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PART TWO: A DEFENCE OF THE THEOLOGICAL CASE

4. SOME POPULAR REASONS FOR HAVING WOMEN IN THE MINISTRY/ELDERSHIP & REJECTING HEADSHIP

When God created Adam and Eve a culture emerged among His people that reflected His relationship to them. Cain and Abel brought their offerings before God, no doubt in a prescribed manner. In the time of Noah there was a distinction between clean and unclean animals.1 Patriarchy was established with Adam’s family. God did not leave man to fend for himself. He supervised His own worship.

In the objections below the underlying assumption is that God had to work within a human culture that He did not shape, and that consequently anything built on human customs is temporary.

Christians, however, adopt a different underlying assumption. God is sovereign, and He does all things after the pleasure of His own will. He is totally in control of His own world and our world. These two conflicting assumptions cannot be reconciled. One belongs to the sons of darkness, those on the broad road leading to destruction, haters of God, despising authority, without faith; the other belongs to the sons of light, those on the narrow road that leads to life, lovers of God, submissive to authority, and abounding in faith. One is the seed of the serpent, the other the seed of the woman. In Paul’s day there were more corrupters (peddlers, NKJV) of the Word of God than those preaching it sincerely (2 Cor 2:17). Old Testament history shows that the Elect of God are always a minority with His Church, and the same applies today. A rule of thumb for recognising the peddler is to ask, How popular is he within the visible church? If he is popular then he has changed the substance of the Gospel to get to that position. Take a close look at his doctrine of Headship for the source of his popularity. It is probably missing. It is here that

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1 In Gen 31:34 Rachel used the excuse that ‘the way of women is upon me,’ in order to continue sitting on the camel in whose saddle-bags she had hidden Laban’s household gods. If she was ‘unclean’ then the saddlebags were also ‘unclean’ and this would account for the fact that they were not searched in case touching them made Laban ‘unclean’.
you will discover the hairline crack in his ministry—in every man’s ministry. You cannot be an imitator of Christ and be popular. Headship lies at the very heart of holiness without which no one will see God. It lays out the manner in which men and women are to relate to each other under Christ’s headship of the Church. It lays out the manner in which men and women are to approach their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in worship and service. It is foundational for a stable, unbreakable marriage. Headship is the lost doctrine of the twenty and twenty-first centuries, hence the steep rise in divorces among Christians. It is also the most despised and least taught doctrine in theological colleges, compounding the problem of ever getting back to a biblical position.

In all the objections you will encounter below the one thing to listen out for is the voice of feminism. Even the most respected of modern Christian commentators have their doctrine of headship peppered with caveats, concessions, compromises, subtly designed to appease those who despise the biblical doctrine of Headship and to appeal to the natural theology in all men in a bid to make the Gospel “attractive” to the natural man. Modern commentators must reflect the new feminist, inclusive spirit of the age—and they do, otherwise they will not get into print. Financial profit, not spiritual profit, lies behind most bible commentary series. Publishers produce only what will make them a profit. If the biblical doctrine of headship is “not going to go down well” then it is omitted from their programmes. If the natural man is the buyer, then the natural man has to be placated. So a spiral of darkness sets it. You suppress what will not sell and promote only what is acceptable and profitable.

An author can make himself popular by putting the biblical doctrine at one end of the spectrum and the most extreme feminist doctrine on the other end and by placing himself in the middle he comes across as a very “balanced” commentator. It is a compromise. The biblical doctrine is placed at the opposite end of the feminist spectrum, thus ensuring it is never considered in its own right. A caricature version is presented as a straw-man, and rightly laughed at. Those advocating the 2000-year old traditional doctrine are pictured as hardliners and hawks, even modern-day Pharisees. All this is fine as an appeal to the natural man, or carnal Christian, but the spiritual man is not deceived by it. He is on the lookout for the Truth. The rule of thumb is: if it acceptable to the mind of the natural man, it is not the Truth, because the natural man cannot understand the things of the spirit of God because they are foolishness to his way of thinking, neither can he understand them because they are spiritually discerned (1 Cor 2:14). At the heart of the Christian faith is special revelation.

Revelation was intended to create a culture, not to be moulded by it. In the case of Israel’s religion its totality was shaped by Yahweh Himself revealing to Moses over a period of forty days and nights how He wanted everything to be set up. That must be an accepted fact. If He stipulated that all His worship must come through the hands of the male members of the Covenants He made with Adam, Noah, Abraham and Moses, then that is His deliberate decision. Men and women lived within His revealed will for thousands of years.

If, in the New Covenant, He has stipulated that all worship of Him must come through the male members then that, too, is His decision, and the Church must live by faith with it. But not all bishops and pastors have faith, so these walk according to their fleshly judgment of what is right and wrong, and that fleshly judgment will coincide with feminist views. With this in mind, the revelation of the headship of Christ over the Church, and the reaffirmation of the headship of Man over Woman, the Church is in a strong position to counter any argument that would seek to overthrow God’s government of the world, Christ’s government of the Church, and Man’s government of the home.
4.1 HISTORY HAS SHOWN THAT GOD HAS BLESSED THE PUBLIC PREACHING OF WOMEN AND ESPECIALLY HER MISSIONARY WORK

In spite of the clear teaching of Scripture on woman’s acceptance of God’s authority structures, and Man’s headship in relation to Woman, there is a wide-spread tendency to argue from results, rather than from revelation. Pragmatic arguments are considered of greater weight and moment than theological arguments. It is worth quoting in full A. H. Ross’s reply to this approach (written in 1870):

It is urged, as conclusive, that God’s blessing does, in many instances, accompany the speaking of women in the assemblies. This we thankfully admit; for probably no woman wilfully transgressed in the matter. The fault has been one of ignorance, not of intent; of interpretation, or rather a practice indulged in without knowledge or reproof, and not of the heart. Probably no one of them would have spoken, had she believed that Paul forbade her to do so. They probably read Paul’s prohibitions as a good Methodist once told us that she read those passages which teach election and divine decrees: “I hurry over them as fast as I can”; not because she would trifle with God’s message of love, but because these passages seemed to teach what was to her the gravest error, Calvinism. Now, such being the attitude towards both God’s decrees and his commands of silence, and the silence of women not lying at the foundation of the gospel plan, it is in accordance with God’s providence to reward their earnest piety. His blessing, is, however, to be ascribed to their piety, and not to their external [or unwitting] violation of his commands. He, in other words, overlooks their departure from his strict injunctions in order to reward their devotion; and does not overlook their devotion in order to bless their public address. When once it is clearly accepted, however, that Paul’s rules are now binding, any violation of them will involve the authority of God, and cannot receive his blessing, unless he encourage wilful disobedience (emphasis mine).²

God is sovereign over His works and hence He may, and often does, use extraordinary means to accomplish His purposes—extraordinary from our point of view. For example, He opened the mouth of an ass to rebuke a prophet (Num 22:28). When Saul told his servants to, “Find me a woman who is a medium, so that I may go and enquire of her,” because, “the Lord did not answer him by dreams or Urim or prophets” (God’s usual means), God used a means that Saul ought to have “cut off” (1 Sam 28:9) in order to condemn him. He had commanded His people to cut off all such mediums (Deut 18:9-12; Lev 19:31; 20:6, 27).

Thus we see that God can use agencies to convey His will which He has proscribed in His Word. We should not, therefore, conclude from the witch of Endor’s account that it is permissible for the Church to institute and ordain witches to the ministry because they have been instrumental in conveying God’s will. Though we are bound to God’s written and revealed will for us, He is not bound by His own laws as we have just shown.

When God threatened to chastise His people we read (Isaiah 3:1-5, 12):

See now . . . the Lord Almighty is about to take from Jerusalem and Judah . . . hero and warrior, the judge and prophet, the soothsayer and elder . . . I will make boys their officials; mere children will govern them . . . The young will rise up against the old . . . Youths oppress my people, women rule over them.

It was a shame in Hebrew culture to be ruled by a woman or a child, or to die by the hand of a woman. God knows how to shame the male members of the Old Testament Church!

Walke has pointed out that greater attention must be given to God’s written record of His will than a reliance on human reason, experience (e.g., so-called “callings”), and/or tradition (cf. Deut 8:3; Ezek 28:6, 15-17). This is particularly so today given that many practising homosexuals and lesbians have been admitted into positions of authority (i.e., the office of Elder) on the strength of their “calling” to the ministry, which, they claim, no one has the right to question. They frequently claim that their sexual orientation is the work of God Himself, and for that reason it is beyond the authority of the Church to discriminate against them. Often a “calling from God” is claimed by many godly, Christian women which they claim overrides the written record, and gives them “equality of authority and leadership” alongside men in the ministry.

4.1.1. WOMEN GOD USED IN THE OT

In Scripture when a nation, people or church, turned away from God it very soon turned aside His authority structure. Things were turned upside down, and the men and women who ruled had power only in name, not in reality. For old Israel, the outward sign of spiritual decline—of God’s judgment—was when women ruled over them (Isa 3:12). When they saw women in authority they could conclude that all was not well with the nation’s relationship to God. “And the children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord . . . . Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapppidoth, she judged Israel at that time” (Jud 4:1, 4).

Deborah, who was married, is an example of this point (Jud 4:4-9). But as Bruce Walke noted: “

Probably, however, it is the exception that proves the rule. In addition to being a prophetess, Deborah was “judging” (i.e., “ruling”) Israel. The narrator, however, makes his intention clear by carefully shaming the Israelite men at that time for their fear of being afraid to assume leadership. Note, for example, how Deborah shames Barak, the military commander of Israel’s army, for his failure to assume leadership. After she mediated God’s command to him to join battle with Sisera, commander of the Canaanite army, Barak replies: “If you go with me, I will go; but if you don’t go with me, I won’t go.” To which Deborah responds, “Very well, I will go with you. But because of the way you are going about this [i.e., full of fear] the honour will not be yours, the Lord will hand Sisera over to a woman [i.e., to shame him]” (Judges 9:54). She did not seek to overthrow patriarchy through her gifts but to support it. Apparently, the Lord raised up this exceptional woman, who was full of faith, to shame the men of Israel for their lack of faith, as such faith is essential to leadership in the holy nation. If so, the story aims to reprove unfaithful men for not taking leadership, not to present an alternative norm to male authority. The story also, shows, however, that the Spirit of the Lord is above culture and not restricted by normative patriarchy.

Here we have a clear example of a woman ruling Israel in a time of apostasy. The remedy was not to oust the women from positions of authority, but to repent and return to the Lord who would set the nation on its feet again, and restore the judge and prophet to lead them.

Another example is Queen Athaliah: “When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she proceeded to destroy the whole royal family of the house of

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Judah. But Jehoshabeath, the daughter of King Jehoram, took Joash son of Ahaziah and stole him away . . . and put him and his nurse in a bedroom” (2 Chr 22:10ff.).

If Athaliah had been successful she would have destroyed God’s promise to David that there would always be someone to sit on his throne until the Messiah came. She very nearly succeeded in breaking the succession to Christ. But she was not the only one to attempt this as Scripture shows. The greatest threat to the succession always occurred in times of apostasy from true religion, and she reigned in a time of apostasy.

Of the more favourable references to women in the Old Testament we read of Miriam, the sister of Moses, leading in singing. But when we look a little closer at the text it reads (Exod 15:20): “Then Miriam the prophetess, 5 Aaron’s sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women followed her, with tambourines and dancing.”

This is a good example of a woman ministering to women. She did not lead the men in singing Yahweh’s praises. Later on, Miriam and Aaron (she is named first, Num 12:1ff.) spoke against Moses and challenged his authority. God was content simply to rebuke Aaron, but we are told, “The anger of the Lord burned against them, and he left them. When the cloud lifted from above the Tent, there stood Miriam—leperous, like snow” (Num 12:9-10). When Moses and Aaron pleaded with God to heal her, the Lord replied, “If her father had spat in her face, would she not have been in disgrace for seven days? Confine her outside the camp for seven days” (12:14). God’s punishment was the equivalent of spitting in her face for challenging the authority of Moses; she was condemned to remain outside the company of God’s people for seven days like an unclean thing in His sight. 6

In the Old Testament Hilkiah the priest and four other men went to the home of Huldah the prophetess and received Yahweh’s prophetic word through her (2 Kgs 22:14). It is fashionable to play up Huldah’s priority over Jeremiah in that when Josiah sent Hilkiah to “seek Yahweh for me” (2 Kgs 22:13) they chose to consult with Huldah rather than with Jeremiah. But it is worth noting that at this precise point in time (the 18th year of Josiah) Jeremiah was probably a young man having only begun his long, 42-year ministry in Josiah’s 13th year (Jer 1:1-3; 25:3), which was just five years (or three full years and two partial years on either side of it) before the finding of the Law.

The fact that the Law was completely forgotten and came as a surprise to Josiah is not surprising when we consider that Manasseh, Josiah’s evil grandfather ruled for 55 years, and he was followed by Josiah’s own evil father, who ruled for two years. This was the situation that the eight-year old Josiah inherited. It is quite probable that Manasseh and Amon killed off Yahweh’s male prophets during their apostate periods of government (57 years in total) and that women of faith (like Deborah in the apostate period of the Judges) were used by Yahweh to keep alive a mouthpiece for Himself. We should see Huldah as another Deborah-like figure during these apostate times. If she had a good track record of fulfilled prophecies behind her, and so was well-respected and revered by the time the Law was discovered in Josiah’s 18th year, it is not surprising that the High Priest and his four companions knew where God’s mouthpiece could be found, and duly made a visit to her home and were not disappointed to receive God’s message through her. Jeremiah, at this juncture, was only commencing his long prophetic ministry, so he was relatively inexperienced. It should be remembered that Jeremiah and Josiah were born about the same time and he was specifically chosen from birth for his long ministry culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC.

Since God has poured out His Spirit on old and young, male and female, it follows that if men could exercise their prophetic gift outside the context of the formal ecclesia, then the women and girls could also do the same, provided they covered their heads. What is forbidden to the women, but granted to the men, is to exercise their prophetic gift in the church meeting itself. A woman cannot use the excuse that she could not help speaking a prophetic word in church because she was overcome by the Spirit to speak, because Paul taught that “the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets, for God is not a God of disorder, but of peace” (1 Cor 14:32), or as one paraphrase puts it: “Remember that a person

5 The Babylonian Talmud Mishna Megilla 14a mentions seven good prophetesses: Sarah, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Abigail, Huldah and Esther. Of these only Miriam and Huldah are mentioned as such in the OT.
who has a message from God has the power to stop himself or to wait his turn (The Living Bible).7

Paul is able to say that all the men in the Corinthian church can prophesy in turn during the church service (1 Cor 14:31), but he wisely limits the number to two or three prophecies (1 Cor 14:29). Although there is no direct record we can infer that all women have the same gift of prophecy from the fact that she has the same Spirit within her, but she is commanded not to use it in the church service (1 Cor 14:34). She can exercise it at home and on the other six days of the week with a covered head (1 Cor 11:5-6), as can the Christian children who also had the gift (cf. the boy Samuel in the OT). Peter points out that the gift of the Spirit, and with it the ability to prophesy, would cross all social barriers (servants: male and female; civilians: freemen and freewomen; gender: male and female) and levels of maturity (age: children and grandparents). All the people of God would have the gift of the Spirit. This was not so under the Old Covenant. For although the Spirit had crossed all social barriers (as He did at Pentecost) it was to a far lesser degree. What we see on the day of Pentecost had its precursor in the trickling of God’s people who had the same gift under the Old Covenant. The difference was just a difference of degree; the quality was the same, because it was the same Spirit in them that was in the Twelve Apostles on the day of Pentecost. That this trickling should have included children (Samuel) and women (Miriam, c. 1445 BC; Deborah, c. 1350 BC; Isaiah’s wife, 739-686 BC [Isa 8:3]; Huldah, c. 640 BC) is not surprising. And if there were true prophetesses we should not be surprised to find false prophetesses within the Church of the Old Covenant.

Noadiah was a prophetess in the time of Nehemiah, but she strongly opposed Nehemiah’s attempt to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (Neh 6:1; probably by giving out some “word of prophecy” she had “received” from Yahweh) and along with other male prophets tried to intimidate him. Self-proclaimed prophetesses and prophets can give false advice or false “messages from God.” The testing procedure is set out in Deuteronomy 13:1. Such false prophetesses and prophets were to be stoned even if they were one’s parents or relatives (Deut 13:6; 33:9). No doubt Noadiah prophesied in public!

Because of the paucity of examples in the Old Testament where women occupy a leadership role it has been necessary to resort to instances where women spoke to men. Consequently it is claimed that David had two women teachers, Abigail (1 Sam 25) and the wise woman of Tekoa (2 Sam 14:1-20); and Joab had a woman teacher, the wise woman of Abel Beth Maacah (2 Sam 20:16-22). When this paucity is added to the paucity of the New Testament “evidence” it is then claimed that Paul is not prohibiting the general sort of Christian teaching and mutual exhortation that takes place within the assembly. In support of this assumption the following passages are listed: Col 3:16; Heb 3:13; 5:12; 10:24; 1 Cor 14:26; 1 Pet 3:15,8 without realising that all of these passages are addressed specifically to men.9 It is not enough to quote passages addressed to men and then assume that Peter and Paul were addressing women as well. Correct hermeneutics must start back in the actual Sitz im Leben of the passages with a good grasp of the cultural moment against which any passage of Scripture is set, before applying it to a modern situation. Given the culture of the time in which the whole of the Old and New Testaments were written, women would never have assumed a teaching role over men, certainly not in the home and never in a public assembly. Individual men may privately consult a woman if she had a reputation for being a wise woman, but a fixed teaching role was reserved only for male priests.

It is a common fault among those who argue for a public ministry for women toward men to take up passages of Scripture which were specifically addressed to men and apply them to women. This common hermeneutical oversight plus the doctrine of headships are the two pivotal factors that must constitute the warp and woof of any solution regarding the place of men and women in the public ministry of Christ’s Church. If one or other of

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7 The Jerusalem Bible reads: ‘Prophets can always control their prophetic spirits, since God is not a God of disorder but of peace.’
9 For the full data see Chart 19. Title: “Paul and the New Testament writers addressed their letters to men.”
these factors is missing it is as disastrous as missing out either the warp or the woof in making a piece of cloth.\textsuperscript{10}

When we come to the New Testament it should be borne in mind that the position occupied by women as presented in the Talmud does not necessarily reflect the \textit{Sitz im Leben} of New Testament times.\textsuperscript{11} For example, a strange woman could enter the house of a strict Pharisee and touch Jesus. This is something that would be unheard of in Talmudic times.

Once Scripture is used by some to permit women “a general sort of teaching . . . within the assembly” then 1 Timothy 2:12 is immediately qualified to read: “I permit no woman to teach men authoritatively.” But this interpretation/translation raises serious problems. First, who is going to decide the point where a woman teacher crosses over from a “general sort of teaching” to an “authoritative form of teaching”?

Second, if she asks for the criterion—in all good faith so as not to infringe Paul’s injunction—who is going to decide it for her? and will this criterion be universal?

Third, why, if a woman can speak “a general sort of teaching within the assembly,” does Paul tell her to be silent?

Fourth, why does he say it is a shame for a woman to speak in an assembly (1 Cor 14:35)?

Fifth, would the culture of the time have permitted her such a public-speaking role? Once again note the fragmented approach to Scripture. Where 1 Timothy 2:12 is treated in isolation from 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 and 14:33b-38 we run into insuperable problems. We need to adopt a holistic approach to all the evidence on Paul’s teaching about headship in order that through his words we can enter the mind of Paul and from within that mind re-read his writings. This is the only safe way to enter his world and understand and grasp his theological world-view of which 1 Corinthians 11:3 is the key. This revelation is as vital to a correct understanding of all Paul’s doctrines as the canvas is to the paint of a painter. All his doctrines are painted on this canvas, and this canvas holds all his doctrines together.

\textbf{4.1.1.1 THE CHRISTIAN AND POLITICS}

Without a clear grasp of Paul’s understanding of what is entailed in his words, “the head of woman is man” we end up speculating that “Paul may not be intending to prohibit women from exercising authority over men in the political or social spheres since these may be considered beyond the scope of our text [1 Tim 2:12].”\textsuperscript{12}

In reply, first, 1 Corinthians 11:3 sets out a principle that is comprehensive in its scope. It includes all spheres—religious, social and political.\textsuperscript{13}

Second, in Christ’s Kingdom there is no distinction between these man-made spheres. He is Lord of all, and He is to be Lord in all these spheres as God was throughout the entire pre-Christian period. There is to be no area of life that is left outside His rule, or left unreformed, as though Christ were permitted to rule in the religious sphere but not in the workplace.

Third, the Christian man is not to permit Satan, the god of this world, to dictate or control his life \textit{in any part}. This will result in a head-on clash with the “world” in all spheres of his life: family, social and national. No area of his life can be left unreformed. \textit{Paul would expect every man to imitate him—as he imitated Christ—and apply the principle of Christ’s headship to every department of life}. The Christian is expected to live in the world but not be part of its system of values. He must render to Caesar what is due to him and to God what is due to Him. Inevitably this will mean having to live with situations which are outside his control to change, such as having women in secular authority (queens and Prime Ministers), women MPs, and the whole work-environment

\textsuperscript{10} This topic is more fully developed under 4.3.3 below.


\textsuperscript{13} Section 4.9, should be read with this section.
which is controlled by non-Christians, or so-called Christians, who are not controlled by Christ.\textsuperscript{14}

In a democracy, with each Christian under Christ’s control (headship), and consistently abiding by His teaching on Man’s headship, eventually Christ’s standards will be reflected in the institutions of State and local government authorities where Christians are in the majority. The Christian should have a clear world-view of how Christ wants His world to be governed, and by keeping before him the principle laid down in 1 Corinthians 11:3 and applying it consistently to his own family in the first instance and wherever he is in a position to further it at the social and political level, he should consciously do so in order that Christ’s rule will one day cover the earth as the waters cover the seas. His first allegiance is to Christ and not to the State he happens to be born into. Not everything is yet under Jesus’ control/rule; but Christians can be part of Christ’s political agenda by opposing the agenda of Satan whose policy it is to turn upside-down what Christ is turning right-side up. The present age is characterised by a mixture of right-side up and upside-down values and authority structures. The Christian should be able to discern what is upside-down in his environment and turn it right-side up where he can. By keeping very close to Christ’s teaching and never standing in judgment over it, recognising His headship in all spheres of his life, the mature Christian man can help guide the Church in an increasingly mixed-up world, and that now includes the authority structures that Christ instituted in His Church.

Sometimes an unbiblical situation is set forth in order to undermine or blur the lines of authority. The unbiblical situation is often a modern Western situation which would not arise in a Hebrew patriarchal culture. For example, a son may become a general of the army in which his father serves as a private soldier, and consequently, the father must obey his son’s orders. Or the son might become the President. Similarly, an ordinary Christian may be an elder of a church where an MP, president, or king might be a member. Could he, or the collective eldership, threaten to excommunicate such powerful state persons if they do not carry through Christ’s teaching in their political and social spheres, or relieve the poor? Could such an eldership in Paul’s day be made up of Christian slaves whose masters were members of their churches?

In the family, social, and political spheres, woman is to fulfil a helpmeet role to the man she is married to. If she is married to a king then she fulfills a helpmeet role to the person of the king. If she is married to a lowly farmer then she fulfills a helpmeet role to the person of the farmer. She should not be treated or regarded as another farmhand. Adam was a gardener but Eve was not put alongside him to do his weeding for him: she was not a subordinate gardener to Adam. She was to fulfill her role by being a helpmeet to the person of Adam. She was created looking toward the man, not at his work. Her focus is to be on the man himself, and not primarily on his work for God. In whatever sphere God allows her husband (be it the religious, political or social) there she can fulfill her same personal role, be it as queen or as a farmer’s wife. Her role never changes: though the context may. She may never rule over her husband or the husband of another woman in her own right. But the secular world, controlled by the god of this world, will do all it can to turn God’s authority structures upside-down, and the Church will have to deal with such upside-down structures, while retaining a knowledge of the right-side-up position at all times, and actively seeking to implement and promote its many forms throughout the world for the good of mankind—in the home, in society, and in all political institutions.

Listing instances of foreign Gentile queens in the Bible is to no avail\textsuperscript{15} because these institutions were not, and are not, under the control of God, though He may use any institutions set up by man for His own purposes. Thus He used Gentile armies (Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman) to do His bidding and through them He

\textsuperscript{14} Joseph may have been vice-regent of Egypt but that did not set aside his duty toward his father (who, in any case, was not Joseph’s head). Human institutions cannot overrule divine structures. A king, senator or Member of Parliament are no different than Joe Bloggs when it comes to allegiance to Christ’s teaching as safeguarded by the elders of the church to which they belong. Each has Christ, not the eldership, as his Head. The elders have no authority due to their office if they are not fully imitating Christ and Paul’s example. Their authority comes through the perfect model they present; once the model is lost or compromised they lose their authority and the respect due to them. The king and Joe Bloggs alike can disobey them.

poured out His pent-up righteous indignation against His people at the time of the Babylonian Exile (606—536 BC).

Likewise listing Christian women in politics, industry, or the ministry from the dawn of Christianity does not justify their position if it as at variance with Christ’s teaching on the headship of Man. They may be in an upside-down situation but unless they use their position to turn things back to a right-side up situation they only strengthen the upside-down position by their role model presence. We noted above (under 4.1) how God’s use of Christian women in the past has become an instrument in the hands of His enemies to undermine His authority structures. If it had been recognised that these women lived in an upside-down world (as we do today) and in such a world one would expect such aberrations from the “normal” to occur, then these examples would present us with no problem. No doubt there are many today who can point to contemporary women ministers and bishops “doing a good job,” adding, “and probably a better one than most men,” and using these deviations to justify the aberration. A classic case of circular argument.

Pragmatic arguments, if they fly in the face of explicit prohibitions, are detrimental to good order. Women bishops would never have occurred had the Apostolic injunction prohibiting women from speaking in the Church been carefully followed. Evangelical ministers can be heard up and down the land deploiring women ministers and threatening to leave the church if women bishops are appointed. But the very same ministers permit women to speak in their own churches, oblivious of the direct cause and effect connection between this breach (which they justify as only a little breach) and the appointment of women bishops!

The Christian Church is a subversive force in this world in that it is constantly seeking to undo Satan’s work and overthrow his control of the vast majority of nations. The secular state, likewise, is a subversive force within God’s universe in that it is naturally seeking to undo His work. What God has joined together man seeks to pull it asunder; to break it up, to distort it, to turn it on its head. Increasingly its values are taking over those of Christ Jesus in His own Church with the connivance (active and passive) of His own pastors, elders, vicars and bishops. Thus, there are two powerful, but opposite, spiritual forces operating for the allegiance of every person born into the world. And sadly, many, many Christians are co-operating with forces detrimental to the maintenance of good order in the Church. If good order cannot be maintained in Christ’s own Church how can the Church ever hope to see it in force among the nations of the world?

### 4.1.2. **WOMEN GOD USED IN THE NT**

In the New Testament we read of Anna, a prophetess of eighty-four years of age, who “spoke about the child [Jesus] to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem” (Lk 2:38). As there were no public assemblages in the Temple precincts on such occasions, the speaking of this holy woman could only have taken place on a personal or private level. Nevertheless, she did speak to all, including Simeon, who was present, therefore women did deliver their prophecies to men in a private or personal capacity and this would be covered by 1 Corinthians 11:5.

Prophetesses seem to be the exception in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament prophetesses seemed to have been more common. In Acts 21:9 we read: “He [Philip] had four unmarried daughters who had the gift of prophecy.” The text does not tell us when, how, or where they exercised their gift. However, we would do well to be cautious and suspend all judgment until we have had time to examine the evidence behind R. Bank’s statement on this verse which reads, “. . . we have, in Acts 21:9, independent evidence that Paul had contact with other churches in which women prophesied.”

I say “cautious” because Banks may have been privy to a private prophetic revelation on this verse. The verse as it stands, however, says nothing about these four daughters prophesying in the church. Given the biblical culture of the times, like Huldah, they probably prophesied in their own home, but we have no evidence that they prophesied in the

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church. This would be contrary to the whole of prophetic history, where God never asked a woman to go to the Temple and prophesy among the men. Consequently, Philip’s daughters cannot be used as proof-text evidence that women prophesied in the church. It is a sign of desperation when Acts 21:9 is used as “proof” that women prophesied in the church.

The only reference to a prophetess teaching in a church is in Revelation 2:20, where she is roundly condemned by him “whose eyes are like blazing fire” as follows:

To the angel of the church in Thyatira write: . . . I know your deeds, your love and faith . . . . Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols.

Note that Jesus says she calls herself a prophetess, which suggests he did not regard her as such.

Lastly, we have a further example of God’s sovereignty over His own means of communicating His prophecies to His people in using the impious high-priest Caiaphas to convey a prophecy about Jesus’ death for the nation (Jn 11:50-52).

It is clear, then, that God may, in His sovereignty, bring good out of evil, and use pious and impious persons to convey His will. Pragmatic arguments and arguments from results are not convincing arguments. Pragmatic arguments if they contradict revealed truth should be treated with the suspicion they deserve: “Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins” (Jas 4:17).

Much is made of the fact that Apollos was taken into the home of Aquila and Priscilla, where they explained the Word of God to him more fully. Note that this activity did not happen in church, but that does not stop many from applying it to the ekklesia (the called out gathering of God’s people). Neither did Priscilla explain the Gospel on her own. We have no example where a woman taught a man on her own in her church. Would this have been possible or seemly? It cannot be inherently immoral for a husband and wife to invite someone into their home and talk to them about spiritual things, surely? So what’s the problem with Priscilla discussing spiritual matters with male guests? You would think to read some commentators that she was involved in some extraordinary feat, unheard of in the annals of human relationships! If women are told to educate themselves by asking their own husbands at home concerning what he learned in the weekly services, surely she could learn from other male friends and guests, and there will arise occasions when she knows more than some of her male guests or friends. It would be quite natural for her to impart this knowledge to them, surely, in the privacy of her own home. But we are not at liberty to extrapulate a principle from what happened in her home to what she can do in church.

The complete list of Paul’s fellow-workmen (συνεργοί) comes to 14 men, but no women are listed among them. The men are Timothy (1 Thess 3:2; Rom 16:21), Apollos (1 Cor 3:9), Philemon (Phlm 1), Aristarchus, Mark, Demas, Luke, and Jesus Justus (Phlm 23-24; Col 4:10-14), Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25), Clement “and others” (Phil 4:2-3), Titus (2 Cor 8:23), Prisca and Aquila (Rom 16:3), Urbanus (Rom 16:9). Others who were fellow-workmen but who are not specifically called such are Stephanus, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (1 Cor 16:15-18). The name Prisca (in Rom 16:3; 1 Cor 16:19; 2 Tim 4:19) belongs to a man since he is called Paul’s fellow-workman (τοῦς συνεργούς μου). Always his name is coupled with Aquila.\footnote{Prisca’s name occurs three times in conjunction with her husband, Aquila (Acts 18:2, 18, 26). In Acts 18:2, 18 Aquila’s name occurs first in the Majority Greek Text (but second in UBS\textsuperscript{9} in 18:26, probably by assimilation to 18:18).

\footnote{In 1 Cor 16:19 his name is replaced by ‘Priscilla’ in the Majority Greek Text (probably by similarity with his wife’s name) but not in UBS\textsuperscript{9}. 2 Tim 4:19 is quoted in \textit{Actis Pauli} where Aquila’s wife is called Lectra (see A. Souter, \textit{Novum Testamentum Graece} [8th ed. 1950] \textit{sub loc.}).} If Prisca was a woman it would be the only instance where a woman was called a “workman”!

Romans 16:3 refers to a church in the house of “Prisca and Aquila.” If 16:1-21 was written during Paul’s second (recorded) visit to Corinth, then Prisca and Aquila had returned to Rome and had established a church there similar to that over which they had presided at Ephesus. But there is no evidence in Acts for their settling again in Rome; and in
2 Timothy 4:19, greetings are sent to them in Ephesus. The accepted chronology is that Aquila and Prisca left their settled home in Ephesus (where according to the Graeco-Latin MSS DEFG [1 Cor 16:19] Paul resided) soon after Paul had written First Corinthians (16:19), and that a year later their house in Rome was the centre of a church, and then later on they returned to Ephesus, and once more took up the same position in the Christian community. To get round this difficulty it has been suggested that Romans 16:1-21 (or perhaps 1:23) was not part of the original Epistle, but was a letter of commendation for Phoebe addressed by Paul to the church at Ephesus, becoming attached to Romans 15 at a later time in order to ensure its preservation. But given that it is now known that the names in Romans 16 (including Prisca and Aquila) "are found swarming in inscriptions, papyri, and ostraca all over the Mediterranean world," it would seem that the Aquila in Rome is not the same person as the Aquila in Corinth, and consequently, the Prisca in Rome is not the same as the Priscilla in Corinth.

Sometimes Euodia and Syntyche are also found listed in feminist works as "workmen."22 Philippians 4:2-3 reads:

(2) Euodia I exhort, and Syntyche I exhort, to be of the same mind in the Lord. (3) Yes, I ask also you, Synzygus, genuine one,23 be assisting those [fem. pl.24] who in the Gospel did strive along with me, with Clement also, and the others [masc. pl.]—my fellow-workmen—whose [gen. pl.25] names are (are) in the Book of Life.

The use of ἕως at the beginning of v. 3 appears to be addressed to an individual and so Paul’s thought has moved on to a new thought. It is not connected with v. 2, which stands on its own. The particle ἕως can be used in oaths, strong affirmations, and in positive answers.26 Here it can be taken either as a strong affirmation ("verily, truly"); cf. Rev 22:20 or as a reply ("yes") to something that Synzygus asked Paul about. In this case Synzygus would appear to have asked Paul if it was alright to help (reimburse?) the women who had helped the work of the men with their substance (as a band of women did with Jesus and his Apostles), and Paul’s answer is a firm Yes.

The Philippian church was a very generous benefactor in providing provisions (money, clothing and food, no doubt) to enable Paul to take the Gospel all over Macedonia (Phil 4:14-17), and it seems they did the same for Clement and all of Paul’s fellow-

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25 See for example, Florence M. Gillman, *Women Who Knew Paul* [Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992] who devoted 94 pages (!) to the women listed in Paul’s epistles, the majority of which is fanciful speculation about their great standing in the churches, but the syntax of Phil 4:3 is against this. Even J. Stott was borne along by the feminists to assume that Euodia and Synthyche were ‘workmen’ (*op. cit.*, p. 250).
26 See for example, Carl F. H. Henry, *Syzygus* is more likely to be a proper name here because of the preceding it; but it might also be translated as 'yoke-fellow'. In support of a proper name is Westcott and Hort’s marginal reading: Carl von Weizäcker, *The Apostolic Age of the Christian Church*, 2 vols. ET by James Millar from 2nd rev. ed. (London: Williams & Norgate/New York: Putnam, 1897-99), 1:282; and *Die Heilige Schrift des Alten und des Neuen Testaments* (Zürich: Verlag der Zwingli-Bibel, 1942). The word preceding it (so USB5) or following it (MT) is γυνή, which is the vocative sing. masc. from γυναῖκα, ‘O genuine one!’
27 The grammatical feminine plural reference here may or may not include Euodia and Syntyche. The thought of these two squabbling women may have triggered off a reminder of the more helpful women Paul knew of in the Philippian church who strove alongside him as others did alongside Jesus.
28 This could refer either to (1) all the women who backed up the ministry of the men mentioned here, i.e., Paul, Clement, and the other unnamed fellow-workers; or (2) the unnamed ‘other men’ whose names are written in the Book of Life. In favour of (1) it is said that Paul’s attention is on the women who helped him, Clement, and his other fellow-workmen. It is these unnamed women he refers to in the words: ‘whose names are (are) in the Book of Life.’ In favour of (2) is Paul’s omission of the names of his ‘other workmen’, and so he compensates for this by reference to the knowledge that their names are written in the Book of Life. Solution (2) is preferable in this context. The thought of the Book of Life may have triggered off the burst of joy that runs through vv. 4-7. The phrase, ‘As to the rest . . .‘ (v. 8) may be a reply to some other query the church had communicated to him.
29 See Liddell & Scott’s *Greek Lexicon*. The TR reads ἕως in place of ἕοι, which led to the ambiguous translation, ‘And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel,’ where ‘those women’ might be taken to refer back to Euodias and Syntyche. But, the intervention of ἕως and the switch of address away to a man, Synzygus, possibly the leader of the church at Philippi, suggests that Paul has dealt with the pair of squabbling women and has moved on to address something that Synzygus had asked for a ruling on, hence the use of ἕοι here: ‘Yes, . . .’
workmen. It may be that the Philippian church was the financial backer for all of Paul’s work and workers, and that Paul makes a request to it to assist the women who “struggled together with” (συνεβάλλανταν) Paul and other males on their evangelistic journeys. The use of “struggled together with” is a good illustration of what it means for women in the new environment of the Christian community to be man’s true helpmeet. She does not act independently of man but with man. The responsibility of taking the Gospel into all the world lies on the shoulders of Christ’s male disciples (because of their headship relation to Him); the responsibility of the Christian women is to help them—“struggle alongside them”—in it (because of their submissive relation to their heads).

There is not a single, unambiguous example of a woman in the NT writings who might have been in the front line alongside men, or independently of him, taking the Gospel to men. Jesus had 12 men who followed him around in a supporting capacity (Mt 27:55; just as Paul had on occasions no doubt), but Jesus chose none of these loyal women when he chose 70 men to be front-line workers for Him in the last year of His ministry. Why not?

There are two distinct approaches to the biblical material. On the one hand there are those who work from principles that are either stated or implied in Scripture. These principles, together with an understanding of the integrity of God’s Word as a consistent and reliable guide to the mind of the Trinity, are their guide to understanding the practices of the Early Church as reflected in the pages of the New Testament writings. Thus Phoebe would be understood to be operating within those principles and not in opposition to them, and so her work for the Lord would be seen within a theological context and not as the result of an ad hoc arrangement. Given the consistent teaching of the Apostles and the culture she lived in there is just no way that she could have broken the universal rule of silence in the Christian Church (or Christian synagogue). A good understanding of the culture she lived in, plus Paul’s teaching on the place of women in all his churches, plus the history of the next nineteen centuries which never saw a woman permitted to preach in church, give a consistent picture. What was preventing the Church from permitting women to speak in the church was a special revelation from Jesus Himself banning it. They clearly allowed principle to come before pragmatic considerations.

On the other hand, others approach the same biblical material, but start, not with isolating theological principles, but with practices: with what people actually did; how Jesus treated men and women; the number of female friends that Paul greets, etcetera, and out of these incidents or descriptions draw some general observations. These observations, plus a different understanding of the integrity of God’s Word, including the idea that the Scriptures give contradictory teaching and that those who wrote them were not always consistent in what they said and did, often present a picture that appeals to today’s sense of what is fair and right. On this approach greater attention is paid to the practices of the Apostolic Church, without a deeper understanding of the underlying principles that produced those practices. The practices then become the basis for extensions. For example it is argued that if Phoebe could be a deaconess why could she not be an Elder? If Priscilla taught Apollos in private why could she not do the same in public? If a man can preach why can’t a woman? The argument from extension must be carefully weighed in case it violates the principle that produced the original practice which is now being extended.

If the Lord has given the gift of prophesy to male and female followers but He specifically lays it down that females are not to exercise this gift in the public ministry of His church that should be the end of the matter. If they are not permitted to exercise the

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27 This word occurs only twice (Phil 1:27; 4:3) in the NT.

28 A common interpretation is to place a comma after αὐτοῖς (dat. pl. fem.) in v. 3 and assume that it refers back to Euodia and Syntyche, and then make the following clause αἵτινες (nom. pl. fem. from ἀίτις) ἵνα ... λαμβάνεται ... ἔναντι δι' ἑαυτῶν, "who ... struggled with me ... whose names (are) in the Book of Life," refer back to these two women of whom Paul can confidently affirm that their names are written in the Book of Life. A variant on this interpretation is to make the last clause refer, not to the two women, but to the unnamed others (m,p).''


30 I take it as an essential prerequisite to an evangelical approach that no Scripture may be interpreted so as to contradict or nullify another. If that prerequisite is absent then we have no foundation on which to build a true understanding of the Scriptures either on this topic or any other.

31 See 4.5 on Phoebe as a deaconess.
gift in His Church then they are permitted to exercise it outside the Church at home, and thus there is no contradiction between 1 Corinthians 11:5 and 14:34. If we find women exercising their gift of prophecy then we can infer that they did so either in their own homes, or in the company of friends, or even, like the prophetless Anna, in public (with their heads covered). The one place we can infer they did not exercise it was in the Church.

It might appear that God is being arbitrary in debarring women from exercising His gift in one place but not in another, but He has His reasons. These have been set out in the theological section of this work. It is not profitable to set up disagreements between Jesus and Paul, or between Jesus and the apostolic church, or between Paul and the Early Church, and use these supposed disagreements to do away with the principles on which God has ordained His people should come before Him in worship. To use Scripture to destroy Scripture puts the destroyer in the place of Scripture.

Given Paul’s view of the theological relationship between men and women, he would not approve of any situation where a woman was in a leadership role over any man, otherwise he would be inconsistent. Consequently, for him man must go out into all the world taking the Good News with him. In doing so he has the right to bring his wife along with him (1 Cor 9:5) because she can help him take the Gospel to other women. If she is single then she should be under male leadership of some kind on the mission field or at home.

4.1.3. REMAIN IN YOUR CALLING

The universal principle Paul taught was: Remain in your present calling. If one is female, let her remain female, and accept this from God and the calling that goes with it, namely to subordinate all her talents and knowledge to serve God through Man as his helpmeet, knowing that this is exactly what God wants her to do with her life. The statement of what she is expected to do with her life must give her life tremendous focus. It is a very practical calling. She can see the man before her whom she is to help achieve the purpose he has been made for.

On the other hand, Paul would argue, if one is male, let him remain male, and accept this from God and the calling that goes with it, namely, to subordinate all his mind, and soul and strength to serve God through Christ, and Him alone. This is slightly more difficult for him because he does not have Christ right before him in a physical manner to whom he can talk, as a wife might do to her husband. But nevertheless man is obliged to find out what is Christ’s will for him and get on with it. It must be comforting to him to have someone by his side who truly loves him and is desirous that he fulfil his own personal calling. She is so united with him in body and soul that his goal becomes hers: they both can subdue the earth if they work together in harmony with God’s laws.

If every Christian man and woman (we do not expect secular society to follow this guide) were to let this fundamental teaching guide their actions in the family, the Church and the State, it would transform each of these spheres into something like what they were originally intended to be, namely, loving and purposeful communities.

We have scratched about to find a clear example that would contradict the Apostolic teaching that women should keep silent in the churches, but there is none. At best we have found instances where God poured out His Holy Spirit on women, as well as on men, in the Old Testament Church, but He never raised up women of the stature of Isaiah, Jeremiah or Ezekiel, with a ministry to the whole nation. Why did He choose only men to reach men? We read of schools of the “sons of the prophets,” but not of schools of the “daughters of the prophets.” Why?

Two things characterised women once they entered the ecclesia (the formal gathering to worship God through the Lord Jesus Christ). First, they were covered, and second, they kept silent in the meeting (as regards giving prophetic words, or speaking in tongues, or any contribution of an individual nature). The entire worship service was to be conducted by men. The reasons given by Paul for the woman’s deportment and demeanour in

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32 See 4.3.4. and 4.3.5.
33 This approach dominates works opposed to Paul’s teaching on the headship of man. See e.g. E. Carroll, “Women and Ministry,” *Theological Studies* 36 (1975) 660-87.
the worship service are theological and spiritual and have nothing to do with local customs.

4.1.4. THE INFLUENCE OF THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT

The rise of the modern feminist movement began with the suffragettes (ca. 1906) and was a direct challenge to the biblical teaching on the doctrine of the Headship of Man. It started, as we would expect, in Satan’s kingdom, the secular state. The campaign for “equal opportunities for women’s rights” soon resulted, in the British Isles, in women ministers in the Congregational Church in 1917. Bishop R. O. Hall of Hong Kong was the first Anglican to ordain a woman in 1944. However, the province of the Anglican Communion concerned, Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui, did not approve of this action, and the woman concerned “retired;” she returned to her work as a deaconess, but the theological issue was not faced. M. Bruce argued that if there are theological objections against the new practice then the contrary belief is a heresy.

The church began to weaken. By the mid-1960s the success of feminism was so pervasive that the only two professions still closed to them were the London Stock Exchange and the ordained ministry of the historic churches. Indecision marked the 1968 Lambeth Conference (of Anglican bishops) which declared that “the theological arguments as at present presented for and against the ordination of women to the priesthood are inconclusive.” In 1973 the Stock Exchange capitulated. The church was the odd man out. It was out of step with the world. It felt uncomfortable. Indecision was followed by positive noises for women’s ordination. Donald Coggan became archbishop of Canterbury in 1974 and soon made it known that he was in favour of women priests. In 1975 the Church of England’s General Synod expressed the view that there are “no fundamental objections to the ordination of women to the priesthood.” These positive noises encouraged other Anglican Communions to ordain women, and the Church of England was now beginning to look even more isolated within its own Communion. Things could not have been made more uncomfortable: sister churches were deserting her to fall into step with the world. She was forced to recognise the fait accompli. In 1978 the Lambeth Conference of bishops recognised that some Anglican provinces now had women clergy, and agreed to respect each others ministers. The Church lost sight of its teaching and its authority and it was not long before “women began to rule over them” (cf. Isa 3:12). The Swedish Church had women ministers in 1960, the French Reformed Church in 1965, and the Church of Scotland in 1966. In 1967 the Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk and two years later the synod of the Gereformeerde Kerken in Netherlands (Reformed Churches in the Netherlands) followed. The Dutch Mennonites admitted women in 1905. Antoinette Louisa Brown is usually considered to be the first female minister in the United States having been ordained in 1853.

Before women got the vote in 1919 it was made clear that the object of the Women’s Suffrage Movement was more than just a political vote. A writer of the time noted:

The claim that “women may occupy any position and exercise any function in the Church that men do” has come to the fore too rapidly . . . to be a natural outcome of Church life; . . . the movement is rather an overflow from the political into the ecclesiastical sphere, . . .

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34 See O. Banks, Faces of Feminism: A Study of Feminism as a Social Movement (Oxford: OUP, 1981). Some date the beginning of the feminist movement to Anna Maria van Schurman, a Dutch woman, who in 1641 published a dissertation on the right of women to engage in science. It appeared in English as The Learned Maid (1659). An American, Judith Sargent Murray, wrote a work, ‘On the Equality of the Sexes’ (1790). On the subject see A. Yarbo Collins (ed.), Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship (SBL Centennial Publications; Biblical Scholarship in North America, 10; Chico CA, 1985). The most well-known early work is that by Mary Wollstonecraft, A Vindication of the Rights of Women (1792). The Quaker sisters, Angelina and Sarah Grimké caused a stir in 1837 when they embarked on public speaking engagements to abolish slavery. Public speaking was the domain of men. But it was not until 1848 when the first Women’s Rights Convention took place at Seneca Falls (USA) that the feminist cause really began to make an impact on society values. See G. Lerner, The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-Seventy (Women and History, 2; New York/Oxford, 1993). In Britain, the movement got going with John Stuart Mill’s Subjection of Women (1869). See N. A. Hardesty, Women Called to Witness: Evangelical Feminism in the 19th Century (Nashville, 1984).

As in the political sphere the initial franchise is avowedly only a step to further advances, so in the ecclesiastical sphere . . . [they] state quite frankly that their demand includes the admission of women to the Diaconate, to the Priesthood, and to the Episcopate, on the same terms as men, and as frankly state their reasons for the demand, viz. that women have gifts for that work equally with men, “and that the teaching of Christ recognizes no distinction of nationality, class, or sex.”

The Diaconate and the Priesthood have been achieved; the Episcopate and Archbishopsric are merely a matter of time.

It should be carefully noted that the first demand in 1917 was not the demand to become Priests, or Deacons, but they set their sights on a “small gain.” The small demand was that laywomen, equally with laymen, shall be—

permitted to vote for and serve as representatives on all Lay Assemblies of the Church, and that all other offices in the Church to which laymen are admitted shall be open also to laywomen, e.g., the office of lay reader (which carries with it permission to preach), of server, etc.

Because the demand was a “small” one it was conceded, but it was like the first small hole in a Dutch dam, and it was followed by another and another concession and compromise until it became impossible to hold back the larger demands which had always been lurking behind that first small one. The first “inconsequential” concession happened to concede the principle of democracy and the abolition of male and female roles. But the Church is a Kingdom, not a democracy. It is unlike any earthly kingdom, in that its authority, and authority structures come from above, not from below, from Christ, not from the people. It is the business of the Church to Christianise the world, not of the world to democratise the Church. The kingdoms of this world are to become the Kingdom of God and His Christ, and not vice versa. A democratic Church is a contradiction in terms. The voice of the people (δημος) is by no means the voice of its Head, the Lord Jesus, in matters of Faith and universal Church practices.

In the 1970s Anglo-Catholics and some evangelicals became very concerned—but far too late—about the future direction of the Church. They could see that the secular pressures that managed to foul up the Church of England’s rudder, after successfully negotiating twenty centuries of severe buffeting by Satan’s forces, now had her lying listless and becalmed. It was conceded that the Church of England was (and still remains) a sitting duck for the next storm to run her unto the rocks. She had/has no power, no rudder to guide her, and no harbour to find shelter in, because the Word of God is now a closed book to her. Her charter documents are out of date, out of fashion, and out of step with the world. The winds of change are blowing her further and further off course.

The 1993 Church of England’s General Synod split the church irrevocably. The voting on the ordination of women was passed as follows: House of Bishops 39 for, 13 against; House of clergy: 176 for, 74 against; House of Laity: 169 for, 82 against. The two-thirds barrier was passed in each of the three Houses. The Truth of the Gospel has not been changed by these numbers. Rather, these numbers reflect the spiritual state of the visible Church which has formally broken away from the Truth. It also illustrates the observation that failure to peruse a particular Truth regularly will lead to its disuse gradually. The Church failed to understand the Spirit’s teaching on the headship of Man; then, what little it did understand of it, it was made to feel embarrassed about; then it ignored it altogether with the inevitable result that it lost sight completely of this foundation truth.

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36 A. E. Oldroyd, “The Place of Women in the Church,” English Church Review 8 (1917) 399-403.
38 This was conceded in 1914, see Nemo, “The Woman’s Movement in the Church,” English Church Review 5 (1914) 377-80. The proposal was put forward by the Bishop of Southwell and it was reported that ‘the Bishops, as a whole, went strongly in favour of what is vaguely termed the ‘feminist movement’ in the Church, 13 of them even voting for the proposal to open diocesan conferences to women, and only 8 against’. The writer discerned that this ‘thin edge of the wedge’ had as its real objective a female priesthood and episcopate (p. 378).
39 By 1999 2000 women had been ordained into the Church of England, or one in nine of the total.
that governs all man-woman relationships both in the home, the Church, and the Christian Community.

Too late, evangelicals saw that the “battle” to keep the truth of Man’s headship alive had been lost in the previous ten years of neglect to remind the Church of the value of this doctrine. The Christian teaching on the family is under attack as never before in the history of the Church, and the Church of England has lost the key corner-stone of that doctrine.

The “battle” against ordaining homosexual and lesbian ministers is likewise being lost by stealth and/or neglect, and it is only a matter of time before the ministry will be open to any person. Secret homosexual and lesbian ministers are lulling the people into believing that their style of life is truly Christian. The national newspapers expose Bishops who indulge in homosexual behaviour. Bishops openly advocate the lowering of consent from 18 to 16 years of age for homosexual behaviour. These bishops are left unrebuked by their peers. The world disapproves of any discipline being administered by the Church at any level. To do so would involve litigation and litigation could cost the Church dearly. She cannot afford to discipline any longer: the clergy will not permit it, otherwise their pocket will be hit.

Some evangelicals see a deeper malaise in the advent of women ministers. For them the Church ship is corrupt, rotten, loosing both its keel and its backbone, leaking like a sieve with dwindling congregations. In 1999 one in nine Anglican clergy was female and the numbers attending church services have continued to decline since 1993. One of the reasons given for the ordination of women was to bring the numbers back up.

The number of female ministers is set to rise inexorably. Women clergy will progress first to the level of rural dean, then to bishop, then to archbishop. The domino-effect is in progress. It is no longer just women but male clergy who are demanding the right of women to be bishops, and that on the same theological, social and pastoral grounds that admitted them into the ministry. At least they are being consistent. The only thing holding this back from happening, they suspect, is that there are no long-standing women candidates in the ministry to be considered ready to be ordained bishop. But their time will come. We hear noises from a few evangelicals that they have drawn the line in the sand at accepting women ministers but not rural deans. But some conservative-evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics have objected to this. “What right have they to draw another line in the sand?” they ask. “The Holy Spirit drew the line in the sand when he said through Paul: “Let your women keep silent in the churches, for it has not been permitted to them to speak, but to be submissive [or: make themselves submissive40], as also the Law teaches . . . . Let a woman learn in quietness in complete submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach, nor to exercise authority over a man, but [on the contrary] she is to [remain] in quietness” (1 Cor 14:33-34; 1 Tim 2:12).”

Once the line of women’s ordination had been overstepped and approved of by the Church of England’s General Synod, then it is inconsistent of those evangelicals who supported women’s ordination to prevent those who have overstepped the line to progress on up the ladder of authority and take their seat on the archbishop’s throne. This is the logic and ethics of sexual equality.

In conclusion, if the Church is to form stable Christian communities, as it takes the Gospel into all the world, then it must safeguard the building block of the family in its post-evangelistic phase. There is no point evangelising if there is not the follow-up care of those evangelised. If the family unit is founded on the Christian doctrine of Man’s headship and if men are encouraged to be head of their families and lead them in daily, family devotions, then the next generation can be secured for Christ. The children will grow up into Christ and have a father who is submissive to Christ in all things. The model of a submissive father is bound to have its effect on his family and in society. There is not much progress in winning souls on the front-line but losing them in the home.

The situation that has developed in the post-evangelised Western world is that there has been a crumbling of the headship structure due to a caricatured Gospel that preaches “sexual equality,” with the consequent denial of the headship of Man, and

40 The Majority Greek text reads ὑποτάσσεσθαι (pres. infin. mid.), a few older mss (SBA) read: ὑποτασσομένοις (3 pl. pres. imper. mid.). The Middle voice is in meaning much closer to the Active than to the Passive. It is something the women are to do, rather than something done to them by others.
consequently men are content not to take the lead, either in the home or in Church. Their inherited rights are stolen from them and they are left uncertain of their role. They become spineless. Their children grow up in an atmosphere that is dominated by non-Christian culture-values in a so-called “Christian country,” and this is mistakenly called a “loving Christian atmosphere” and there they are lost to Christ. We then have the sad situation where Christian parents are hoping that their grown up sons and daughters will be converted at university or after they have left the home and married.

The Church is like a bath. Missionaries and Christian organisations throughout the world have been converting millions to Christ over the centuries and they have been, and are, flooding into the Church, but the plug is missing and millions are pouring out at the other end—these millions are the offspring of Christian parents. If the Church had been able to stop the flow out of the Church the whole world would have been evangelised centuries ago. The plug is the family unit where the next generation must be won for Christ, otherwise time and effort will have to be expended to try and win this next generation after they have left the family unit. The Church must look once again to its God-ordained family structure, and realign itself with its creational and foundational doctrines.

One of the major causes of the loss of children of Christian parents has been the loss of the doctrine of Man’s headship. The blame for this must lie at the door of the Church leaders. With the rise of the feminist movement they became embarrassed over Christ’s teaching on headship and they did not face the challenge to this false teaching head-on. As a consequence they did nothing. This lack of leadership was transmitted downwards into the parishes and churches of the land where the ministers and vicars turned a blind eye to the heresy, and allowed themselves to be swept along by the campaign for “equal status for all.”

Another major cause for the loss of children of Christian parents has been the neglect of Christ’s command to Peter to “feed my lambs.” The church service was designed as a place where Christians, and especially Christian men, the family leaders, were to be built-up in their faith. Instead, this service has now been hijacked to become an “evangelistic service” to reach the unsaved—the goats, and the lambs are neglected. Their feeding time has been misused to preach to the stranger who walks into the service.

I have strong reservations about the use of the church service for evangelism. The reasons for this come from the context and specific wording of 1 Corinthians 14.

First, the context of this chapter is explicitly set “in the assembly / ecclesia” which is referred to nine times (cf. 14:4, 5, 12, 19, 23, [“come together” (in one place), 26], 28, 33, 34, 35). The context is of the “gathered out” community of God’s flock.

Second, the worship is spiritual, by spiritual persons, using spiritual gifts and means. Earlier in the Epistle Paul had shown how impossible it was for the natural man to understand the things of the Spirit of God because they are foolishness to him:

We have not received the Spirit of the world but the spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us . . . expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned” (2:12-14).

The “gathered out” community of God’s people met specifically (1) to continue the worship begun in Genesis 4:3—to offer up spiritual sacrifices well-pleasing to God, which has never been broken to this day; and (2) to use the spiritual gifts given to them by God to build up their faith (meaning knowledge and comradeship) in the true religion, and their Faith (meaning trust) in the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the promise of eternal life in His Son. That is the main function of their gathering together, it is not to evangelise their neighbours.

Third, Jesus was very concerned that His flock—His sheep and His lambs (young converts)—received Peter’s attention, “Feed my lambs . . . feed my sheep.” Jesus has set pastors (shepherds) in His Church whose specific task it is to feed His lambs and to protect them from being taken from Him through false shepherds and false teaching. These pastors were not to neglect the little, vulnerable ones, to go in search of the goats. Jesus gave that job
to Evangelists and others. If each man should remain within the calling Jesus has given him and do it to the best of his ability, then he will receive the Master’s “Well done!” However, if a pastor neglects his own specific calling to “tend the flock of God” over whom he has been made an overseer, and fails to build up the spiritual muscles of His disciples to discern truth from error, and loses the lambs, he will get no “Well done!” from the Master even if he has a successful “evangelistic career” behind him as a result of his neglect.

We cannot afford to neglect feeding the flock and, as I understand Paul, the purpose of the weekly gathering is primarily to bring the sheep, not the goats, together into one place, with the specific purpose of building up their faith. It was never designed to be a public evangelistic meeting. If we turn it into an “evangelistic meeting” we change the character of the meeting completely. It ceases to be a meeting designed solely for worship and for building up the flock.

Fourth, we learn from 1 Corinthians 14:23-25 that while the character of the weekly meeting is for the benefit of the flock (not the goats or the lost sheep) the meeting itself is not a strictly private one, that is, for believers only. “Unbelievers and ignorant persons” (14:24) may come in on their own initiative. (Note: they are not invited in.) The text suggests that as the believers carry out the exercise of their spiritual gifts they may be observed by outsiders, looking in on their worship, but who are distinctly not part of the worshipping community, and as they watch they make their own assessment of what the Christian religion is all about. If they see good order, and experience a profound sense of the presence of God, some may be convicted and worship God declaring, “God really is among you.” But it would be wrong, just because “outsiders” come in as spectators, to leave off the primary tasks of worshipping and of building up the flock, and use the occasion for an evangelistic address! That would be a misuse of its purpose. So, everything in it own time and place, otherwise we will create disorder. The evangelistic “address” should be incidental, in the sense that in the course of using its spiritual gifts to build up one another, the Church is witnessing to the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. What a way to witness to the world! Just by focusing attention on the purpose of the meeting, and not paying any attention to the unbelieving onlookers, leads to their conversion! It is because there is so little sense of His presence in our services that I suppose we have to compensate for this lack by giving the entire service over to evangelising the outsider among us. But what an indictment of our spirituality!

If the church service has an evangelistic thrust then it will be as an indirect result of Christians sticking to the two main purposes of their gathering (worship and edification). This is the only right way to evangelise outsiders who come into our church services. If, after the worship service is over, these outsiders wish to know more, then a meeting specifically designed for that purpose can be arranged. The evangelistic service should have no trapping of worship about it. Let its character be totally different from that of the Church service. It would be wrong to change the nature of the weekly meeting of all the male members, and use the sermon to evangelise the outsiders. That sermon must be reserved for the flock: it is their feeding time. It is their time to remind themselves of the doctrines and traditions that were handed down to them from the Apostles of Christ. Because that “reminding” time has been neglected, or rather hijacked for evangelism, the Church gradually lost it way. The believers (old and young) must not be deprived of their food, or neglected, and made to fend for themselves in some other way, such as home study groups.

The cause of the ineffectiveness in the Church’s evangelism is that it has misused the worship service for evangelism when it ought to have been used to build up the flock. Because of this misuse the flock is as weak as water and as woolly as a flock of sheep when it comes to discerning truth from error. What if the Church returned to a right use of the worship service, and God was so present among His people by His Spirit that they found themselves undergoing the same experience of the unbeliever in 1 Corinthians 14:23-25; “But if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all, and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, “God is really among you!” “ Will such a day come again in Christian services when the Christians themselves will involuntary fall down and exclaim: “God is in this place!”? The Church has moved a long way from its foundational doctrines and traditions.
that it is hard to see any means that would bring it back to its “first love.” In Part 4 (6.3) I have suggested one possible way to restore the honour of Christ in His Church.

Lastly, a profitable area for destroying Christ’s command to the men and women appearing before Him, as He has directed, is to use His own actions to do this. Christ’s attitude toward women was different from that of surrounding males because they did not have His Spirit living in them. Such males did not have a love-headship relationship with their womenfolk, but only a force-headship one, consequently there was bound to be a huge disparity between Christ’s relationship to women and theirs. This disparity is then exploited to do away with Jesus’ teaching on headship. So, for instance, we find constant references to the “revolutionary actions of Jesus” against the prevailing “headship” of man, and Jewish men are castigated for their low view of women and their high view of their masculinity and male leadership qualities. Example after example of how Jesus’ attitude toward women differed from other males is somehow thought in their minds to mean that Jesus strongly disapproved of what His Apostles preached in His name after He ascended to heaven. Paul, in particular, is singled out as the main perpetrator and defender of Man’s headship which Jesus was said to be totally against. All Jesus’ actions toward women are said to deny any headship relation between men and women in His new Kingdom.

While this misuse of Jesus’ actions to destroy Jesus’ teaching on Man’s headship is extremely common, those who believe that Scripture does not contradict Scripture will have no difficulty reconciling Jesus’ words with His works: He preached what He practised, and His Apostles faithfully reflected His doctrine in their writings.

Another obstacle against accepting the Bible as the basis for settling the issue of ordination for women is that because the Word of God came predominantly through the mind of male prophets and male priests the revelation it conveys is suspect because it maintains male government of the state and the family.

Michael Bruce replied: “But why, if this line of argument is to be pursued, stop here? Since our Lord was a man, should he not also be suspect also? . . . is not the real demand not just for the ordination of women, but for a new religion?”

For a typical “softly softly” feminist approach see Elizabeth Achtemeier’s work. She condemns the hard-feminists on the one hand and the New Testament on the other for the present denial of women’s rights, and hopes thereby to present a middle way. She rehearses the old red herring of Paul contradicting himself in 1 Corinthians 11:4 and 14:33-35 and resolves it by assuming that Paul is quoting other men (“you” in v. 36 is a masculine plural) and that he refutes their argument (given in v. 36) with scorn. The evidence from 1-2 Timothy and Titus cannot be evaded so easily, so a different tactic is employed here, namely, destroy its value as inspired Scripture:

First and Second Timothy and Titus, which are recognized by all but conservative scholars to be Pauline pseudepigrapha (written not by the apostle himself but by those who continue in his tradition), are very much local letters, and they give vivid descriptions of the difficulty that some local churches are having with some women (and men) in their congregations (see 1 Tim 1:3-7; 2:9; 5:6, 13-16; 2 Tim 3:1-9; 4:3-4; Titus 2:3-5; 3:9). It is clear that not only are some women engaging in scandalous behavior, thus discrediting the gospel, but that some of them, who were forbidden to be educated in the Torah in their homes, were being led astray by Gnostic heretics. It is little wonder therefore that the writers of these letters did not want such women teaching and prophesying in the church.

On the assumption of a Gnostic background to the Pastorals see Excursus 2.

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42 See Bruce Waltke’s excellent reply to this tactic in, “The Role of Women in the Bible,” CCRS 31 (no. 3, 1995) 29-40, esp. p. 31.


45 See 4.3.9 above for a reply.
Paul's letter to the Ephesians cannot be passed off as pseudepigrapha so a different tactic is needed to neutralise its teaching on man's headship there, namely, it is an intrusive gloss, not written by Paul himself:

Finally, Eph 5:21-33, again a portion of a letter written in the Pauline tradition, urges upon husband and wife mutual service of one another out of reverence for Christ (v. 21).

She has imported a new idea into the passage, namely, “mutual service.” This addition overlooks the fact that Paul commands the wife to obey her husband and, using the same verb, tells the slave to obey his/her master. All the household codes teach the same thing. Nowhere does Paul tell the master to obey his slave in “mutual service,” or the husband to obey his wife in “mutual service.” Unable to accept the entire letter as coming from Paul, Achtemeier invents the idea that a portion of the letter (the portion she objects to) is, in fact, a piece of pseudepigrapha which has been inadvertently slipped into the letter. There is no scholarly support for this fabricated piece of pseudepigrapha.

In conclusion, the phrase “sexual equality” contains a direct threat to the creation of mankind as “male” and “female” whom God made in His own image. God ordained that woman was made for man, not vice versa. Consequently Scripture teaches “sexual quality” not “sexual equality.” Sexual inequality results when males fail to live up to their creational potential and neglect their headship duties and responsibilities, and when females fail to accept the headship of their husbands or obey him out of love in everything (or if they get no love from him, then to go on obeying him out of love to the Lord Jesus who has called them to live submissively in such a loveless relationship, and for the sake of the Gospel).

Feminism is the greatest threat to the Christian woman’s relationship to Christ. She is being urged (serpent-speak) to depart from her preordained station to be Man’s helpmeet and to “go independent” of her husband (whether he is a Christian or not) in everything. The Christian woman is being pulled in all kinds of ways to insert her independence under the guise of “self-assertive” courses. The Christian woman should love her husband in such a beautiful, self-giving submission that her example will help her husband to see how he should give himself in a similar, self-giving submission to Christ, his Head, out of knowledge that he was preordained to do this, and this is his prime reason for having being created. Man was made for Christ, not vice versa; and woman was made for man, not vice versa. Disturb these creation orders and disorder follows.

The rise of feminism, or the assumption that men and women are equal in every respect, can be dated back to New Testament times. There is a statement in the Gospel of the Egyptians, preserved by Clement of Alexandria (Stromata 3.13.1), to the effect that: “When you tread on the garment of shame and when the two become one, the male with the female neither male nor female. . . .” Christian baptism became a transvestite ceremony in which the participants put off the old body so as to return to humanity’s original androgynous state. “Becoming one” refers to the androgy nous state, and “male with the female” refers to sexual abstinence. Indeed a kind of asexuality, symbolised by a form of Christian nudism, was highly valued in some early Gnostic literature (cf. Gospel of Thomas 21, 22, 37). The unveiling of women, which Paul denounces, would be an expression of this asexual state. All kind of perversions have been spawned by a misunderstanding of Galatians 3:38, such as an exaggerated “realised eschatology” that blurred the distinctions between the sexes.

Bruce Waltke has seen the danger of feminism to the institution of marriage:

Those who would urge married women to give priority to fulfilment in careers outside the home over against fulfilment in childbearing within the marriage

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structure—in my understanding of the biblical text—are not offering sound advice. . . . Humanity is grounded in being male and female, an immutably fixed, natural reality. It is my view that any form of feminism which, in a desire for freedom and power, depreciates this fundamental design is inconsistent with the biblical revelation. “Gracem” as Pope John Paul II noted in his remarks to Roman Catholic bishops, “never casts nature aside or cancels it out, but rather perfects it and ennobles it.

In the second creation account God gives Adam his bride and thereby institutes marriage, defining them now as husband and wife. By instituting marriage in the Garden of Eden, God represents marriage as an ideal and holy state, and act of worship (Heb 13:4). . . . Marriage is the only social institution that precedes the Fall, and the homes established through marriage provide the foundation stones for society.48

Another area of influence is the language used to refer to God.

God, who is over all, represents himself by masculine names and titles, not feminine. He identifies himself as Father, Son and Spirit, not Parent, Child and Spirit, nor Mother, Daughter and Spirit. Jesus taught his church to address God as “Father” (Luke 11:2) and to baptize nations “in the name of Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt 28:19). God’s titles are King, not Queen; Lord, not Mistress. God, not mortals, has the right to name himself. It is inexcusable hubris on the part of mortals to change the images by which the eternal God chooses to represent himself. We cannot change God’s name and titles without committing idolatry, for we will have re-imaged him in a way other than the metaphors and the incarnation by which he revealed himself. His representations and incarnation are inseparable from his being. Moreover, in contrast to male imagery, one cannot introduce feminine imagery without introducing sexual connotations. For example, in Hebrew grammar the masculine form in inclusivistic (i.e., with reference to animate beings it can be used of male and female), but the feminine form is marked (i.e., with reference to animate beings only the female is in view).49

END OF SECTION