INTRODUCTION

If the reader was expecting to find a full and unbiased exegetical treatment of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 showing why the traditional understanding is invalid he is going to be sadly disappointed. Very little is said about 1 Timothy 2:11 within the context of 2:11-15. The work is heavily weighted on background information in that it deliberately sets out to find “another interpretation” (i.e., another background scenario) in the belief that Paul permitted women to rule over men. The authors find another way to exegete 1 Timothy 2:12 by discovering two new meanings for two words. In place of “to rule” they discovered a new meaning using a late Renaissance work which gives the meaning “to represent oneself as the author, originator, or source of something” (102). And in place of “quietness” they discovered a new meaning “conformity [to a standard]” (103).

Armed with these two new meanings they produce a new translation of 1 Timothy 2:12 which reads: “I do not permit woman to teach nor to represent herself as originator of man but she is to be in conformity [with the Scriptures] or that she keeps it a secret. For Adam was created first, then Eve” (103). The rest of the book is an attempt to provide a background that will support this new reading of the text.

There are a number of serious objections to their methods and conclusion.

LINGUISTIC CHANGES

On the semantic issue there are two problems they need to overcome, because if the two new meanings are deemed to be forced on the text then the considerable labour expended in providing a new background is an irrelevance.

First, how firm is the evidence for these new meanings? And, second, if these two new meanings are found in Greek literature does any of it go back to the time of Paul?

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Even if the two linguistic questions could be answered satisfactorily there are a further four serious objections to the new historical background that they have constructed because the scenario that the Kroegers have constructed envisages a Gnostic-like sect which taught that Eve was created first and Adam second. It is conjectured that this false teaching was being taught by women.

First, why should this false teaching be taught only by women? Were there no men who taught this idea? This theory needs to blame only the women for propagating this false teaching because only women are commanded to keep silent in 1 Timothy 2:11.
Second, even if it could be proved that there was a false Gnostic doctrine that taught that Eve was created before Adam, and that it was taught only by women, is there any evidence that this doctrine goes back to Paul’s day? This the Kroegers acknowledge they cannot prove. Third, even if it could be proved that there was such a false Gnostic doctrine around in Paul’s day (as they have reconstructed it) can it be proved that in the present context Paul was specifically condemning this particular false teaching. In other words, it is one thing to prove that a particular heresy was contemporary with 1 Timothy but quite another to say that it is explicitly condemned in 1 Timothy 2:12.

Fourth, can it be proved that the traditional method of exegeting Scripture according to normal lexicographical studies does not give a coherent explanation for 2:13-14 when it is set alongside the other creation-theology texts, such as 1 Corinthians 11:7-8 and 14:34-35? Another major defect in Kroeger’s presentation is the treatment of 1 Timothy 2:11-14 in isolation from Paul’s other creation theology texts and his teaching on the headship of Man. When the three creation-theology texts are examined together then a different theological background emerges to that presented in Kroeger’s work.

OVERSTATEMENT AND UNDERSTATEMENT

Apart from these two major areas of concern (linguistic and background) there is also the tendency to overstate their case by understating the facts that would weaken their thesis, leading to many half-truths. These are dealt with in part 3 below. To mention just one example here as typical of their approach, when Priscilla is mentioned by the Kroegers she is never mentioned alongside her husband who is kept out of sight, giving a misleading impression.

We shall look in detail at the three areas that are said to support this new theory.

1. LINGUISTIC CHANGES

1.1. NEW MEANINGS

Central to Kroeger’s thesis is the need to find new meanings for the terms “quietness” and “to rule” in 1 Timothy 2:12. While these two words remain unchanged they are an obstacle, because his object is to find a new meaning of the text which would fit in with his belief that Paul sanctioned women speaking in the church and taking positions of leadership, on a par with men, in the Church. As the text stands it does not permit this to happen. Indeed, it flatly denies woman any place of leadership of men. The object of Kroegers’ changes is to obtain a translation which will permit women the exact same status as men. To achieve this 1 Timothy 2:12 is translated in such a way as would make the text give the content of the forbidden teaching, namely, that woman was responsible for the creation of man. To achieve this two pivotal words must be given new meanings.

But how firm is the evidence for these new meanings? Changing the meaning of two words, however, would alone not be sufficient to give Kroeger the desired “new interpretation” that he is seeking because of the presence of a second negative. Consequently a new application of a syntactical feature is “discovered” to remove an unwanted negative.

1.1.1. REDUNDANT NEGATIVE

At first Kroeger tentatively suggests that, “First Timothy 2:12 can perhaps be construed as an indirect statement with a redundant negative so that the emphasis is upon the content that women are forbidden to teach rather than upon their teaching or administrative function” (37). But by the time he has concluded his thesis his “can perhaps” has become a certainty.

Comment: Kroeger’s discussion on oujde is confused (83). He first of all argued that it is a “redundant negative” (37) and, apparently, almost convinced a classicist to become a Christian as a result! But in his definitive translation he includes it (see 103). If we are to delete negatives as high-handedly as Kroeger does here then Scripture can be made to say the opposite. Paul said, “I do not permit a woman to teach,” Kroeger arbitrarily deletes the negative and in effect permits the text to say by implication, “I do permit a woman to teach”! Note, on page 38 he identifies himself with “evangelical scholarship.” He says he is prepared to examine the work of other scholars but, significantly, he avoided any contrary view to his own such as George Knight’s thorough study of the verb authentein (see 1.1.3 and Appx G below).
If we examine the text of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 the Greek text reads as follows:

2:11 ἐν γυνῇ ἵππωρα μαθαινέω ἐν πάσῃ ὑποταγῇ· 2:12 διδάσκειν δὲ γυναικὶ οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω, οὐδὲ αὐθεντεῖν αὐτὸς, ἀλλ' εἶναι ἐν ἴππωρᾳ. 2:13 Ἄδει γὰρ πρώτος ἐπλάϑη, εἶτα Ἐσώ. 2:14 καὶ Ἀδει ὄν νηπατηθῇ, ή δὲ γυνὴ ἐξαπατηθεῖσα ἐν παραβάσεως γέγονεν. 2:15 σωθῆται δὲ διὰ τῆς τεκνογονίας, εάν μείνωσι ἐν πίστει καὶ ἀγάπῃ καὶ ἀγαθασμῷ μετὰ σωφροσύνης.

2.11 “A woman in quietness² let her learn in all submissiveness, for I do not permit a woman to teach or [oūde] to exert authority over a man,⁴ but to be quiet.”

Comment: According to Kroeger we are to regard oūde as “a redundant negative” (37). The parallels he gives on p. 239 n. 1, namely, Lk 23:53; Mk 5:3 and 14:25, demonstrate the opposite point he is making, because not one of the triple negatives is redundant. He as much as admits this when he acknowledges, “This is impossible English but perfectly respectable Greek. These so-called redundant negatives often occur after verbs of prohibition, hindering, and denying.” The reader is left confused by this acknowledgement. On the one hand, the unsuspecting or ill-informed reader (and this book is aimed at the ordinary Christian) is being offered the idea that a second or third negative is redundant and this permits Kroeger to delete oude in 1 Timothy 2:12. But on the other hand, he is being told that the second or third negative is not redundant but “respectable Greek.” In that case it is not a redundant negative. Which is it? On p. 189 the reader is told that, “When the second negative is a compound (such as oude) it serves to strengthen the first (ou or ouk). Examples occur at Luke 4:2; 20:40; and Romans 13:8.” In fact Luke 4:2 and 20:40 do not have two negatives because oūde is an accusative noun, singular neuter. Likewise in Rom 13:8 Μὴ ἐχθρὸν μὴ ἐχθρὸν ὑφείλετε means, “To no one [noun dat. sg. masc. neut.] nothing [noun acc. sg. neut.] we owe.” Here the two so-called negatives are in fact nouns. These three examples were put forward as parallels to 1 Timothy 2:12 where the second negative was said to strengthen the first one. These three examples fail to do that. He has failed to produce a single example which has the same syntax as 1 Timothy 2:12 where the second negative strengthens the first one. Greek scholars are familiar with the construction oυκ . . . oυδὲ “not . . . or,” where two distinct activities are denied/prohibited and the main verb accompanies both prohibitions. Examples which parallel the construction in 1 Timothy 2:12 are: 1 Maccabees 15:14, “and he permitted no one to leave or (oude) to enter it;” Isaiah 42:24, “and they would not walk in his ways or (oude) listen to his law;” and Sirach 18:6, “it is not possible to diminish or (oude) to increase them.”

Where two infinitives are negated in this way they normally follow the main verb. In the case of 1 Timothy 2:12, however, the prohibited activity (“to teach”) is placed before the main verb (“I do not permit”) followed by the second negated infinitive (“or to rule a man”). If the two infinitives followed the main verb then the text would read: 2:12 γυναικὶ δὲ οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω διδάσκειν οὐδὲ αὐθεντεῖν αὐτὸς, ἀλλ' εἶναι ἐν ἴππωρᾳ. If the Greek syntax was in this order it would read, “I do not permit a woman to teach or to rule a man, but to be submissive.” This might have allowed Kroeger to interpret oūde according to the second function on p. 83, i.e., oūde would be used here, “To specify with greater clarity the meaning of one word or phrase by conjoining it with another word or phrase. Romans 3:10 reads, “There is no one righteous, not even (oude) one.” Oude emphasizes the total absence of a righteous human being . . . .”

But unfortunately for Kroeger’s case the two infinitives do not come together in the way his theory would require them. Indeed, he uses an illustration which couples two infinitives together (which 1 Tim 2:12 does not) to clinch his argument (as he thought). The illustration he uses is, “For instance, if we should say, ‘I forbid a woman to teach or to discuss differential calculus with a man,’ it becomes clear that the subject in which she should not give instruction is higher mathematics.” First, he has changed “differential calculus” to “higher mathematics” in the second half of what is intended to be a logical statement. If we substitute “differential calculus” for “higher mathematics” we will restore the logical test, thus: “For instance, if we should say, ‘I forbid a

² In 1 Cor 14:34 she is told to be silent in the church which is the chief form that submissiveness would take in that context. ‘Quiet’ here refers to a disposition which, in a church context, would be manifested in keeping silent and unobtrusive both in noise and presence.

woman to teach or to discuss differential calculus with a man, it becomes clear that the subject in which she should not give instruction is differential calculus.”

I may be wrong but the logic of the “not . . . or” is that she is not to teach a man, and also, or in particular, she is not to discuss differential calculus with a man. “Teach” is a broader activity than “to discuss differential calculus.” It is possible not to discuss differential calculus with a man and yet to teach him other things.

We have given three examples which have a syntax close to 1 Timothy 2:12 and in each case the two infinitive actions are negated (i.e., “and he permitted no one to leave or enter it” (1 Macc 15:14); “It is not possible to diminish or increase them” (Sir 18:6). “For there is no unrighteousness with the Lord our God, nor is there with him respect of persons, nor is there with him to take bribes”). In each instance the 

oude indicates that the main verb should be repeated before the second infinitive. 1 Macc 15:14 reads, “and he permitted no one to leave nor [did he permit any one] to enter it;” and Sir 18:6 would read, “It is not possible to diminish nor [is it possible] to increase them.” Apart from the fact that in 1 Timothy 2:12 the first infinitive comes before the main verb these two examples are good parallels to 1 Timothy 2:12, “I do not permit a woman to teach nor [do I permit her] to rule a man.” The 

oude indicates that the main verb is implied before the second infinitive. An instance of two positive infinitives dependent on the same main verb is, “And the [king] permitted him both to serve as High Priest and [he permitted him] to rule the nation” (4 Macc 4:17).

Kroeger’s prime example, Luke 18:13, does not support his thesis, because the text reads, “But the tax-collector standing afar off had no desire, not even [he desired] to lift up his eyes to heaven.” The tax-collector is a picture of total dejection which is brought out by the double negated action.

What Kroeger has conveniently overlooked is that—

“ouj negates the indicative, mhv the remaining moods including the infinitive and participle. Individual words or phrases are always negated by ouj . . . connected with this is the preference for ouj in contrasting statements (e.g., . . . 1 Pet 3:3 . . . ).” Also, “Negatives with the infinitive. Mhv is used throughout . . . .”

The result of this rule is that if Kroeger wanted to negate the infinitive and read “not to rule over man” as the content of what she is not to teach, then he would need to alter the second negative 

oude to mhv. There is no textual evidence for this alteration. The form of the second negative shows that the main verb is to be repeated after it.

If we were to write out what Paul says in vv. 11-12 in full then it would read as follows:

A woman in quietness I do not permit a woman to teach nor [do I permit her] to rule a man but to be in quietness

Comment: Kroeger wants the Greek to read:

Let a woman learn in silence with all submission [p. 75]. I do not permit a woman to teach that she is the originator of man but she is to be in conformity [with the Scriptures] [or that she keeps it a secret]. For Adam was created first, then Eve [pp. 189, 191].

The omission of the second negative in his translation is a violation of Greek syntax. The reason for this forced translation is his premise that, “1 Timothy 2:11-15 is not a decree of timeless and universal restriction and punishment but a corrective: a specific direction as to

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what women should not teach and why” (p. 23). Note the use of “punishment” to describe the “good order” that is required in the Church.

Kroeger gives five translations of 1 Timothy 2:12 (pp. 79, 103, 189, 191, 192).

**The first translation reads (79):**
“To teach, on the contrary, to a woman I do not grant permission, and not authentein but to be in silence.” Note the omission of “man” in this translation, but also the retention of the second “not” which he had argued was “redundant.”

**The second translation (103):**
“I do not allow a woman to teach nor to proclaim herself as originator of man but she is to be in conformity [with the Scriptures] [or that she keeps it a secret.] For Adam was created first, then Eve.” Two activities are prohibited here (she is not to teach and she is not to proclaim herself the originator of man) which Kroeger claims is in accordance with Greek syntax, but this is not the final translation that Kroeger is moving toward. His method is to change only one element in the sentence at a time because to introduce three changes all at once would raise suspicions and defeat his object. Here he lets the second negative stand in the translation for the moment, but he has introduced the idea of the content of her teaching, namely, “to proclaim herself the originator of man.” That is the main purpose of his half-way translation.

**The third translation (189):**
“I do not allow a woman to teach nor to proclaim herself author of man” (cf. p. 103).

**The fourth translation (191):**
“I do not permit a woman to teach that she is the originator of man but she is to be in conformity [with the Scriptures] [or that she keeps it a secret]. For Adam was created first, then Eve.” Here he has arrived at the translation he requires in order to remove Paul’s command as it appears in all other translations. He justifies this translation on the grounds that “oude can introduce an infinitive of indirect discourse and that the subject need not be repeated.” He gives no illustrations of this grammatical rule. See p. 192, where another version reads: “I absolutely do not allow a woman to teach [someone] to maintain that she is the author of a man.”

**The fifth translation (203):**
“I forbid a woman to slay a man.”

Comment: There is confusion here. It is not clear whether his translation on p. 103 or on p. 189 is his final “correct” translation. If we take the wording on page 103 as his definitive translation it reads, “I do not allow a woman to teach nor to proclaim herself as originator of man but she is to be in conformity [with the Scriptures] [or that she keeps it a secret.] For Adam was created first, then Eve” (emphasis mine). Here he does not omit the “redundant negative,” but instead introduces a paraphrase in place of the word authentein, namely: “to proclaim herself as originator.” He provides no known context (apart from here) in Greek literature of Paul’s time where authentein has this meaning. The word has been carefully examined in Greek literature by George W. Knight and this meaning is not listed anywhere in his work.⁷

1.1.2. QUIETNESS

Kroeger claims, “The Greek word for silence has at least five different meanings in the New Testament in particular and in the Greek religion as a whole” (37).

Comment: But when Kroeger has the opportunity to set out the evidence at a crucial juncture he fails to do so, as here, and expects the unsuspecting reader who is unfamiliar with the grammatical issues involved to accept his statements as Gospel just because he says so. A second peculiarity is the use of “conformity [with the Scriptures] [or that she keeps it a secret]” to translate “quietness.” Again there is no known context in which the meaning “conformity” occurs in biblical or classical literature. The word occurs four times in the NT and is translated either by “silence” (Acts 22:2; 1 Tim 2:11, 12) or “quietness” (2 Thess 3:12). If we substitute “conformity” in 2 Thessalonians 3:12 we get: “and such we command and

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⁶ This meaning has now been seriously questioned by David K. Huttar, as it rests on a reconstructed Greek text, “AYQENTEN in the Aeschylus Scholium,” JETS 44 (2001) 615-625.

⁷ See Leland E. Wilshire, “The TLG Computer and Further Reference to AYQENTEN in 1 Timothy 2.12,” NTS 34 (1988) 120-34; and George W. Knight III, “AYQENTEN in reference to Women in 1 Timothy 2:12,” NTS 30 (1984) 143-57. This title is mentioned (inaccurately) on p. 229 n 1, but appears to have been dismissed with the remark: “For views not supportive of women’s full participation in ministry see George W. Knight . . . .”
exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ, that with **conformity [or in secret]** working, their own bread they may eat.”

Acts 22:2, “and they having heard that in the Hebrew dialect he was speaking to them, gave the more **conformity [or, secret]**, and he says . . . .” In neither context does Kroeger’s proposed new meaning make sense.

There is an oddity in translating “quietness” by “keeps it a secret” in 1 Timothy 2:12, because the substance of the “secret” is heretical, hence it is extremely doubtful if Paul would tell women to keep it a secret.

On page 103 Kroeger indulges in a semantic sleight-of-hand. He claims:

The word *hesuchia*, however, can also mean “peace” or “harmony” (see also 1 Thess 4:11; 2 Thess 3:12; 1 Tim 2:2). This, we believe, is the preferred translation here for the term. Just as the writer asked that women learn in conformity to the Word of God, he now asks that they express their views in harmony with the revelation of the Scriptures: in this case, that women did not create man nor did Eve bring spiritual illumination to Adam.

Comment: First, the standard Greek dictionaries and lexicons do not give “conformity” as a meaning for *hesuchia*. The word occurs seven times in the canonical books of the OT and a further five times in the pseudepigrapha literature of the LXX. The *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Lust, 1992) gives “rest, quiet” in 1 Chr 4:40 [“the land before them was vast and there was peace [εἰρήνη] and quietness”]; 22:9 [“his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace [εἰρήνη] and quietness to Israel in his days”]; Ezk 38:11 [“I will come upon them that are at ease and in tranquillity [εὖ τῇ ἡσυχίᾳ], and dwelling in peace [ἐν ἑσυχίᾳ]; Jb 34:29 [“And he (God) will give quietness, and who will condemn?”]; “silence, stillness” in Prv 7:9 [“when there happens to be the stillness of the night”]; “to be at rest, to keep quiet, to be inactive” in Jos 5:8 [“when they had been circumcised they rested”]; “to keep quiet” in Prv 11:12 [“A man lacking understanding sneers at citizens: but a sensible man is quiet”].

Note that “peace” [εἰρήνη] and “quietness” [ἡσυχία] are not the same thing as they translate µ/λυ; and µ/ζευ, respectively in 1 Chr 22:9 and 4:40.

The five apocryphal texts are: Esdras 4:17; Sirach 28:16; 1 Macc 9:25; 2 Macc 12:2; 2 Macc 14:4 (see Appendix D).

Note again the use of “we believe” which is an admission that the research has not been done. Here Kroeger selects an unattested, non-lexicon meaning, namely “conformity,” in place of the common meaning “quietness.”

The sleight-of-hand comes in when Kroeger changes the meaning of the noun *hesuchia* from “quietness” to “peace, harmony” in contexts away from 1 Timothy 2:12, but by the time he uses it in 1 Timothy 2:12, it has undergone a subtle change to *conformity* (which is a different concept) and he then applies it to 2:12.

If we apply his new meaning of *conformity* to 2:11 it would read, “Let a woman learn in conformity in all submission.” Which does not make sense. In conformity to what? Liddell & Scott lists the meanings of ἡσυχίος as follows: (1) still, quiet, at rest, opposite to moving, talking, labouring, etc. (2) quiet, gentle, of character. There is no listing of *conformity* as a lexical meaning for this word. Again the meaning *conformity* has been plucked out of the air in order to arrive at “another interpretation,” which is the goal of Kroeger’s thesis.

1.1.3. **AUTHENTEIN “TO RULE”**

The meaning of *αὐθεντέω* must come from the verbal category not from the noun category. This was the fundamental error in Kroeger’s approach (see pp. 97-98). For the possible meaning of this word see Appendix G.

Kroeger gives many unusual meanings for the noun forms but many of these are not listed in other reputable studies of the word using the TLG database. On wonders why the evidence for each of the rare meanings is suppressed when it is so crucial to the heart of his thesis. The following are some of the meanings he finds for the noun form.

“usurpation of power”

On pages 88-90 he gives the meaning “usurpation of power” (i.e., to seize possession of something unlawfully) from two sixth century AD legal documents. This is all to no avail since we require a synchronic study of the word set in the first century AD, not the sixth century.

On p. 90 Kroeger uses the terms “vulgar” and “polite” as if they meant “crude/rude” as opposed to “polite.” This is mischievous. The term “vulgar” refers to the koine Greek, the commonly used Greek of the Hellenistic era (323 BC—AD 500). It was this Greek in which the New Testament was written, as opposed to the Greek used by classical Attic writers which
was deemed to be more “correct” by the purists of the “Atticist Movement” which arose at the end of the first century BC. Jerome’s Latin version was called the Vulgar Version, not that it used vulgar language but that it was the “common” language of the people.

“domination”

After noting that the concept of “domination” could apply to 1 Timothy 2:12 he dismisses it on the grounds that it stands in direct variance to other Pauline material (91). The material is not stated. On his suggestion that Phoebe was ordained by Paul himself to the post of deaconess (91) see section 4.5.2. Likewise for his suggestion that Junia was a woman apostle, see section 4.5.3. Another reason for rejecting “domination” is, “The Scriptures themselves, as well as the vigorous leadership provided by the women of Asia Minor in the first few centuries of the church, cause us to question the traditional interpretation” (92). The claim of “vigorous leadership” has not been proved so it cannot be used as an argument here.

Another reason is, “A prohibition against women assuming positions of authority is inconsistent with the strong evidence demonstrating that in the early Christian communities women were most certainly engaged in leadership” (92). Here again the “strong evidence” is lacking, so the statement cannot be used as an argument here.

Another argument is taken from the secular world where it is argued that women took leadership roles (92). This is irrelevant if Paul’s teaching on headship precludes women taking any position of authority over man. In any case he acknowledges, “Nevertheless there is no evidence that women took an ascendant role over the men in civil life” (92).

“women dominate males, fornicate freely and do men’s work”

Kroeger claims to find a meaning for *aujēntēi*n* which implied that women engaged in men’s work, fornicate freely without arousing their husbands’ jealousy, and dominate males. Again, we lack the evidence. We are expected to accept his word for it. It would appear from the list of authors who are claimed to support this meaning that none of them were contemporaries of Paul.

“ritual castration”

Actual castration was said to be practised by males who wanted to be thought of as females. Again it would appear that what little evidence there is does not belong to the time of Paul. No actual text is quoted using the verb *aujēntēwo* so this meaning cannot be admitted as an argument here.

“sex and murder”

All the examples are of the noun *authentes* which does not tell us what the infinitive means (95).

“mingling sex and death”

Again all the examples are of the noun *authentes* which does not tell us what the infinitive means (95).

What strikes one reading through Kroeger’s list of meanings is how few examples he gives. Also the vast majority of these meanings are taken from the noun *authentes*. We have pointed out how precarious it is to determine the meaning of a verb from its noun forms and vice versa. If one wants to know the meaning of an infinitive then one must look up all the examples of infinitives, not nouns.

Another mistake Kroeger makes is that he takes the meaning of the noun form and then gives it a verbal meaning without presenting a single example of the verb having that meaning. Thus he argues, “By the second century B.C.E. *authentes* was being used to denote an originator or instigator” (99) but he gives no verb with this meaning. The verb is given the meaning, “to take something in hand or to take the initiative in a given situation” (101), and “a doer, one that puts [something] in motion” (102). Then comes the crucial information (which he states he took from lexicographers of the late Renaissance era) that the noun or verb (he does not state which) can mean “to declare oneself the author or source of anything”

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8 L. E. Wilshire, *op. cit.*, p. 121.
(praebeo me auctorem) (102). Now does this mean “to declare oneself the doer,” or, “to declare oneself the source of something”? These are two different meanings and it is not clear if these meanings are attached to the noun or the verb form. Once again note the reluctance to lay before the scholarly world the actual quotations from the lexicographers. This ensures that his work cannot be scrutinized to see if it carries the meaning he claims it carries.

In any case to quote a meaning which occurs nowhere in classical literature, if one is to go by the work of others on this verb, does his cause no service. Indeed, to depend on a meaning which occurs over 1300 years after the time 1 Timothy was written is like asking scholars to believe that recently coined English words occurred over 1300 years ago in English even though we have no written evidence for them!

Kroeger projects back 1300 years a meaning found in the late Renaissance era into the text of 1 Timothy 2:12 and translates it as, “nor to proclaim herself author of man” (103). Here he jumps from the noun, meaning “originator, source,” to the verbal meaning “to declare oneself author,” or “to represent herself as originator of man” (103). Again, the crucial evidence that the verb itself carries this meaning is omitted. One suspects that he has taken the verbal idea from the noun. If so, then this invalidates the exercise.

1.1.4. DOES PAUL GIVEN THE CONTENT OF “TO TEACH”? 

Kroeger claims:

We might render the verse literally, “To teach, on the contrary, to a woman I do not grant permission, and not authentein but to be in silence.” This verse contains three infinitives: to teach, authentein, and to be. The separation of “to teach” from the other infinitives is most interesting and may indicate that one or both of these two infinitives deal with the content of a woman’s teaching. For example, a woman at neighboring Thyatira taught “the deep things of Satan.” She instructed Christ’s servants “to fornicate and to eat things sacrificed to idols” (Rev 2:20). The two infinitives in this verse are used with didaskein, the same word for teaching as in 1 Timothy 2:12. Just as we are told in Revelation 2:20 what the woman was teaching, we may in 1 Timothy 2:12 be afforded a definition of what it is that a woman should not teach.” (79-80)

Comment: First, let us examine his parallel example in Revelation 2:20. The text reads, “But I have against you a few things: that you are tolerating the woman Jezebel, who is calling (pres. part. act. sg. nom. fem.) herself a prophetess, and she teaches, and she leads astray my servants to commit fornication, and to eat idol-sacrifices.” Jezebel is said to do two things: 1. she teaches (pres. indic. act.) and 2. she leads astray (pres. ind. act.) my servants to commit fornication (aor 1 infin.), and to eat (aor 2 infin. act.) idol-sacrifices.

Note that the two infinitives do not follow the verb “teach” but the verb “leads astray.” In other words the two infinitives fill out in what way she leads Christ’s servants astray, namely she leads them to commit fornication and to eat sacrifices offered to idols. Therefore Kroeger’s statement that “to commit fornication and to eat idol-sacrifices” form the content of Jezebel’s teaching is not a true parallel to 1 Timothy 2:12, because the verb teaching takes second place to the following verb leads astray whose practical consequences are spelled out in the two following infinitives: she leads them to commit fornication and to eat sacrifices offered to idols.

No doubt Jezebel led them astray through her teaching, but the infinitives go with the verb she leads them astray and not directly with the first verb. So we cannot grammatically say that the two infinitives give the contents of her teaching, rather they give the consequences of her teaching. She teaches falsely and as a result they commit fornication and eat idol-sacrifices. There is no suggestion that the topics she teaches are “commit fornication” and “eat idol-sacrifices” as though these were the contents of her teaching.

Second, when we examine the word order of 1 Timothy 2:12 we do not find the close connection that we observe in Revelation 2:20 between the teaching/leading astray and the following infinitives, because the two infinitives in 1 Timothy 2:12 are separated by the contrastive “but.” The word order is, “to teach, now—to a woman—not I am permitting, neither [am I permitting her] to rule a man, but to be in quietness, for Adam first was formed, then Eve.”

Kroeger also shows a preference for fringe meanings in order to evade the common meaning. He does this twice in 1 Timothy 2:12. The most glaring example is authentein which becomes “to proclaim [oneself] as originator.” Note that Kroeger, in order to give some semblance of legitimacy to his choice of meaning, puts “to begin something” in no. 1 position on p. 84, whereas Liddell & Scott give only two meaning for the word: (1) to have full power or authority over, and (2) to commit a murder,” with no other meanings listed. For the noun form Liddell &

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9 This meaning has now been seriously questioned by David K. Huttar, as it rests on a reconstructed Greek text, “AUTHENTEIN in the Aeschylus Scholium,” JETS 44 (2001) 615-625.
Scott lists the main meanings as follows: (1) one who does anything with his own hand, an actual murderer; (2) a perpetrator of any act; (3) an absolute master, autocrat, commander. Kroeger’s meaning of originator is not listed as a possibility (see p. 100 where Kroeger attempts to impose his unique meaning on the text. In all the biblical examples he gives of the infinitive, as distinct from its Classical usage, the meaning is to rule or judge, see bottom of p. 101). In any case, even if originator was a legitimate meaning for the word his translation should read, “I do not allow a woman to teach or to originate a man . . .” which does not make sense. Because his preferred meaning made nonsense he was forced to impose a new concept on a simple infinitive, namely, to proclaim herself as originator of man.

In conclusion we are forced to ask the question: Why are two words (“quietness” and “to rule”) in 1 Timothy 2:12 given meanings which are not recorded as lexical meanings in the standard Greek dictionaries and lexicons? If unattested meanings have to be imposed on the text in order to arrive at “another interpretation” one must question not only the legitimacy of the exercise itself but also its outcome. Why is “another interpretation” being sought for when the practice of the Early Church and the witness of all the Early Church Fathers follows the normal reading of the Greek text? He himself acknowledges as much on p. 90.

1.1.5. “TO TEACH, ON THE CONTRARY, . . .”

The beginning of Kroeger’s translation reads: “To teach, on the contrary, . . .”

**Comment:** This translation does not make sense, because Paul is not making any contrast between what precedes and what follows. Greek has the well-known construction μεν . . . δὲ: “on the one hand . . . and on the other hand . . .”, but that is not in use here.

Verses 11-12 contain a single thought which begins and ends with the exhortation to the woman to be “in quietness,” that is, to learn from her male teachers in a submissive manner (which will include silence, cf. 1 Cor 14:34). The theological reason for this exhortation is then given in vv. 13-14. Consequently the translation “on the contrary” can have no place in this construction, because in v. 11 the submission that Paul commands in v.11a is made total in the statement of 11b, “in all submission.” This is nothing short of a demand for absolute submission. As if this strong statement were not sufficient or clear in itself, he adds, by the use of δὲ two specific activities that she is not permitted to perform: she cannot teach and she cannot rule men. He then, using the contrastive, ἀλλὰ “but rather,” returns to his opening thought that she is to be “in quietness,” i.e., in total submission to man her head. The repetition of the requirement for a submissive attitude to be shown to men (their heads) at the beginning of v. 11 and the end of v. 12 sets the context for what comes in between them. The emphasis throughout the two verses is on total submissiveness expressing itself in (a) silence (cf. 1 Cor 14:34) and (b) a quiet disposition (1 Timothy 2:11-12). In relation to spiritual instruction she is to look to man for it. She is to be careful not to reverse this headship order and seek to teach him or to rule him. The theological basis for this relationship between men and women is nature (gender) not nurture, and Man’s headship not “sexual equality.”

We can conclude that Kroeger’s translation of δὲ by “on the contrary” is illogical in this context. Here, in v. 12, it has the force of a mild “for,” spelling out (in a negative list) the kinds of activities which are in keeping with a submissive attitude. The two activities of teaching and ruling are ruled by Paul to be incompatible with one who is in total submission to the male teacher and ruler. The counter to teacher is taught; and the counter to ruler is ruled, and women cannot be both teacher and taught, or ruler and ruled in relation to their husbands.

Just as man is to show a totally submissive attitude to Jesus his Head and Teacher, in all things; so likewise, women are to adopt the same submissive attitude toward her head—man—in all things.

Also, in his translation he conveniently omitted the word “man” as the object of authentein. The way 1 Timothy 2:11-14 has been translated (see above) is also the way all of the Early Church Fathers without exception (who have commented on the passage) understood it. For almost 2000 years this is how the Church understood the Greek. How is it that it is only at the end of the twentieth century that “an unexpected construction” is discovered which, coincidentally, yields an interpretation that destroys the biblical teaching on the headship of man?

Kroeger (80) draws on some passages which he claims illustrates the use of another infinitive with the infinitive “to teach.” Whether his illustrations are true or false are beside the point. Grammatically the infinitive “to teach” can stand on its own and does not require a further infinitive to accompany it on every occasion. To claim, as he appears to do here, that the infinitive “to teach” must always be accompanied by a further infinitive is false. If he conceives that “to teach” is not always followed by another infinite then each sentence must be
examined in its own right, and therefore it is an irrelevance whether “to teach” is followed by another infinitive or not.\(^{10}\) If, on the one hand, Kroeger wanted Paul to say, “I am not permitting a woman to teach to rule a man,” (note the omission of the second negative) where the infinitive expression “to rule a man” could conceivably be the content of her teaching, then a different Greek sentence would be necessary to reflect this, such as: 2:12 \(\text{διδάσκειν} \ \text{ἄνδρῳ} \ \text{οὐκ \ ἐπιτρέπω}\) \(\text{ἀδελφέων} \ \text{ἄνδρὸς}.\) This would require omitting \(\text{οὐδὲ}\) which is not what Paul has written. There is no textual evidence for omitting \(\text{οὐδὲ}\) and this is fatal both to his translation and his reconstruction of the supposed background to this verse.

If, on the other hand, Paul wanted to say, “I do not permit a woman to teach, or to rule a man, but rather to be submissive,” then the present word order is sufficient. It is interesting that the verb prohibiting the actions of the two infinitives is placed between them, as though to focus attention on each of them separately.

Kroeger argues:

If we were to understand the use of \(\text{διδάσκειν}\) as a prohibition against all women instructing men in any manner, we would find difficulties with other materials in the Pastoral. First, Titus 2:3 says that older women should be “teachers of what is excellent.” While their instruction certainly was to include young women (Titus 2:4-5), it was not necessarily limited only to women. Secondly, Paul writes in 2 Timothy 2:2, “The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful persons who will be able to teach others also.” Here the word for “persons” is \(\text{ἀνθρώπος}\), which is used to designate persons of either sex. Far from prohibiting them from teaching, it appears to be a strong exhortation that responsible women should make the proclamation of the truth a very high priority! Those of either sex who are able to teach hereby receive a summons to make known the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ. (81)

Comment: First, Kroeger is careless in his reading of the context of the texts he uses. In every case (except Tit 2:3, see below) the texts are addressed to men, not to women. That is their original setting and the original setting includes a culture in which women did not speak in public or teach men. He is reading the texts from within his twentieth-century cultural viewpoint. This applies to his quotations from Colossians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 14:3, 26, 31, all of which are addressed to men.

Second, he does not appear to be aware that in advocating women teaching men in the Church that he is thereby destroying the doctrine of Man’s headship in 1 Corinthians 11:3. Third, he appears to be unaware that 1 Corinthians 11:8-9; 14:34; and 1 Timothy 2:13-14 are all based on Paul’s creation theology. By concentrating solely on one text—1 Timothy 2:12 to the exclusion of all other relevant texts—he has failed to understand Paul’s holistic view of the love-headship relation between men and women.

With regard to Tit 2:3 there is no problem. Titus and Timothy were to teach the whole church, including the women, who in their turn would teach the young women (\(\text{σύνέργει} \ \text{ζώνα} \ \text{not} \ \text{διδάσκω}, \ \text{Tit} 2:4-5\)). With regard to 2 Timothy 2:2 there is no problem. If \(\text{ἀνθρώπος}\) includes men and women, then Timothy was to teach both men and women, who in their turn will teach those in the sphere in which God has called them to live out their lives. Women will teach women, and men will teach other men and women (their wives), according to the outworking of the doctrine of man’s headship. He does not provide an example where \(\text{ἀνθρώπος}\) refers to women on their own.

On page 83 Kroeger follows a strange linguistic logic. He appears to believe that where a word is used in a specific and limited situation in some places then it thereby cannot be used in a universal sense (but see his admission on p. 226 n 6). Consequently he attempts to limit Paul’s use of the verb “I permit” to a particular situation and deny it has a permanent value for all time.

Kroeger claims, “...a number of other Pauline passages support the concept of women sharing instruction with men as well as vice versa. We must therefore consider whether a specific sort of teaching is prohibited, rather than all teaching of any kind.” (82)

Comment: First, Kroeger’s premise that women have as much right to teach men as vice versa led him to the conclusion that there must be “another interpretation” of 1 Timothy 2:12 which would harmonise with his premise. Unfortunately for his theology the premise was wrong. Second, the initial premise was wrong because none of the Scriptures he brings forward supports the premise. What he has conveniently ignored are those Scriptures that establish...

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\(^{10}\) If we examine his illustrations we see some carelessness in his reading of the text. The first illustration is 1 Tim 1:3-4, but this should read: “...according as I did charge you to remain in Ephesus—I going on to Macedonia—that you might charge certain not to teach any other thing, nor to give heed to fables ...” He appears to have overlooked the verb “charge” and the charge contains two negated activities (1) not to teach any other thing, and (2) not to give heed to fables, etc. The two infinitives relate back to the verb “charge” and they are two distinct, though closely related, activities.
the headship of Man. With these Scriptures out of sight he appeared to find texts which supported his premise. An understanding of Paul’s teaching on headship and his creation theology would have put him on the right track to understand the mind of Paul.

1.2. DATE OF LITERATURE

If Kroeger’s two meanings are found in Greek literature do we have any literature containing these new meanings which goes back to the time of Paul?

Comment: Kroeger makes no attempt to answer this extremely important question. Why not? So precarious is Kroeger’s base that he will not discuss the sources, dates or origins of Gnosticism (66, cf. 119). Why? If he can show that Gnostic ideas about Eve go back to Paul’s time then this would make his theory more plausible. One suspects that he has seen some serious obstacles and has shied away from doing the research (or publishing it) in case it weakens, not strengthens, his case. His case is so tenuous that by page 65 he recognises it as only as an hypothesis. It is not even a probability any longer.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. WHAT WAS THE HERESY?

In Gnostic teaching all matter was evil, so Yahweh was an evil person (or thing?) for having created it. Yahweh is not the supreme God. He comes below another higher, perfect God. The serpent was good in helping Adam and Eve to shake off the deception perpetrated on them by the Creator and Eve was the mediator who brought true knowledge to the human race. Cain and Esau were heroes while Abel richly deserved his fate. Its “upside-downing” of the Bible is its characteristic feature. Compare 1 Timothy 6:20 “oppositions of so-called knowledge.” (60)

Comment: Even if Kroeger could prove that a Gnostic teaching existed in Paul’s day which reversed the biblical position that Adam was formed first, then Eve, and taught that Eve was formed first, then Adam, he would still have difficulty with the Greek syntax of 1 Timothy 2:12 to get it into the text. However, Kroeger makes no attempt to establish the possibility that the “upside-down” teaching on the creation order of male and female did exist in Paul’s day. If it did not, then his case falls to the ground. If it did, where is the evidence? For some unknown reason he decided not to establish the possibility that the reversed order did exist. This is a fatal weakness in his approach. On that kind of approach we might read into 1 Timothy 2:12 any number of possible scenarios which would alter the meaning of the Greek as it stands. By walking away from researching the proof required to make his hypothesis plausible he has made his case suspect. He is hoping the uninformed reader will accept his theory uncritically without the proof.

So Kroeger has two major problems with his proposed new translation of 1 Tim 2:12. First, he must provide scholarship with the proof that (a) an upside-down teaching on the order of Adam and Eve existed, and (b) that it existed in Paul’s day. If he defaults on either of these points his case becomes one of mere conjecture. The present work omits the proof that scholars would expect to find in a work purporting to find the original meaning of this important text.

Second, he has to prove (a) that Paul in 1 Timothy 2:12 is directly combating this upside-down teaching, and (b) that the traditional reading of the text is not possible grammatically, and (c) that Paul’s use of Gen 2-3 in 2:13-14 is not part of a larger, world-view that Paul’s theology reveals in which the headship of Man explains the positive and negative statements about woman in 2:11-12. In other words, 1 Timothy 2:12 must not be isolated from similar statements in 1 Cor 11:8-9 and 14:34, or viewed apart from the cosmological principle set out in 1 Cor 11:3.

Nowhere in his work does Kroeger deny the grammatical legitimacy of the traditional translation of 1 Timothy 2:11-12, so that translation is left still standing at the end of his work. He has not been able to shift it or abolish it, presumably because it is the most natural way to read the Greek. In the case of his translation, by contrast, at every point it utilises the extremes of grammatical or semantic possibilities in order to arrive at “another interpretation.” His approach is, “Is there an unexpected construction which might give another interpretation?” (37). He looks for “an unexpected construction” in order to arrive at “another interpretation.” This is an admission that the traditional translation is the “normal” and that his is the “abnormal” approach to translating ordinary Greek.
Another admission is that 1 Timothy 2:12 “can perhaps be construed as an indirect statement with a redundant negative.” The “can perhaps” is an admission that it “can perhaps not” be an indirect statement here. Not content with a “perhaps” his translation also requires the second negative to be deleted as “redundant.” How many more grammatical concessions does he require in order to arrive at his conclusion? It reminds one of the child’s game where you arrive at a different word by changing one letter at a time. Given enough “goes” all the original letters are soon replaced resulting in a completely new word. Kroeger, by deleting a negative here and replacing a direct by an indirect construction there, and changing the meanings of words, arrives at “another interpretation.”

2.2. DID THE HERESY EXIST IN PAUL’S DAY?

Timothy was in Ephesus when he received Paul’s first letter. Kroeger’s theory requires Paul to condemn a female teacher in the church in Ephesus who is teaching Gnostic heresy (59).

Comment: In Acts 20:29 there is no mention of any females “speaking perverse things” but only males. The text reads, “for I know this, that there shall enter in, after my departing, grievous wolves unto you, not sparing the flock, and of your own selves [spoken to the elders of the Ephesian church] there shall arise men 

Kroeger tries to make out a case that the young widows are Gnostics (62).

Quote: “The false teachers incite people to withstand the truth of Moses, just as did Jannes and Jambres.” (63)

Comment: This is careless reading of the text. The text (2 Tim 3:8) actually says, “and, even as Jannes and Jambres stood against Moses, so also these do stand against the truth, men corrupted in mind . . . .”. The false teachers are not against Moses but against the truth.

2.3. DID PAUL REFUTE THE HERESY?

Quote: “The author of the Pastorals . . . cites the biblical account in order to repudiate the legendary figures and all of the spurious lore that had grown up around them. This, we shall argue, is precisely what is happening in 1 Timothy 2:13-14, where the writer is dealing with contemporary lore ascribed to Eve.” (64)

Comment: First, Kroeger attributes a false motive to the writer of the Pastorals who did not cite the names of Jannes and Jambres in order to repudiate contemporary lore about them. The text makes it plain that Paul is referring to the historical confrontation at the time of the Exodus and draws a parallel between that confrontation and a confrontation that would take place in the future—“And know this that in the last days there shall come perilous times . . . .” (2 Tim 3:1). In other words, Paul still has the historical Exodus confrontation in mind when he concludes the outcome in 3:9, “but they shall not advance any further, for their folly shall be manifest to all, as theirs [Jannes & Jambres] also did become.”

Second, since there is no contemporary lore concerning Jannes & Jambres in 3:1-9 (which is based on Exodus 7:10ff.), and since 2:13-14 is also based on two historical events (creation of Adam in Gen 2:7 followed by Eve’s in 2:21-22; deception of Eve in 3:6a followed by Adam’s sin in 3:6b) the supposed contemporary lore ascribed to Eve (in Gnostic literature) is an imposition on the text.

Kroeger argued:

Our hypothesis will deal with the possibility that the false teachers were indeed Gnostics, proto-Gnostics, or some group with a mythology remarkably like that of the Gnostics. There is within the Pastorals abundant evidence that Gnosticism was in a formative stage, though the hotly debated strands of theology were surely less developed than that known to us from second-century writings. We maintain that those involved with the false doctrines included both men and women, and that the women were involved in telling stories which contradicted the Scriptures.” (65)

Comment: First, if men and women were teaching this false doctrine (i.e., that Eve was formed first, then Adam) why is Paul selective in telling only the women not to teach it? In 1 Timothy 1:3; 1:6-7 (mascl. pl. vb following); 1:19-20; 4:1-3; and 6:3-5 (cf. 2 Tim 1:15; 2:17; 3:1-10, 13; 4:3-4, 14), the false teachers are all males, as one would expect, because Timothy is told to convey Paul’s teaching to “the brothers” (4:6) which suggests that a Christian church/synagogue existed in Ephesus. The meeting-place of the brothers is called “the house of God, which is an assembly of the living God” (3:15). Kroeger requires false women teachers and he finds them in 1 Timothy 4:7; 5:11-13; 2 Timothy 3:6-7; and Tit 1:11. The last two are irrelevant because it is men who are leading women astray. The first is doubtful and the second has nothing to do with teaching false doctrine.
Second, Kroeger’s hypothesis requires that the particular false doctrine Paul condemns is the one which asserts that Eve, not Adam, was formed first. Where is this doctrine found in Gnostic writings? How early is the evidence for it?

Third, the reason Paul gives for the woman learning in a submissive disposition (quietness), refraining from teaching and from ruling a man, is based on the order of creation: Adam was created first, then Eve, and she was created specifically for him. This explains why Paul draws attention to the priority of Adam’s existence. The woman is to learn from her husband in quietness. 1 Cor 14:34 supplements what is said here. For there she is commanded to be silent and if she has any questions she is to ask these of her husband in the privacy of her own home, not in public. The two injunctions go together and both are based on the Law, and on the Headship of Man. There is no need to seek an alternative explanation for Paul’s use of Gen 2-3 than the one he gives, which is in harmony with his holistic view of the relations between men and women in the church.

2.4. WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE TRADITIONAL VIEW?

It is interesting that Kroeger refuses or omits to examine the traditional exegesis of the text, so that it is left standing at the end of his research. Consequently, the reader is left wondering why he should accept a novel interpretation based on novel methods of exegesis. The only argument levelled against the traditional interpretation is that Kroeger does not like it! He then indulges in a misrepresentation of that view with the sole object of holding it up to ridicule. By avoiding all contact with Paul’s teaching on headship the object was to focus attention on the practical implications of headship without stating the theological reasons why those implications are there in the first place.

Ultimately Kroeger’s appeal is to the fallen nature of men and women with the constant underlying refrain: “it is not fair, is it?” It is not fair to deny women their freedom, their liberty, their freewill, etc. By playing on these themes the unsuspecting reader is drawn in to agree with him.

3. OVERSTATING AND UNDERSTATING

Kroeger’s preface deliberately sets out to denigrate the traditional view by a series of heart-rendering stories about women being deprived of or denied their God-given “freedom.” For example, “She was a member of an active but conservative church that severely restricted the scope of her Christian activities” (11).

Comment: This accusation against evangelical exegesis reminds one of the serpent’s innuendo to Eve that God was restricting her by not allowing her to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. It is typical of those who oppose the biblical teaching on the distinct spheres and functions that God has given to men and women to represent His wisdom as evil. Woman has been created to fulfil a specific role in God’s world. If she neglects that God-appointed role then she fails in His purpose for her life. It is a sure indication of someone who is not in tune with the Spirit of God’s Word when s/he talks of God restricting women’s freedom to a sphere that is not the same as man’s. The use of “liberation language” is also another indication that God’s Word is under attack.

Kroeger claims that 1 Timothy 2:12 “is used to disbar women from proclaiming the Good News.” (11)

Comment: This is deceptive. Kroeger’s method is to win sympathy for his view by misrepresenting the biblical teaching on the ministry of women. He either is ignorant of, or undervalues, God’s two distinct purposes in the creation of man and woman. He appears to be coming from a feminist interpretation of Scripture where men and women are deemed to be identical, except at the physical level, all other supposed differences being the result of nurture not nature. This theological viewpoint permeates his work at every level. He suppresses the traditional explanation (i.e., Man’s headship), and thereby wins over the uninformed reader to oppose anyone who prevents a woman from preaching the Gospel. He has very little time for the conservative evangelical position (he claims to be a conservative evangelical) that Scripture does not permit a woman to teach or rule a man, neither does it permit her to speak in church. Kroeger does not accept this teaching because it opposes his feminist viewpoint.

Kroeger uses his Preface to present one unrepresentative interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:11-12, as “a straw man,” and then holding it up to ridicule, he gains the sympathy of unwary readers.

11 Books combating feminist theology are S. Goldberg, The Inevitability of Patriarchy (New York: Morrow, 1974); C. N. Jacklin, The Psychology of Sex Differences (Stanford University, 1974).
He thinks that by presenting only one unrepresentative view, and knocking it down that there will be no alternative to his view. This is not a fair way to handle God’s Word. Certainly no British evangelical scholar would accept his opening illustration as a valid application of the teaching in 1 Timothy 2:11-12. But by parading it as the representative interpretation he manipulates the impact he wants to achieve.

His second illustration is intended to represent the “conservative church” as an uncaring, unchristian, organisation. The third and fourth illustrations, like the first, are intended to bring ridicule on the “conservative church.”

The use of these opening four illustrations are clearly intended to parody the conservative evangelical position which he is no doubt aware of. By presenting a caricature view as the only alternative to his view the intention is to contrast his view with a false view. That is dishonest writing. He indulges in more of it on pp. 23-24. It is not surprising to find the serpent’s suggestion that the woman has been “restricted” by God, or man, or both, or by conservative evangelicals in Kroeger’s work. The crusade to “liberate” her has a good ring about it, but all it means is that unregenerate persons want to do as they please rather than submit to the will of the Lord Jesus Christ, their Head. If Scripture reveals that the Christian woman has her own appointed sphere and that she should fill that sphere first before she thinks of neglecting it to work in man’s allotted sphere, then it should be followed.

On page 12 Kroeger misrepresents Paul’s teaching by insinuating that his (and Paul’s modern day followers) whole doctrine of woman’s ministry hinges on one verb in 1 Timothy 2:12. In fact Paul’s doctrine on the relation between man and woman goes back to 1 Corinthians 11:3, where he states the revelation which he received of the three headships in creation. Paul’s doctrine is grounded in creation theology (see 1 Cor 11:8-9; 1 Tim 2:13-14), not just one verb or one verse.

Kroeger then turns Jesus’ request to the women to tell His disciples that He had risen from the dead into a mandate for women to preach to men. There is a touch of unreality about this kind of exegesis. Surely in all civilisations men can speak to their friends (male and female) in public! So what was special or peculiar when Jesus spoke to the women and asked them to convey a message to his disciples? Kroeger uses the most ordinary every-day encounters between Jesus and women to promote them as teachers of men! Even Jesus Himself ignores the women who bore witness to his resurrection and refers only to the male witnesses. Mark 16:14, “And he reproached their unbelief and stiffness of heart, because they believed not the ones having seen him having been raised.” Here “the ones” is masculine plural, as is the aorist middle participle “having seen him,” which is a reference to the two on the road to Emmaus and Peter. These were Jesus’ three male witnesses. The apostles might have been excused if all the witnesses had been women.

Quote: “The spiritual leadership of Hulda, Deborah, Miriam, Priscilla, Phoebe, and others is denigrated or denied.” (12)
Comment: Another typical misrepresentation of the conservative treatment of these persons. I know of no conservative scholar who would denigrate the work of these godly women. If Kroeger can misrepresent and twist the views of other good men out of all recognition in just the first two pages of his book one should not be surprised to find his handling of Scripture to be any less twisted.

Quote: “Yet it was Priscilla who “instructed Apollos more perfectly in the way of the Lord” (Acts 18:26) at Ephesus.” (12)
Comment: To someone who did not know any better Kroeger would seem to be giving a fair impression of what Acts 18:26 says (see p. 17 where he repeats the same statement). However, he is being economical with the facts. Acts 18:26 records that it was Aquila and Priscilla—husband and wife—who instructed Apollos, and not just Priscilla on her own. Aquila and Priscilla first encountered Apollos in the synagogue where men and women did not mix, so it would have been Aquila’s place to invite Apollos to his home with a view to instructing him more fully in the Christian faith.

Much is made of the fact that Apollos was taken into the home of Aquila and Priscilla.12 Note that this activity did not happen in church, but that does not stop many from applying it to the ecclesia. It is worth pointing out that Priscilla did not explain the Gospel on her own. We have no example where a woman taught a man on her own in her own home. Would this have been possible or seemly in that culture?

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

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12 Priscilla’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 18:26, probably by assimilation to 18:18).
discussing spiritual matters with male guests? You would think to read Kroeger 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 things learned in the weekly services by her husband (1 Cor 14:35), 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 extrapolate a principle from what happened in her home to what she can do in church.

Quote: “it was the judge and prophet Deborah who led the children of Israel into battle.” (12)

Comment: What Kroeger does not point out is that in the time of Deborah the nation was in an apostate condition (Jud 4:1, “they did evil in the sight of Yahweh”) and that Deborah was God’s prophet to deliver His message to Barak who was so cowardly that he said he would not go unless Deborah went with him! That is the low state that mankind fell to at that time. If the leading general has to hide behind the skirt of a woman what must the footsoldiers have been like?! Because of Barak’s cowardly behaviour Yahweh decided to use another woman (Jael) to put him to shame. On a point of accuracy (not a trait in Kroeger’s work) Deborah did not lead Israel out to battle. She said to Barak: “I will certainly go with you” (Jud 4:9). Another touch of ignominy occurs in 5:1 where it reads, “And Deborah sings—also Barak son of Abinoam—on that day . . .” as if he is accompanying her, not the other way round. In times of apostasy God takes away many leaders and replaces them with others who are not natural leaders. When God threatened to chastise Jerusalem and Judah 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.e., all male leaders] . . . . I will make boys their officials; mere children will govern them . . . . The young will rise up against the old . . . . Youth oppresses my people, women rule over them.

When women ruled over God’s people it was a sure sign that He had taken away their leaders. So it was no credit to Israel to glory in its female rulers, or to be led by them at any level.

Quote: “Hulda triggered the great revival under King Josiah.” (13)

Comment: Once again we have an illustration of Kroeger’s ignorance of the facts. Anything that looks like support for his cause is pounced upon and becomes “evidence” to support his pre-determined conclusions that there is no distinction between men and women at any level (except the physical).

Hulda triggered no “great revival” because Josiah’s revival began ten years before he sent five men to consult her. The facts are: when Josiah was eight years old (in 632 BC) he began to seek the Lord (2 Chr 34:3). When he was twelve years old (in 628 BC) he began a national reformation in which he broke all the images and pagan shrines throughout the land. It was as a result of his reforms that six years later, when the Temple was being refurbished, the Book of the Law was found in the Temple, and it was only then that Hulda was consulted. 13

So much for Hulda’s fictitious “revival.”

So far we have seen that Kroeger adopts at times a facile approach to the biblical text, and he has a definite feminist axe to grind with no credible hermeneutic behind it, such as reading the text against its original cultural and political background. Every text is examined with a view to moulding it to fit into his pre-determined conclusions.

Kroeger quotes Psalm 68:11 as if a host of women went out to preach the Gospel. At least that is how he sees its present day application (“Such passages call women to a ministry of proclamation”)(13).

Comment: This exegesis fails to read the text in its original cultural setting. The Psalm has a military setting and just as the women and girls went out to greet David and Saul returning from the slaying of Goliath and the Philistines, with timbrels and songs, so here, in this Psalm, when the Lord’s word goes forth and accomplishes its purpose, the female proclaimers go out in praise of its accomplishment. Nothing could be more natural. What the women do belongs to Israel’s military culture. But in those times women went together, sang together, and danced together. There were no mixed gatherings or mixed choirs.

Isaiah 40:9 is translated by Kroeger: “O woman who is herald of good tidings to Zion, lift up your voice with strength, O woman who is herald of good tidings to Jerusalem, lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, “Behold your God” (13).”

Comment: This is a mistranslation of the Hebrew which reads:

\[13\] Jeremiah was called to be a prophet in 626 BC and was only in his fifth year (so he may have been the same age as Josiah—22 years) when the Book of the Law was found.
On a high mountain get you [fem. sg.] up, O Zion, proclaiming tidings.
Lift up with power your [fem. sg.] voice, O Jerusalem, proclaiming tidings.
The parallelism shows that “proclaiming tidings” goes with “Zion” and “Jerusalem.” There is no word for “woman” in the Hebrew text.
Kroeger appears not to be aware of the fact that cities are regarded as female in Hebrew, and so the grammatical gender is feminine. Zion and Jerusalem are being addressed because they are grammatically feminine.
It is obvious from Kroeger’s choice of translation that he has little knowledge of the Hebrew language. But his ignorance shows up his biased approach to any text that remotely looks like supporting his cause. We have examined all the evidence he has produced on pp. 12-13 which he claims “call women to a ministry of proclamation” and not a single text stands up in his favour.

Micah 6:4 is translated by Kroeger as: “Have I not sent before thee Moses and Aaron and Miriam to lead thee?” (13)
Comment: First, the bold words are not in the Hebrew. He has added these words on his own authority. He repeats this mistranslation on page 33.
Second, the Hebrew is not in the form of a question but is a statement of fact. It reads:
For I brought you up from the land of Egypt.
And from the house of servants I ransomed you.
And I sent before you Moses, Aaron and Miriam.
Yahweh is recounting what He did in the past which should have called forth Israel’s thanks, but He is puzzled by their attitude of indifference toward Him, hence His question in v. 3, “O my people, what have I done to you? And what? have I wearied you? Testify against me.” He not only sent Moses (male) and Miriam (female) but Isaiah (male), Deborah (female), Jeremiah (male), and Hulda (female), and many, many other prophets, male and female, “daily rising up and sending” them, but they paid no attention to them or to Him.
Third, the interpretation Kroeger puts on Micah 6:4 is intended to elevate Miriam to the position of a leader of Israel. The implication being that she led the men through the Red Sea. It should be noted, however, that Miriam, unlike Moses, was not a leader of men. The only leading she did was to lead the women in song (Exod. 15:20). Miriam, unlike Aaron, was not a High Priest. Aaron was not a leader in the same sense that Moses was. He had a different function; he was the High Priest. Yahweh is not stating that all three were leaders, because they clearly were not, but that He sent them together to use their different gifts to keep them from going astray. In other words God provided Israel with good leaders (Moses to lead men, Miriam to lead women out in song; and Aaron to lead their worship) and still they went astray from Him. Micah 6:4 testifies to diversity not duplication of gifts; not three joint rulers, or triumvirate, but three different types of leaders with different spheres. If Miriam had any gift of leadership it was as a choir-mistress leading the women in singing a song her brother Moses composed. The only time she sought to elevate herself into a position of dominance over Moses Yahweh spat in her face metaphorically (Num 12:14).
Kroeger asserts: “This verse [Micah 6:4] causes us to ponder whether women are called to silence or service.”
Comment: The answer is not an either/or, but both. Women are called to service within the sphere God has allotted them; and called to silence in the sphere they are not allotted. Consequently for Kroeger to use Micah 6:4 to support Miriam’s leadership of men is mischievous, and in the end destroys the headship of Man that God instituted. The Christian is warned in Romans 13:1, “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.” If God will punish men who do not obey human rulers, how much more severe will He be with those who defy His own institution of the headship of Man? Woman is not to rule Man in the Church. She is to show her submission by her silence; and she is to show her love by her service of good works. It is not a case of either/or, but of showing both at the appropriate time and place—“silence in Church, service in the Community.”
It is clear from the preface that the traditional, or conservative evangelical, interpretation has been rejected out of hand as contradicting Galatians 3:28. The tone is clearly disdainful of any interpretation which does not fit his treatment of one text—1 Timothy 2:12.

Moving on from the Preface to his Introduction we find more of the same approach and rejection of the conservative-evangelical position, but also a new element: overstating some of the evidence and understating or ignoring those facts that would undermine or weaken his position.
Quote: “Priscilla instructed the learned Apollos, Lois and Eunice taught Timothy, and Phoebe is named as an overseer and a deacon in the church at Cenchrea.” (17)

Comment: There are three half-truths here. (1) I have dealt with Priscilla above, but the inference he wants to make here is that the “learned” Apollos has Priscilla to thank for his learning. On p. 55 he makes the claim, “Apollos argued with great power that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, and thereafter the early church called Priscilla a ‘teacher of teachers.’” There is no source given for this statement. See section 5 “The Early Church” which deals with the Early Church fathers’ views of women’s ministry.

(2) There is no direct evidence that Lois and Eunice taught Timothy but we can infer from 2 Timothy 3:15 that his parents taught him from infancy the contents of the Scriptures.14 All we are told in 2 Timothy 1:5 is that Paul remembers Timothy’s “unfeigned faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded that also in you.” The faith spoken of here is not something you can pass on to someone (i.e., knowledge of the faith in the sense of believing and trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation). Paul claims that Timothy is his “child in the faith” because he begot him through his preaching. No doubt Eunice and Timothy’s father, like all good parents, taught their children stories from the Old Testament, but that is only what every Christian parent should do today.

But what Kroeger wants to infer from his statement is that Timothy owed his later, mature position and standing to a woman teacher (82). We have before shown that Priscilla and Aquila, in their own home, i.e., privately, shared their knowledge with Apollos. Where Priscilla could not teach, or pass on, or share, her knowledge was in the public Church meeting. Her headship relation to her husband (with its attendant submission as manifested in public silence) takes precedent over her opportunity to share her gifts in the public Church service. (3) There are two points of disagreement with Kroeger’s description of Phoebe. (a) Phoebe is called a “deacon.” I have shown above (see 4.5 and 4.1) that when set against the culture of the times women would never have been in a position of authority over men. So that hermeneutically it would be a mistake to transfer and transplant twentieth-century culture back into her time. The following is an abstract from (4.5 above):

Although this particular work (Acts 6:1-6) among the women was given to men and not to women, this could have been because the situation required firm leadership. It is likely that there was other work among the women which would not be appropriate for a man to do, so although we have only one reference to a woman being called a deacon/servant (διακόνος from σлικόνος) in Romans 16:1, namely, Phoebe, no doubt certain tasks would be instinctively felt to be “woman’s work,” even if the women concerned are not given any title or official appointment.

In the New Testament church the only teaching ministry done by women was done by older women (the feminine form of Elder is used of any elderly woman) who were expected to pass on to younger women/wives their wisdom on how to run their homes and to be subject to their husbands. It is interesting that the teaching regarding submission is given to the older women, and it is their responsibility to iron out difficulties that the younger wives may have in this area. Of course, this is the natural right of older women in most nations, tribes, and societies. It is a non-institutional convention which is here being strengthened in the New Covenant society. Their ministry is based on sex discrimination (in the good sense of that word) and so it is not to the whole church, though if ever there was an office of Deaconess these older women would surely qualify for it.

Regarding the translation “deaconess” in Romans 16:1 it should be pointed out that the Greek word means a servant (even a slave) of any kind. In the Greek there is only one form of the word which is masculine (there is no feminine form) which is applied to male and female servants alike. Neither is the word always a technical term. It has the ordinary meaning of “servant” as can be seen in Mark 10:43: “whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant (or deacon).” In this sense every Christian—male and female—is a servant/deacon of Christ. It is not clear whether Phoebe was a servant in this sense, or in a technical sense (as in Philippians 1:1 and 1 Timothy 3:8, 12?). The term “deaconess” is a loaded translation here. Since there is considerable doubt as to the exact nature of her work, it would be best to err on the side of truth and call her “a servant of the church in Cenchreae.”

14 Timothy’s father was a non-Jew (Acts 16:1, 3), and it would appear, according to a single Greek manuscript (MS 25), that Eunice, his mother, was a widow at the time Paul took him to be his emissary (see T. B. Allworthy, Women in the Apostolic Church [Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, 1917], p. 54). The reference to being taught from a babe (βρέφειας) in 2 Tim 3:15 may refer to the little parchment rolls used for teaching children. ‘From their consciousness,’ says Josephus (Antiq., ii. 18), or, as Philo puts it, ‘from their swaddling clothes’ (Legatio ad Caium, 31).

15 The following translations prefer ‘servant’: AV (1611), RV (1881), ASV (1901), Weymouth (1913), NAS (1960), Smith-Goodspeed (1931), King James II (1971), Ferrar Fenton (1883-), and C.I. Scofield (1909).

Robert Young’s Literal Translation (1862) has ‘ministrant’. J.B. Rotherham (1872) has ‘minister,’ as does NRSV mg (1989).
Given this background it is not surprising to discover that according to two early Christian documents, the Didascalia (3rd cent. AD) and the Apostolic Constitutions (late 4th cent. AD) the function of the deaconess was to assist the clergy in the baptising of women, ministering to the women who were poor and sick, instructors of women catechumens, and in general intermediaries between the deacon or the bishop and the women of the congregation. The office died out by and large in the 11th century, but was revived in 1836 in the Lutheran Church. Phoebe would, most likely, have been engaged in work that had to do with the women in the church in Cenchrea, given the culture of the time. But the tenor of the passage might suggest that she was a mature woman who was doing a service to the whole church (even if it was specifically for the benefit of the women, because there were matters to do with females that male deacons could not do). The text is silent regarding the nature of her work, and maybe we should be too, and not use this brief mention of her to hang all our modern ideas about the function of deacons on.

We need to distinguish between descriptive and prescriptive roles for women in Paul’s epistles. The study of the descriptive should be controlled by an analysis of the prescriptive teaching of Paul on the subject of women’s role in the church. Paul established clear parameters (which he already found in the Hebrew Scriptures) for women’s roles in the church. The mention of only five women is purely fortuitous or accidental (he knew many more women, and no doubt many more women helped him), but Paul’s norms regarding women’s roles in the church are foundational, and thus much more important. We would expect Paul to abide by his own principles, or rather “the commandment of the Lord” (1 Cor 14:37).

Before we can talk about these women being in “leadership” or “authority” roles we should first of all define these terms in the light of Paul’s use of them. To avoid Paul’s world-view of the relationship between men and women, and focus solely on five names, about whom we know so little, will lead to a distortion of Paul’s teaching and eventually annul it if the descriptive is allowed to dominate the prescriptive. The way the descriptive data is used by those who object to Paul’s prescriptions gives a false impression that women occupied the same positions as men in every respect in Paul’s churches. Paul is then pictured as contradicting his own teaching. But Paul was confident he had the mind of Christ in this matter, so there can be no contradiction between what he preached and what he practised. To argue otherwise is to undermine the authority of the New Testament Scriptures.

(b) Kroeger calls Phoebe an “overseer.”

Comment: Now an overseer is another word for a bishop/elder. In Acts 20:17 Paul called for the elders of the church in Ephesus and told them, “Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers [ἐπιστολιν; RV, bishops], to feed the church of God.” To call Phoebe a bishop/overseer appointed by the Holy Spirit is a mistake, never mind being a distortion of the doctrine of Man’s headship. Phoebe is called a προστάτης in Rom 16:2. It occurs only here in the New Testament. Given the Greek culture of the time, where respectable women did not normally appear alone in public (she usually got her maid to do all the out-of-doors jobs for her, such as going to the market), or hold public office, or speak in any public assembly of citizens, a woman’s sphere of life revolved around the household. It is in this connection that the significance of the word should be sought, and not as that word would be used of a man’s sphere of influence which was mainly outside the home.

It would be a hermeneutical mistake to look up a Greek dictionary and apply a function that would be culturally acceptable for a man to fulfil but which would not have been possible for a woman to fulfil, and apply it to Phoebe. The masculine form of the word is προστάτης and it has a wide range of meanings such as (1) a chief of a party in democratic Greek states, president, ruler, where in some Greek states it was actually a title. It also has another set of meanings such as (2) one who stands before and protects, a protector, guard, champion, used espec.


For the history of the office of deaconess see The Ministry of Women. A Report by a Committee appointed by His Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, with Appendices and Fifteen Collotype Illustrations (London: SPCK, 1919).

See 4.5.2. for a full treatment of the same topic.
of certain gods as Apollo. The word occurs only five times in the LXX and always of high-ranking civil servants. (1 Chr 27:31, overseers of David’s economic wealth [sheep, cattle, farms, vineyards, labourers, and his treasures]; 1 Chr 29:6, overseers of the work on the proposed Temple; 2 Chr 8:10, overseers of the non-Israelite labourers on Solomon’s Temple; 2 Chr 24:11 (bis), the king’s officers and the High Priest’s officer. A woman could not occupy these offices. (3) In Athens it was the name given to a citizen, a patron who took care of emigrants or aliens in a foreign city, or a resident alien who had to pay taxes but enjoyed no civic rights.

There is a separate feminine form (προστάτις) which is used of Phoebe which would suggest that out of all the masculine “occupations” noted above it is the third meaning that would most readily apply to her in this context, because Paul’s use of the word implies that she took care “of many and of myself also.” She was a patron, a generous-hearted lady, who looked after the unfortunates. In 1 Timothy 5:10 it was expected of mature widows that they “had entertained strangers, . . . saints” feet she washed, . . . those in tribulation she relieved, . . . every good work she followed after.” This probably sums up Phoebe’s work as a “deacon.” So looking after travelling Christians (evangelists, apostles and their co-workers) was customary work for aged women. So Paul, as a traveller, would have had first-hand knowledge of Phoebe’s kindness in Cenchrea, hence his desire to “pay her back” by asking his friends in Rome to take good care of her physical needs when she arrived. To interpret the word to mean that Phoebe was “a ruler of many and of me [Paul] also” would be inconsistent with 1 Timothy 2:11 where Paul teaches that a woman is not to rule a man. We must not only consult a Greek dictionary, but a Greek dictionary of culture, if we are to make a proper match in a given context, as we have shown above.

We must expect that Paul would always speak and act in a consistent manner with his teaching, and in particular that, “the head of woman is man.” Understanding his theology will often help us to determine how his vocabulary is to be defined in situations which involve relations between men and women. The term prostatis “patron” is a good example. Phoebe was not an “overseer” or bishop because such an office would be incompatible with her gender: only males could be overseers.

Quote: “Eve as a “secondary” creation . . . is based upon her subsequent formation from the side of man. If being created first determines superiority, however, we must go back beyond the man to the beasts, the birds, the fish, and the creeping and crawling creatures” (18).

Comment: Kroeger fails to understand that man was of a different order of being to everything else God had created (unless Kroeger believes in evolution). Man was created as “the glory of God”—His best work, because Adam was a “son of God” (Lk 3:36). Woman, on the other hand, was created as the “glory of man” because she was created, not for God but, to satisfy man’s needs. Kroeger denies Paul’s statement that Eve was the first to sin (20).

Comment: By denying the representative nature of Adam and Eve’s sin and its transmission to all humans (20)(i.e., the doctrine of Original Sin) he undermines the conservative-evangelical view of the enormity of the first sin. Kroeger appears to adopt the view that all the consequences of that first sin ought to be removed as soon as one becomes a Christian, and as a consequence men and women are equal again. Does he expect the pain of birth to be removed once a woman becomes a Christian? Does he expect the weeds to be removed once a farmer becomes a Christian? Such a view of sin and God belongs to a beginner in the things of Christ. The mature, well-read, Christian knows better than to rail against a just God because He does not conform to our way of thinking.

Quote: “The Bible is not a book of oppression—for women or anyone else.” (29)

Comment: Note the use of “liberation” language again as if God were unjust to restrict Adam and Eve from eating of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Any restriction to one’s “liberty” is not of God, is Kroeger’s rule-of-thumb teaching. Obedience, for Kroeger, is an unacceptable concept. The inference is, you are free to do as you feel led: there is no restriction on the kind of ministry women can do.

Quote: “Often it seems that we must abandon either our view of the Bible as our only infallible rule of faith and practice or else we must deny the full equality of all persons before God.” (30)

Comment: Note the simplistic either/or option which once again shows up Kroeger’s distance from conservative-evangelical teaching on this subject. The Bible is both an infallible book and it teaches that all men and women are made in the moral image of God. Note the fallacy that if men and women are equal in the image of God then they are equal in all other respects. He
appears to ignore the Scriptural statement that while man is the “glory of God,” woman is the “glory of man” (1 Cor 11:7), therefore they cannot be equal in all respects. Throughout his work Kroeger is careful never to look carefully into Paul’s crucial “headship” principle in 1 Cor 11:3. This is very telling and significant. He deliberately avoids the very foundation on which Paul drew his arguments for the universal church practices. Why?

Kroeger also avoids looking into any of Paul’s creation theology texts (1 Cor 11:8-9; 14:34; and 1 Tim 2:13-14). His only reference to these texts is to back off from them with the statement that they are “difficult Pauline passages” and he infers that they are not clear because of “all their exegetical problems” (33). His approach to these texts is that if he says they are difficult then they are difficult. There is nothing difficult about them once one understands the mind of the writer. Paul’s use of them is perfectly logical and clear. But if you want to side-line unpalatable Scriptural truths simply dub them as “difficult,” or, as Kroeger put it, “plagued with problems,” or better still, put the blame on commentators and exploit the disagreements between them with the excuse that, “If they are not able to sort out what the text means how am I expected to do so?” In this way they can be side-lined from the discussion.

It seems a fair deduction to draw from the way in which Kroeger studiously avoided any contact with the creation texts, and especially the headship principle in 1 Cor 11:3, that this was done because these texts and doctrines are diametrically opposed to Kroeger’s predetermined preference that women should teach and rule over men in exactly the same manner that men do. Kroeger’s basic underlying assumption is that there is no difference between male and female; they are absolutely equal in all respects except the physical body they inhabit. In this respect Kroeger’s approach is indistinguishable from that of the feminist movement.

Quote: “No less a thoroughgoing fundamentalist than the late L. E. Maxwell, president of the Praire Bible Institute, declared that more than a hundred passages in the Bible affirm women in roles of leadership, and fewer than half a dozen appear to be in opposition.” (33)

Comment: It is not clear whether Maxwell subscribed to the whole of this statement as no source is given. Kroeger’s method here is to quote a statement from someone else which cannot be checked. Where are these “more than a hundred passages”? There are only two women mentioned in the whole of the OT who performed a public role: Miriam and Deborah. The average reader is not in a position to check Kroeger’s statement, and consequently there is the danger that he will mislead them into believing that there are “more than a hundred passages” which support his view. This is not honest scholarship. Just where his case appears to be strongest he defaults in giving the evidence for it. Note the way he handles the “evidence.” He says: “It would be quite easy to give up, rather smug in our belief that the larger set of positive passages is quite direct, whereas the passages apparently representing a negative point of view are plagued with problems.”

Having amassed an unverifiable one hundred examples in favour of his view he then contrasts these with the few “negative” examples, which are only “apparently” negative. This presentation might deceive the average Christian who is not familiar with the background to the problem, but it will not get past those who are familiar with the topic under discussion who will want to see the evidence for themselves and weigh up each case for themselves.

Quote: “Paul . . . was fully aware of the consequences of a Jewish woman removing her veil in a public gathering.” (35)

Comment: Jewish women in Paul’s day did not wear veils, but something draped over their head.

Quote: “Gender, age, social condition, and racial considerations are all swept away by Galatians 3:28.” (39)

Comment: This is classic feminist teaching. Having added “age” which is not in Galatians 3:28, he might as well have gone on to add, “homosexual, heterosexual, and lesbian.” Why stop with age? If all distinctions are gone there are no longer males and females in the world—just people. An early Christian sect, the Adamites, thought that in Christ the Fall was reversed and they went about naked, worshipped in church naked, and had communal meals together naked. This is what happens when “Gender . . . is swept away.”

Kroeger’s approach is not a holistic one. He fails to deal with the principle in 1 Cor 11:3 that the “head of woman is man.” Whether he likes it or not that principle makes a gender distinction that is rooted in creation itself, in its genes, not in culture. Likewise, when the

Church comes before God in worship the females are distinguished from the males by having their heads covered and remaining silent during the church service (1 Cor 11:4-9; 14:34-35; 1 Tim 2:11-14). The reasons are rooted in creation, not in culture.

Kroeger fails to take into account or appreciate the breath of Paul's theology. In his view, as he peers at only one verse—2 Timothy 2:12—out of Paul's encyclopaedic knowledge of God's revelation, his total preoccupation with this one verse has produced a myopic effect in his perception of Paul's teaching because, thinking that this was the only verse on the subject of the relation between men and women in church, he failed to deal with 1 Cor 14:34. If he had stretched his vision to take in 1 Cor 11:8-9, he would have found a common denominator between these three passages that throws light on each other, and together form a cumulative argument that goes back to 1 Cor 11:3, “the head of woman is man.” Once it becomes plain that Paul is arguing from nature not nurture, all Paul's statements come into focus around the principle “the head of woman is man.” Indeed, the heart of his Gospel is in the revelation, “the head of Christ is God.”

Kroeger does not accept unequivocally the authorship of the Pastoral Epistles (44).20 He sees “at least one other hand in the composition. Possibly the epistle was written upon the instruction of the apostle Paul but completed after his death as his will and testament . . . to Timothy.” If so, then Paul's medical advice—to desist from drinking water and start drinking a little wine instead to help his stomach trouble—was a little late in getting to Timothy! And what about his hope to come soon to see Timothy (1 Tim 3:14)? If Timothy never got the letter until Paul was dead, it being his last will and testament, according to Kroeger, what was the point of the wish?

Kroeger leaves open the possibility that someone might have added something to the text “wishing to simulate an epistle of Paul.” (46)

Kroeger peddles views that lower, or sow doubt, in the reader's mind that the Pastors are genuine. He did the same with 1 Cor 14:34-35 (36). He does not share the standard held by most evangelical conservative scholarship in this respect. This low view of Scripture (i.e., that we could be reading non-apostolic verses as apostolic) is playing into his hands because 1 Timothy 2:12 and other parts of Paul's writing which “contradict” Gal 3:28 are held by some to be late additions. Kroeger cannot be seen to go along with that view, but he achieves the same result—deletion of Paul's command—by another route, namely the deletion of the negative.

Quote: “First Timothy 5:5-10 speaks of widows who are to be enrolled as members of the clergy, and Titus 2:3 requires female elders to be “worthy of the priesthood.”” (91)

Comment: There are two misunderstandings here. First, Paul does not say that widows are to be enrolled as members of the clergy. This is an anachronistic reading of the text as if “clergy” existed in Paul's day. This is just another indication that Kroeger has failed to develop a biblical hermeneutic. He reads the text from within a twentieth-century standpoint. If Kroeger had read 1 Timothy 5:5-10 in the broader context (something he fails to do regularly) of the whole chapter he would have seen that 5:1 lists all the age-groups that Timothy has to pastor. Paul is not talking about offices in the church here. He does that elsewhere (3:1-13).

Second, Titus 2:3 does not require female elders to be “worthy of the priesthood.” Again the answer is in the broader context. Paul goes through all the age-groups that Titus has to pastor in Crete. Paul is not talking about offices in the church here. He does that elsewhere (1:5-9). In any case women could not be elders because elders had to lead their own households (1 Tim 3:5). Only heads of houses were eligible for the eldership.

On page 91 Kroeger argues that if the directive in 1 Timothy 2:12 forbids women to rule over men then it stands in direct variance to other Pauline material. He then lists these contrary texts, but these turn out to be a series of inaccurate statements such as that (1) Phoebe had an “office” similar to that of an elder, and was even appointed by Paul himself; (2) Junia was a “noteworthy apostle;” (3) Priscilla and other women were “fellow labourers” with Paul who asked Christians to be subject to them (Phil 4:2-3); (4) Women presided over house-churches; (5) Women were leaders in first century churches in Asia Minor (92); and lastly, that a prohibition against women assuming positions of authority is inconsistent with the strong

evidence for it. “Presumably they did not consider this Scripture to be a deterrent. How, then, might they have understood it?” Kroeger asks. They certainly did not understand it in the way Kroeger has mistranslated the Greek! He is also somewhat lacking in his knowledge of Early Church history and how the early Church Fathers understood Paul’s teaching on the subject.

On the meaning of authentein see Appendix G below.

END OF SECTION