

A Biblical Theology of Women in Leadership

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Introduction

Too often the discussion of women in leadership has focused on the exegesis of individual passages and the study of individual words. In some cases, those on different sides of the issue cannot even agree on which biblical passages are relevant to the discussion. The church badly needs to move beyond the level of exegesis to develop a constructive biblical theology of women in leadership.

In what follows, I will attempt to outline such a theology by tracing women's leadership through salvation history as it is granted in creation, crippled in the fall, restored in redemption, and validated in the consummation. I will then suggest some theological principles to guide us in our reflections. Although I will make some exegetical comments on central texts, I will not answer other exegetical views in detail. That has been done effectively by others. My primary purpose is to construct a positive biblical theology.

Creation

Understanding the theological significance of the creation narratives involves first understanding them in context as stories. The first creation narrative (Genesis 1:26-31) describes the origin of human beings as a creation of God and their relationship to the rest of creation. The second creation

narrative (Genesis 2:18-25) describes the relationship of man and woman to each other. Proponents of restricted roles for women tend to emphasize the second creation narrative, while egalitarians tend to emphasize the first. Both narratives, however, yield significant insights when considered *as stories* rather than as texts to mine for exegetical ammunition.

According to Genesis 1, man and woman are the crown of creation, bearing the image of God and serving as stewards of God's creation. Man and woman are created in God's image: "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:27). The Hebrew text says that God created *adam* in the image of God. In this instance, *adam* is not the name of the man but of the species, making a play on words with the earth (*adamah*) from which the creature was made. It has the sense of our modern word "earthling." In this instance *adam* is plural, referring to both male and female, as is the case in Genesis 5:2: "Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them 'Humankind' [Hebrew, *adam*] when they were created."

In Genesis 1:27, "image of God" and "male and female" appear in parallel, suggesting that the author saw a connection between the image of God and humanity's nature as "male and female." The parallelism implies that both male and female are needed to fully reflect the image of God. Some authors have suggested that the diversity-in-unity of male and female humanity reflects the diversity-in-unity of the Triune God. Man and woman together are given dominion: "God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and

multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth'” (Gen. 1:28). No distinction is made between the man’s and woman’s roles.

According to Genesis 2, man and woman come together in marriage because of their origin in unity. The story begins in verse 18, when God says, “It is not good that the man should be alone.” It goes on to describe the creation of woman from one of the ribs of the man. It ends with the declaration that man and woman become one flesh in marriage because they were one flesh to begin with: “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh” (v. 23-24).

Besides their unity, the narrative stresses the companionship, correspondence, and partnership of male and female. The differentiation of man and woman is rooted in the need of human beings for companionship, the recognition that it is not good for them to be alone. None of the animals is suitable for providing that companionship (v. 20). The word *kenegdo* in 2:18, translated as “meet” in the King James version and as “suitable” in the NIV, means “corresponding to.” Unlike the animals, the woman is created specifically to correspond to the man. The man recognizes this correspondence when he exclaims that she is “bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” (v. 23). Because of that correspondence, she can serve as his companion and partner (see NRSV’s “a helper as his partner”).

The Hebrew word *ezer* (2:18), translated “help” or “helper,” occurs in noun or verb forms about 110 times in the Old Testament. The Brown-Driver-Briggs lexicon renders it as “help” or “succor” (aid given to someone in distress). It usually refers to God as the helper of Israel, as in Psalm 54: “But surely, God is my helper; the Lord is the upholder of my life” (v. 4). Other times it refers to a military or political ally (Josh. 10:4; 1 Kgs. 1:7). Unlike the English word “helper,” it never has the sense of subordinate. David L. Thompson expresses the sense of *ezer* as “strong agent who renders indispensable aid” or “one who rescues.” He notes, “The aid rendered is indispensable, often meaning the difference between survival or destruction.” For example, God is called *ezer* because he delivers the poor and needy (Ps. 72:12), rescues Israel from bondage and distress (Ps. 107:12-14), and saves the lives of those who call on him (Ps. 30:10; 54:4). Brown-Driver-Briggs translates the complete phrase *ezer kenegdo* as “a help *corresponding to* him i.e. equal and adequate to himself.” In the context of the Genesis story, the woman is the man’s deliverer in that she rescues him from his loneliness. She is his ally because she is equipped to work with him in the task of stewardship given by God to humankind.

Finally, the man and woman are naked but feel no shame (v. 25). Contrary to the views of some of the church fathers, this verse cannot mean they have no sexual relations; after all, they have already been given the command to be fruitful and multiply. It means that they accept their own sexuality and that of the other person without insecurity. Their complete trust

in God and in one another gives them the freedom to be vulnerable without fear.

No one could read the Genesis creation narratives on their own terms and derive the subordination of women from them. Subordination must be imported into the text from elsewhere. The most common source is 1 Timothy 2:11-15, where Paul bases his restrictions on women teaching in Ephesus on Eve's being second in creation but first in sin. But Paul's *ad hoc* rationale for his counsel to Timothy should not be read back into the Genesis accounts as an interpretive presupposition. The Genesis texts should be read in light of their own intentions.

Fall

With the entry of sin into the world, discord and domination enter human relationships (Genesis 3). Unity and mutuality give way to shame, blame, and alienation. As their eyes are opened, the man and woman are immediately ashamed of their nakedness (v. 7). Now their sexuality divides them rather than unites them. It becomes a source of anxiety. Shame distorts their relationship with one another and their relationship with God (v. 10). When they are confronted by God about their sin, the man blames the woman, and the woman blames the serpent (v. 12-13).

In confronting them, "God . . . holds each accountable and addresses each as responsible." Contrary to popular opinion, the man and woman are not cursed for their sin. Only the ground and the serpent are cursed (v. 14, 17). Nevertheless, both man and woman must face the consequences of their sin, which involve their alienation from the rest of creation and from each other.

Both man and woman will express their creativity through pain, as the man struggles to make a living from the earth and the woman struggles to bring children to birth (v. 16-19). Their partnership becomes a hierarchy, as the man rules over the woman, yet the woman still desires him (v. 16).

Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen suggests that the effects of the fall reflect the particular ways in which the man and the woman abused their nature as beings created in the image of God. She focuses on the aspects of “sociability and accountable dominion.” As we saw earlier, man and woman were created as social beings and were given stewardship of the creation. However, the woman “abused her dominion” when she asserted her own will above God’s command. The man “abused his sociability” when he chose solidarity with his wife rather than obedience to God. As a consequence, as described in Genesis 3:16, man and woman tend to have characteristic problems in the areas in which they sinned, and they compensate for these by overemphasizing the other aspect of their nature. The man expresses his damaged sociability by dominating his wife. The woman submerges herself in relationships—even abusive ones—in order to avoid accountable dominion.

The damage continues to propagate. In the next chapter of Genesis, the destructive alienation brought about by the fall reaches its ultimate consequence in the murder of Abel by his brother Cain. This picture of life after the fall is descriptive rather than prescriptive. Domination and death are not expressions of God’s will for human beings. As evidence of this, God

already provides a hint of redemption, with the promise of the woman's seed who will crush the serpent's head (v. 15).

Redemption

The work of Christ opens a new era in relations between human beings and God. The change is so radical that Paul calls it a new creation. Believers participate in this new creation as they are united with Christ by faith (2 Cor. 5:17). Women participate in the inauguration of this new era at Pentecost, where they are among the recipients of the promised Holy Spirit (Acts 2:16-21). The pouring out of the Spirit on both women and men is specified as the sign that the day of fulfillment has come (Joel 2:28-29). In 2 Corinthians 6, Paul emphasizes the participation of women in redemption by inserting "and daughters" into an allusion to the messianic promise of 2 Samuel 7:14: "and I will be your father, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:18).

The work of Christ reverses the effects of the fall. As the Last Adam, Jesus undoes the damage done by the first Adam, and his obedience brings righteousness and life "much more surely" than Adam's sin brought condemnation and death (Rom. 5:12-19; 1 Cor. 15:21-22, 45-49). This suggests that the patterns of domination introduced by the fall should be eliminated in redemption.

In his teaching on divorce, Jesus indicates his desire to restore marriage to God's original creation intentions (Matt. 19:4-5). Paul says that relationships between Christians are to be characterized by mutual submission (Eph. 5:21). In this context, the domination of the wife by the husband gives

way to self-sacrificial love modeled on the standard of Christ's love for the church (Eph. 5:22-32). Sexual relations in marriage should be guided by mutuality and sensitivity to the needs of the other (1 Cor. 7:3-5). Leadership among God's people is not to be a matter of domination and authority but of loving servanthood modeled on Christ (Mark 9:33-37; 10:42-45; John 13:1-17).

In Christ, the most fundamental human divisions are overcome. Jews and Gentiles are no longer two hostile peoples but are both part of the "one new humanity" that God is creating through Christ (Eph. 2:15). The great declaration of this new unity is of course Galatians 3:28: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." Paul's expression "male and female" seems to be a deliberate echo of the Genesis creation accounts. Some have argued that this verse means only that men and women are equal in the spiritual realm or the sphere of salvation: they stand on the same footing before God. It is true that the primary emphasis of the verse is unity, not equality. But the New Testament knows nothing of a salvation that is purely private and "spiritual" and has no social implications. The implications for male and female should be the same as the implications for Jew and Gentile and for slave and free. In the church, these formerly divided groups met on equal terms. Jews and Gentiles shared table fellowship. Both Gentiles and slaves served as leaders in the church. For Paul, "in Christ" encompassed the whole of a Christian's reality.

In this new era, women take on new responsibilities. In Judaism, the sign of the covenant, circumcision, was available only to men. As Christians, both women and men are recipients of baptism (1 Cor. 12:13), the sign of belonging to God's people and "the sign of our universal ordination." Through their faith in Christ, women become heirs of Abraham according to God's promise (Gal. 3:29), fellow heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17), and joint heirs with men (1 Pet. 3:7). As members of the body of Christ, women are given spiritual gifts as the Holy Spirit chooses, which are to be used for the building up of the church (1 Cor. 12:4-31; Eph. 4:7-16; 1 Pet. 4:10-11). Some women in the first century exercised leadership functions, serving as prophets, teachers, deacons, and apostles (Acts 18:26; 21:9; Rom. 16:1-2, 7; 1 Cor. 11:5, 13; 1 Tim. 3:11-13). Prophets apparently also had a teaching role, since their ministry served to edify the church (1 Cor. 14:1-5).

Like all Christians who live between Pentecost and the consummation, women live in the tension between the "already" and the "not yet"—experiencing the power and gifts of the age to come while living in the present unredeemed age (Rom. 8:9-30; 2 Cor. 4:7-18). This tension affects women in some especially poignant ways as they attempt to live out their callings. In the first century context, this tension led the church to accept some restrictions on women's roles. The New Testament writers counsel their congregations to respect cultural institutions when they do not contradict the gospel, so that the progress of the gospel will not be hindered (1 Pet. 2:13; Titus 2:5).

This caution comes out most clearly in the New Testament instructions to households, the so-called domestic codes. Yet even these have a striking mutuality when seen in the context of their times, both in the instructions they give the culturally dominant partner and in the respect they accord the culturally subordinate partner. Today we bring the gospel into disrepute in American culture when we forbid the full participation of women in ministry. This hinders the witness of the church. Why should women receive the gospel as good news if they perceive that they are more respected in the world than in the church? Women in leadership today must use prayerful sensitivity to discern when they should gracefully yield to restrictions on their ministries and when they must “obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29; NIV).

Consummation

The “already/not yet” tension will be resolved in the final act of salvation history, the consummation. The new creation will be complete, and believers will receive their inheritance (Rev. 21:1-7). The image of God damaged by the Fall will be fully restored. Women and men will be glorified, as they are perfected and brought to complete Christlikeness in their resurrected bodies (Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 15:12-58; 2 Cor. 3:18; Phil. 3:21; 1 Thess. 4:23-24; Heb. 6:1; 1 John 3:2). As one writer has pointed out, the doctrine of the resurrection of the body means that sexual differentiation will continue into eternity.

The children of God will be revealed and vindicated (Rom. 8:19). Men and women—and even creation itself—will fully experience the “glorious freedom of the children of God” (Rom. 8:21; NIV). God will reveal hidden

deeds and the secrets of all hearts (Matt. 10:26; 25:31-46; Rom. 2:16). Those who have served in silence and obscurity will be acknowledged. The trust and freedom to be vulnerable that existed in the Garden will be restored and surpassed. We will know fully as we have been fully known (1 Cor. 13:9-12). This knowledge will be in the context of love (1 Cor. 8:3; 1 John 4:7-12).

Relationships in the consummation will be fully restored. Loneliness and isolation will be banished, replaced by face-to-face fellowship with God and with other believers, celebrated as a banquet (Matt. 8:11; 22:2). But this is not merely a return to the relationships of Eden. Jesus told the Sadducees that in the consummation there would be no marrying nor giving in marriage (Luke 20:34-6). This implies that marriage, even as it was known in the Garden, will no longer exist. Moreover, since it specifically mentions male and female roles in the act of marriage (marrying and being given in marriage), this implies that the most basic gender-based role distinctions will be transcended. Perhaps the intimacy and immediacy of relationship in the consummation will eliminate the “aloneness” that gave rise to marriage in the first place.

Eternity will be a Sabbath rest from the struggles of life and leadership (Heb. 3:11, 18; 4:1-11; Rev. 14:13b). Women will have a home that lasts (Heb. 11:10). There will be no more regrets or misplaced desires or unfulfilled longings. God will banish all suffering and pain and will wipe away every tear (Rev. 21:4). Appropriate dominion will be finally restored, as all the servants of God, women and men, reign “forever and ever” (Rev. 22:5). And women leaders who have given their lives in service to God will hear the only

affirmation that finally matters: “Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness” (Matt. 25:14-30; NIV).

Theological Principles

The full participation of women in church leadership is affirmed by salvation history, by the nature of God, and by the nature of the church.

Salvation history directs us to ground our theology in creation and redemption rather than in the fall. Non-egalitarians attempt to do this by locating the subordination of women in the creation narratives, but this interpretation cannot be sustained. Whatever the attitude of the author of the Genesis narratives may have been, female subordination is simply not one of the concerns of the stories.

Despite their references to the creation stories, non-egalitarians theologize from the fall and make it normative. This depreciates the work of Christ in overcoming the destructive effects of the fall. Non-egalitarians also tend to apply their hermeneutic selectively to Genesis 3: they expect women to continue to be subordinate, but they do not expect men to continue to earn their living through laborious agricultural work!

The distorted relationships resulting from the fall reflect neither God’s creation intentions nor God’s eschatological goals for creation. Where the church chooses to locate itself in the already/not yet tension is crucial for its witness. The perspective of the New Testament would suggest that the church is called to live by the principles of God’s eschatological kingdom today as a witness to the unredeemed world.

The nature of God also confirms the importance of women in church leadership. God is not a male deity but relates to human beings in both typically masculine and typically feminine ways. The Old Testament portrays God as both a father who protects and defends and a mother who gives birth and nurses (Deut. 1:30-31; Is. 49:13-15). This breadth of imagery means that the participation of both men and women in ministry is necessary to fully reflect the nature of God.

Furthermore, an orthodox understanding of the Trinity provides a model for the full participation of women in leadership. The Trinity is the preeminent example of mutuality and reciprocity. Father, Son, and Spirit form a community of mutual, self-giving love. God's people, including those in leadership, should reflect God's nature as a community of love. "In the midst of a broken world, our Lord calls us to mirror as much as possible that ideal community of love which reflects his own character." In the Gospel of John, Jesus identifies love and unity as the preeminent marks that should characterize the church's life. They stamp us as his disciples and enable us to participate in the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son (13:34-35; 17:20-23). This suggests that the church, if it is functioning properly, is the best analogy for the Trinity that we can offer the world.

By contrast, the hierarchical use of the Trinity to model "equal in essence, different in function" for men and women is a misinterpretation and misapplication of the doctrine of the Trinity. It posits an unorthodox subordination within the Trinity, turning the functional subordination of the

Son during his earthly life into an eternal subordination in order to argue the permanent subordination of women. The traditional orthodox understanding of the Trinity, as expressed in the Athanasian Creed, is that “in this Trinity none is afore, or after another: none is greater, or less than another . . . But the whole three Persons are coeternal, and coequal.” Thus the persons of the Trinity are equal both in essence and in status. Any argument for subordination within the eternal Trinity leaves itself open to charges of Arianism or tritheism.

In its application to women, the hierarchical Trinitarian analogy fails on three counts. First, it is an unbiblical application of the Son’s submission to the Father, which the New Testament writers use as a model for all believers’ submission to God and to one another (Phil. 2:1-11), not for the submission of one gender to another. Second, while true functional subordination is voluntary, selective, and temporary, for the purpose of completing particular tasks, the subordination assigned to women is involuntary, universal, and permanent. Finally, the analogy is logically contradictory, in that it bases “functional” differences (church offices) solely on an aspect of someone’s essential nature (gender). In former times, when the church taught that women were inherently inferior to men, it was logical to conclude that they should serve subordinate functions in the church. Today, however, those who want to affirm women’s essential equality while restricting them to subordinate functions find themselves in a logically indefensible position.

The nature of the church as the body of Christ, empowered by the Spirit to model Christlikeness, requires the participation of women in leadership. Since the Holy Spirit sovereignly distributes the gifts necessary for the functioning of the church, those Spirit-given gifts, not gender, should determine which functions individuals fulfill in the church. Framing a discussion of ministry in terms of power and authority distorts the nature of Christian ministry. It suggests that we are still asking who is the greatest, and we have not understood Jesus' injunction that leadership means service rather than domination.

The argument that only males can effectively represent Christ in leadership misunderstands the nature of the Christlikeness that leaders are called to model. Scripture calls believers to model Christ's love, obedience, patience, humility, compassion, and nonretaliation, but never his maleness. Jesus' Jewishness is much more theologically significant than his maleness, since it identifies him as the Messiah of Israel, but no Christian theologian argues that all church leaders must be Jewish.

The issue of representation is more critical for those traditions that view ministers as priests. This view is problematic on New Testament grounds, since the New Testament nowhere describes church leaders as priests. In fact, all believers are said to be priests, with Christ as their high priest (Heb. 9:11-14; 10:11-14, 19-25; 1 Pet. 2:9). Even if we grant the model of minister as priest, however, some scholars question whether it was the priest's role to represent

God to humanity at all. They believe that the priest represented the people to God, while the prophet represented God to the people. If this is so, the prophetic ministry of women in both Old and New Testaments would suggest that maleness is not necessary in order to represent God. Furthermore, a *representative* of God need not also be a *representation* of God. Leaders (and all believers) are called to be Christ's ambassadors, not his impersonators (2 Cor. 5:20). It is the Holy Spirit, not Christian leaders, whose job it is to make Christ personally present in the church today.

Thus, if we take salvation history seriously, if we have an orthodox view of the Trinity, and if we understand the church to be the body of Christ edified and led by Spirit-gifted persons, we are drawn to the conclusion that women should participate in church leadership on the same basis as men. While a few passages of Scripture can be problematic if they are scrutinized in isolation from their contexts, the whole of biblical revelation, as well as the breadth of theological reflection, points toward the freedom and the responsibility of women to respond to the call of God on their lives wherever it takes them—whether into the nursery or into the pastorate.

Conclusion

The challenge for those of us who are women in church leadership is to live a redemptive witness in the midst of a world—and all too often, a church—that is incompletely redeemed. With the rest of Christ's body, we are called to point the way to the coming of God's kingdom in its fullness. We must be faithful to God's call in ways that reflect both God's truth and God's love—the

love that “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Cor. 13:7). A constructive and contextual biblical theology can nurture and sustain us in this task.

Willard M. Swartley, *Slavery Sabbath War and Women: Case Issues in Biblical Interpretation* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1983), 183-184.

Stanley J. Grenz and Denise Muir Kjesbo attempt to go beyond exegesis to “speak about broader theological themes” in their very valuable book, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 142. In general, egalitarian interpreters have been more sensitive to biblical theology and developments in salvation history than have non-egalitarians, who want to locate female subordination in specific texts that they believe express God’s eternal will. In a recent article, David L. Thompson has argued that “attempts either to support or to deny egalitarian relationships between men and women solely on the basis of the interpretation of individual biblical texts in their contexts lead inevitably to eisegesis—to reading the interpreter’s agenda into the text.” “Women, Men, Slaves and the Bible: Hermeneutical Inquiries,” *Christian Scholar’s Review* 25/3 (1996): 327.

Among the best resources on exegetical issues are the following: Craig S. Keener, *Paul, Women & Wives: Marriage and Women’s Ministry in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992); Gordon Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988); and *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987).

Swartley, 184.

All biblical quotations will be taken from the NRSV unless otherwise indicated.

Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, *Good News for Women: A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997), 124.

Aida Besançon Spencer, *Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry* (Nashville: Nelson, 1985), 21-22.

Spencer, 21.

See, for example, Grenz and Kjesbo, 71. This view is especially associated with Karl Barth. According to Barth, humanity was created to stand in an “I-Thou” relationship to God. The biblical writers do not ground the image of God

in humanity's "intellectual and moral talents and possibilities" but in the fact "that God has created him male and female, that he is this being in differentiation and relationship, and therefore in natural fellowship with God." *Church Dogmatics*, vol. 3, part 1 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1958), 185.

Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, Charles A. Briggs, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1979, s.v.

Thompson, 328. He argues that none of the definitions in the standard lexicons are strong enough to express the "near-rescue level aid" provided.

BDB, s.v.

Grenz and Kjesbo, 165.

For discussions of this passage, see Keener, 113-117; Grenz and Kjesbo, 168-169.

Grenz and Kjesbo, 166.

Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, *Gender and Grace: Love, Work, and Parenting in a Changing World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 39, 43, 47. Several scholars have suggested that there may be different characteristic sins for men and women. In an influential article in 1960, Valerie C. Saiving argued that while masculine sin may be characterized by terms such as "pride" and "will to power," feminine sin might be better described as "triviality, distractibility, and diffuseness . . . dependence upon others for one's own self-definition . . . in short, underdevelopment or negation of the self." "The Human Situation: A Feminine View," *Journal of Religion* 40 (April 1960): 109.

Van Leeuwen calls Pentecost "women's emancipation day" (35).

John R. Kohlenberger III, "Understanding the Current Controversy over Bible Translations" (paper delivered at the CBE International Convention, 14 July 1997), 17-18. As Kohlenberger observes, this puts Paul on the side of inclusive language translations!

Gilbert Bilezikian, "Hierarchist and Egalitarian Enculturations," *JETS* 30 (December 1987): 422.

Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 157.

Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Vancouver: Regent College, 2000), 566 (page citation is to the reprint edition).

Early commentators understood the “Junia” of Romans 16:7 to be a woman. John Chrysostom observed, “Think how great the devotion of this woman must have been, that she should be worthy to be called an apostle!” *Homilies on Romans*, cited in Gerald Bray, ed., *Romans*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, ed. Thomas C. Oden (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 372.

For example, David L. Balch observes that the earlier New Testament household codes stand out from other contemporary examples in that they address slaves directly as responsible persons and members of the Christian community. He believes that modern Christians often overlook the strong integrating effect that the Christian community would have had on members separated by social divisions. “Household Codes,” in *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament*, ed. David E. Aune (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 33. He argues that the New Testament domestic codes had an apologetic function in persuading the larger society that Christianity was not a threat to the social order. *Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter*, SBL Monograph Series (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), 109, 121. See also James L. Bailey and Lyle D. Vander Broek, *Literary Forms in the New Testament: A Handbook* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), 69-71; and John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 174.

Glen Scorgie, “Are We On the Same Page? An Evangelical Response to Germaine Greer’s *The Whole Woman*,” *Priscilla Papers* 15 (Fall 2001): 4.

Bernard Ramm says that glorification will include the “final, perfect, and eternal vindication” of the believer. *Them He Glorified: A Systematic Study of the Doctrine of Glorification* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 67.

“Sister Macrina taught Gregory of Nyssa that the blessed will be like God insofar as they will contemplate the beautiful in him, without regret or inordinate desire or unfulfilled expectation.” Thomas C. Oden, *The Word of Life* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1989), 461.

“It is generally agreed among Biblical scholars that neither the fall nor the conditions that ensued from it during the time of the old covenant may be considered as normative for the life of the new community. The purpose of Christ’s redemptive ministry was to redress the disruptions that had been brought about by the fall and to restore the integrity of God’s creational purposes.” Bilezikian, “Hierarchist and Egalitarian Enculturations,” 422.

George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, rev. ed., ed. Donald A. Hagner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 113. Thompson argues that we should extend our hermeneutic beyond individual passages to follow the trajectory of biblical revelation on an issue (337). He believes that the trajectory of both Old and New Testaments is in the direction of the “full and

equal partnership” of men and women (338). He further suggests that we extend the hermeneutical trajectory beyond the canon itself to the history of interpretation, as the church struggled to apply Scripture to such issues as uncircumcision and abolition (339-349). Keener argues similarly that we must use the same hermeneutic in the passages about wives’ submission as we use in the passages about slaves’ submission (184-224).

Grenz and Kjesbo, 150.

Grenz and Kjesbo, 175.

For a discussion of functional subordination in the Trinity, see Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 363, 751.

Philip Schaff, ed., *The Creeds of Christendom*, 6th ed., revised by David S. Schaff (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 2:68.

For the second and third points, see Groothuis, 43-44, 56-59. She comments: “Regardless of how hierarchalists try to explain the situation, the idea that women are equal *in* their being, yet unequal *by virtue of* their being, is contradictory and ultimately nonsensical” (55). In chapter two of her book, Groothuis has thoroughly analyzed and refuted the “equal in essence, different in function” argument.

Nicholas Wolterstorff, “Hearing the Cry,” in *Women, Authority & the Bible*, ed. Alvera Mickelsen (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 290. Wolterstorff observes that those who deny women equal participation in the church today must do so “by making God appear utterly arbitrary,” in that he denies women the use of the gifts he has given them in equal measure with men.

Gilbert Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles: What the Bible Says About a Woman’s Place in Church and Family*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986), 69; and Groothuis, 107. Grenz and Kjesbo point out that those who use the maleness of Old Testament priests as an argument against women in ministry ignore the many other requirements for priests in the Old Testament (middle age, Aaronic descent, physical perfection, marriage to a virgin, being ceremonially clean) as not relevant today (181).

For the distinction between representative and representation, see Mary Hayter, *The New Eve in Christ: The Use and Abuse of the Bible in the Debate about Women in the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 52, 56.