

practise charismatic exercises such as prophecy and tongues-speaking, these words have no direct application to daily practice. Our negative conclusion, that they do not prohibit women from vocal participation in worship, has obvious positive implications for all churches. The principle of headship which the text embodies stands alongside our previous discussion of marital authority and will be relevant for our subsequent discussion of the role of women in ecclesiastical authority.

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Women and men in church office

We have considered the relationship of men and women within the body of Christ, within the marriage relationship and in the worship of the church. In this chapter we shall discuss it in the context of church office. Our study will focus upon a few major texts: 1 Timothy 2:8-15; 3:1-13; and Romans 16:1-2. In order to deal with these texts we shall also have to consider Paul's use of the first three chapters of Genesis and the nature of church office as set out in the New Testament. The topics which we shall examine are not new. They have been the subject of much controversy in recent years. The discussion will not be in the direction of examining and interacting with the current literature, although those familiar with it will recognize responses to various positions. We shall, instead, try to lay out the teaching of these crucial texts within the context of Paul's thought and that of the day. From this case we shall consider their application in the present.¹ My conclusions will not please everyone. It is my hope, however, that none will feel that violence has been done to the text of Scripture.

A. THE ANNOUNCED PURPOSE OF 1 TIMOTHY

We noted earlier that much of the debate over the role of women in the Christian church has come from an abuse of Galatians 3:28. In that text Paul stressed the unity of all believers in Christ Jesus. He did not intend his discussion to be used to obliterate all dis-

¹ Some contemporary scholars do not consider the letters to Timothy and Titus to be genuinely Pauline. This is not the place to debate the issue, but it is important to note here that I do consider them genuinely Pauline, perhaps by the hand of an amanuensis whom he asked to write under his direction. An increasing number of scholars have been encouraged to reconsider their opposition to these letters as a result of J. A. T. Robinson's deliberately provocative volume *Redating the New Testament* (London, 1976). More substantial grounds have been provided by scholars such as Spicq, Jeremias, Guthrie and Kelly in their recent commentaries.

inctions within Christ's body. He taught both the unity of the body and the diversity of its members. Before considering the specific argument of 1 Timothy 2 and 3, it is appropriate to ask whether it is fair to its author's intent to use the letter to learn about differentiations in the body of Christ and whether it was his intent to have the specific instructions of the book applied generally within the church.

It is universally accepted that 1 Timothy was intended to provide a clear statement concerning certain issues which its author, whom I take to be Paul, felt needed attention. The letter forms a 'spiritual will' from Paul to Timothy. In the letter Paul indicates that he hopes to be able to come soon to Timothy, but fears that he will be delayed (3:14-15a). He writes, 'I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God. . . .'

The precise wording is helpful in deciding whether his instructions are normative. Paul wrote *pōs . . . dei anastrephesthai*, 'how . . . it is necessary to conduct oneself'. *Dei* is an impersonal verb meaning 'one must' or 'one ought'. In Pauline and in general New Testament usage it points to a strong degree of necessity, generally involving divinely based moral obligation. Paul uses it twenty-four times, the majority referring to historical necessities required by God's rule over history (e.g. Rom. 1:27; 1 Cor. 11:19; 15:25, 53; 2 Cor. 2:3; 5:10; 1 Thes. 4:1; 1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:6, 24; Tit. 1:7, 11). Paul's use of *dei* here is presumptive evidence that he considered what he said normative beyond the immediate situation.

Anastrephesthai (to conduct oneself) is a present infinitive form. It takes no person or number and is best translated in this context by the generic or abstract rendering which most translations have adopted. Paul did not say, 'Timothy, here is how you personally ought to behave.' He deliberately said that he wished Timothy to know 'how one ought to conduct himself in God's household'. An alternative would be 'how people ought to conduct themselves'.² Paul's abstract language indicates that his instructions should have a general rather than closely limited application.

Despite the obviously general intention of the author, a large number of recent writers on the subject of the role of women have

² A survey of all the translations immediately available to me shows ten following this pattern, only the AV using an individual rather than an abstract form. A similar number of commentators were unanimous in favour of the more general translation.

suggested that the matters discussed and the instructions given in this letter ought to be seen as relevant only in its particular time period. Even a superficial reading of the letter shows, however, that its author would not accept such a view of it. He delivers 'trustworthy sayings worthy of full acceptance' (see 1 Tim. 1:15; 3:1; 4:9). He informs Timothy of things which will happen in the 'later times' (4:1). The subjects discussed are not passing issues. The opening chapter discusses Paul's life, the work of Christ and wandering from the faith. The second deals with prayers for rulers, personal conduct in church and teaching functions in relation to women. The third discusses qualifications for elders and deacons and begins a discussion of the mystery of the faith and its future rejection. Chapter 4 continues the discussion of 3. The fifth chapter regulates relations between various classes of persons within the church. The final chapter continues the topic of the fifth and warns against love of money. Only the last section of the sixth chapter is pointedly restricted to Timothy. The topics of the letter are not culturally relative, although they could be brought to particular application in Timothy's context. An attempt to discard the substance of the instructions of 1 Timothy cannot find support from the intention of the letter itself. Other, foreign considerations must be introduced if its principles are to be deemed not applicable to the present.

B. TEACHING AND THE EXERCISE OF AUTHORITY: 1 TIMOTHY 2:8-15

The second chapter of 1 Timothy deals with prayer and worship. The first half of the chapter calls for prayer for 'all those in authority, that [Christians] may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness' (2:2) and that even such rulers may be saved (2:3-7). From the topic of prayer for rulers in order that Christians may lead godly lives, Paul turns to discuss particular aspects of a godly life. He begins with the conduct of those who pray and goes on to related issues. He says,

⁸I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing. ⁹I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, ¹⁰but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God. ¹¹A woman should learn

in quietness and full submission. ¹²I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; she must be silent. ¹³For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. ¹⁵But women will be kept safe through (the?) childbirth, if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety (1 Tim. 2:8-15).

1. Behaviour which mars a Christian's approach to God

Verses 8 and 9 shift the focus of the chapter from the prayers which Paul wants offered to the offerers of the prayers. He is concerned that the prayers offered for rulers be acceptable to God and that Christians conduct themselves in a godly manner when they meet to pray. The injunction that prayers should be made for all those in authority (2:2) is matched by instruction that these prayers should be offered everywhere (2:8).

Paul's concern for the men (2:8) makes clever use of the prayer posture of the day and of biblical imagery for an obedient way of life: men are to lift holy (*hosios*) hands. This comment immediately brings to mind not only the uplifted hands of the posture of prayer but also the meaning of clean or holy hands in passages such as Psalm 24:3-5, in which we learn that he who has 'clean hands' and a pure heart will be able to stand before the Lord in his holy place (*cf.* also Jas. 4:8). Paul was concerned that the manner of life of the men should not mar their prayers. It would seem from the end of the verse that he had anger and quarrelling particularly in mind.

A different concern was expressed for women (2:9-10). In words which closely resemble those of Peter (1 Pet. 3:3-4), Paul directs that women should not focus upon fancy clothes as adornment which will commend them to God, but rather that they should be adorned by good deeds. The net impact of his instructions for women is parallel to those for men; both sexes are to live holy lives of obedient works. The difference between the commands to the two sexes gives us some indication of besetting sins of the day.

The particular wording of verses 9 and 10 is helpful as an example of contextual application of ethical principles. Paul makes it clear that he is calling for decency, propriety, modesty and good deeds. These are, of course, not at all culture bound. They are permanently appropriate and their opposite reprehensible. The specific examples offered are, to a certain extent, culturally relative.

Paul warns against 'braided hair *and* gold or pearls or expensive clothes'. He is not, in fact, speaking against all braids, gold wedding-rings and pearl ear-rings. He refers instead to the elaborate hair-styles which were then fashionable among the wealthy and also to the styles worn by courtesans. The sculpture and literature of the period make it clear that women often wore their hair in enormously elaborate arrangements with braids and curls interwoven or piled high like towers and decorated with gems and/or gold and/or pearls. The courtesans wore their hair in numerous small pendant braids with gold droplets or pearls or gems every inch or so, making a shimmering screen of their locks.³ Pliny complains of the vast sums spent on ornamentation and various satirists comment on the hours spent in dressing the hair of women. When Paul wrote 'braided hair *and* gold or pearls' he probably meant 'braided hair decorated with gold or with pearls'.

Whatever his specific illustration, we have no trouble discerning that these practices were not modest or proper and *therefore* not to be practised. Obedience to this command of Paul's requires no subtle exegetical skill or knowledge of the customs of Paul's day; it requires only an assessment of what adornment is excessively costly and not modest or proper. Christians must allow for individual and social differences as they bring this to bear in their individual lives, but they have no need to set aside Paul's instruction as somehow 'culture bound'.

2. Teaching, ruling and women

1 Timothy 2:11 moves beyond clothing to another aspect of the lives of 'women who profess to worship God' (2:10): their role in situations involving teaching or the exercising of authority with respect to men. This section demands close attention.

Verses 11 and 12 should be taken together. Verse 11 makes a positive statement, and verse 12 a corresponding negative one. 'Women should learn in quietness and in full submission.' The general thrust of this command and several of its particular words merit comment. First of all it should be noted that Paul is not

³ Useful information on hair-styles is to be found in J. P. V. D. Balsdon, *Roman Women*, pp. 252-258; J. Neil *Everyday Life in the Holy Land* (London, 1930), pp. 200-203; E. Potter, M. Albert, E. Saglio, 'Coma', in C. Daremburg and E. Saglio (eds.), *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines* (Paris, 1887); T. G. Tucker, *Life in the Roman World of Nero and St Paul* (London, 1910), p. 311; and L. Wilson, *The Clothing of the Ancient Romans* (Baltimore, 1938). Pliny remarks in his *Natural History*(9) that vast sums were being wasted on hair and body ornaments and jewels. See also appendix below, pp. 257-259.

expressing a matter of custom or of personal preference. This will be very clear from his subsequent explanation, but is also asserted by his use of an imperative verb, *manthanetō* (let (a woman) learn). Paul's instructions are cast as a command. Interestingly, his command specifically presumes that women will in fact learn. Some have felt that Paul's view of women was still 'rabbinic', yet, as we have noted before, his assumption that women can and will learn is *not* a typical rabbinic view.

We must consider now what Paul actually commanded. He calls for *hēsychia* (quietness, peacefulness, silence) and *hypotagē* (submission, subjection, from *hypotassō*). These concepts are familiar to us from our study of Ephesians 5, 1 Peter 3 and 1 Corinthians 14. They recur with great regularity in discussions of women in the Christian community. It is important to note that *hēsychia* is not the word used for being silent in 1 Corinthians 14. *Sigaō*, the word used in 1 Corinthians 14, means 'to keep silent' and stresses the silence. It may be used as a command to mean 'Hush!' or even 'Shut up!' *Hēsychia* does mean silence but carries with it connotations of peacefulness and restfulness. Its use in 1 Timothy 2 shows that Paul is not just calling for 'buttoned lips' but for a quiet receptivity and a submission to authority in his description of the manner of women's learning.

The actual structure of verses 11 and 12 helps us to understand what he was thinking of. Rendered literally, he said, 'A woman, in quietness (*hēsychia*) let her learn in all submission. And to teach a woman I do not permit neither to exercise authority over a man, but she is to be in quietness (*hēsychia*).' The components of these verses are sometimes separated, thus requiring that women (1) learn in silence, (2) be in all submission, (3) not teach, (4) not exercise authority over men. When they are separated in this fashion, the grammar and women are abused. The damage is further increased if they are taken out of context. In such cases, the prohibitions and injunctions become generally or universally applicable and men and women who wish to obey Scripture insist that women never, under any circumstances, teach, and that they always, in every circumstance, submit to men. A close look at the context and Paul's wording can set us free from such misunderstanding.

Consider first the context. Paul has been discussing the conduct of Christians in the gathered congregation in which prayers are to be made for rulers (verses 1-4), in which unholy conflict may mar

the prayers of men (verse 8), and in which ostentatious clothes may damage those of women (verse 9). Paul's remarks are not directed to life generally, but to the gathering of God's people and even to a specific situation during that gathering. Women were certainly free to speak in the Pauline churches (1 Cor. 11). Paul is speaking only of teaching situations here in 1 Timothy 2.

The way in which Paul has constructed his sentences is a help. 'In quietness' and 'in full submission' are in apposition to one another. Verse 11 is concerned with one particular issue, the manner in which women learn. Paul employs two phrases to describe what he wants. 'In quietness' and 'in full submission' function adverbially to qualify and to explain his goal. The AV and the RSV have done better than the NIV at catching the flow of the text at this point. They read, 'Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness (subjection).' The NIV reads, 'A woman should learn in quietness and full submission.'

Verse 12 is sometimes taken as making two quite distinct statements: (1) a woman may not teach; (2) a woman may not exercise authority over a man. Paul's grammar permits this reading by inserting the 'or'. The preceding and following context, however, indicate that he was not thinking in that manner. Verse 11 calls for quiet and submissive learning. Verse 12 forbids teaching or exercising authority over men. The two are visibly parallel. Quiet learning inversely parallels (verbal) teaching and full submission inversely parallels exercising authority. Both verses have the same situation in mind, one in which women are not to teach authoritatively but are to learn quietly. The closing remark of verse 12 makes this clear by summing up both verses with a single short statement: 'she must be silent.' We conclude, therefore, that Paul intended that women should not be authoritative teachers in the church.

The question of what constitutes authoritative teaching or an exercise of authority is a vital question for practical life in the church. We shall explore it further in connection with our discussion of 1 Timothy 3. For the moment we must leave it without further development.

The strength of Paul's feeling on this issue may be gauged from the imperative verb ('let a woman learn . . .') in verse 11 and his use of 'permit' (*epitrepō*) in verse 12. *Epitrepō* does not mean 'to advise' or 'to urge' but has overtones of command and is rightly translated 'to permit' or 'to allow'. It is the same verb which was

used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:34 to say that women are not permitted to speak in the judging of the prophets.

The meaning of verse 12 pivots on our translation of 'to exercise authority' (*authentēin*). The Authorized Version translates this by 'usurp authority'. It is clear that the authority in view is not proper in Paul's eyes, but this fact is to be learned from the context rather than from the verb used. Until recently there were only a few known uses of the verb and it was necessary to guess whether it meant 'exercise authority' or 'illegitimately exercise authority'. Further examples of its use have shown that it does not carry with it the connotation of illicit authority, nor does it carry the connotation of 'domineer' ('act imperiously' or 'be overbearing') as some translations and even lexicons have suggested. It simply means 'have authority over' or 'exercise authority over'.⁴ What Paul disallowed therefore was simply the exercise of authority over men, which was incompatible with submission, rather than the abuse or usurpation of authority.

3. Why did Paul forbid women to teach or to exercise authority?

Paul's view of women and church authority is less debated today than is his rationale for his view. Paul offers two supporting arguments: 'Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; the woman, being deceived, became a sinner' (2:13-14). Paul believed that these observations support his case. Many modern critics have viewed them as irrelevant, 'rabbinic', distortions of the meaning of Genesis, and/or actually arguments against Paul's position. We shall make some preliminary observations about the nature of Paul's comments and then consider them in connection with the first three chapters of Genesis and his other appeals to them.

Recent debate has suggested that Paul's teaching in 1 Timothy 2 is designed for his own day and for the particular cultural situation which he faced. Some feel that, were Paul to have written in the twentieth century, he would have taken a different stand. From this it has been concluded by some that if we are to be

⁴ Dr George Knight of Covenant Theological Seminary, St Louis, Missouri has done scholars the favour of examining every use of the term recorded in the current lexicons and of providing not only translations of those Greek texts, but also an analysis of the history of the interpretation and translation of *authentēin*. At the time of this writing, his article '*Authenteō* in Relation to Women in 1 Tim. 2:12' has not yet appeared in print.

faithful to the 'genius' or 'central thrust' or 'greater vision' of Paul, we must reject his actual teaching. Is this legitimate as an approach to 1 Timothy 2?

The question of cultural relativity must be answered in connection with the text itself. Does Paul's teaching contain elements which should be modified in the light of changed historical circumstances? It is not difficult to see, for instance, that Paul's discussion of braided hair must be interpreted in terms of then-contemporary practice and ought not necessarily to be interpreted as prohibiting a woman having her hair in two braids. Paul's teaching in 1 Timothy 2 does not, however, lend itself to such reapplication. The (valid) observation has been made, for instance, that he spoke to a society in which the women were largely ignorant and uneducated, and therefore should not be in positions of authority. It has then been argued that 'new cultural factors', such as the education of women, should lead to new roles for women. Unfortunately for this point of view, Paul frequently had women 'fellow-workers', commended women as representatives from their churches (Phoebe), recognized the abilities of women such as Priscilla, thought that women could learn and should be taught, and, most telling of all, made no reference whatsoever to the relatively ignorant, uneducated state of women in his day as a ground for his position. His case in 1 Timothy 2 hinges instead upon his interpretation of events in the opening chapters of Genesis, with no reference whatever to culture, uneducated women, or even to possible cultural offence which might result if women were to teach. His argument does not allow the introduction of 'new cultural factors' which would have caused him to make other applications of his principles.

Some commentators have introduced 'cultural factors' of a different sort. They have held that Paul's ways of thinking and of interpreting Genesis are first-century, rabbinic ways and should not be followed today. In particular it is felt that his view of Genesis is not what the text actually teaches but represents instead an interpretation of it which he learned from his earlier days as a rabbi and never really integrated into his Christian way of thinking. In other words, Paul is not right about Genesis and is more Jewish than Christian in his thinking about women; he is not consistent with his best insights into Christian truth. This sort of position is to be commended for its candour, but its assumptions and consequences must be clearly understood.

From such a perspective the points under debate are no longer related primarily to the application of Paul's principles, but rather to (1) whether Paul made a mistake in his evaluation of Genesis, and (2) whether he was consistent in his application of Christian truth. By adopting this stance we have set ourselves as the judges of Scripture and as the ones who have the right to determine when the words of the apostle are authoritative. We thus claim to stand over the Bible rather than under it. If we may judge the apostolic understanding of the meaning of the gospel to be error at this point of application of faith to life, there is no reason why we should not do so at other points as well. The meanings of the death of Jesus, of the cross itself and of the person of Jesus also become topics on which the apostles may have been in error. The issues being debated are not inconsequential. The authority of Scripture is the issue which is finally under debate. Paul expressed his own understanding of the authority of his teaching and of those who would overthrow it. He said, 'If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. If he ignores this, he himself will be ignored' (1 Cor. 14:37-38). Paul claimed to write as 'one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy' (1 Cor. 7:25). Strikingly, he made these claims precisely in the context of his (presently questioned) teachings about women and men. Was he right?

I have tried to point out the consequences of dismissing Paul's teachings as culturally relative where he did not think that they were. This does not free us from the task of trying to understand and responsibly to explain them. We must ask whether, in fact, we are able to follow Paul's use of Genesis and to understand how it can be reconciled with an honest assessment of the meaning of Genesis.

An excursus on Genesis 1-3 and Paul's use of it

We have noted in our studies that both Paul and Jesus use the opening chapters of Genesis for support for their teaching about the relation of men and women. Let us review the important Pauline texts and then consider their use of Genesis:

1. 1 Corinthians 6:16. In this text Paul argues that sexual union of a believer with a prostitute creates a monstrous 'one flesh' relation (Gn. 2:24) and that a member of the body of Christ should instead be united to Christ in the Spirit. None considers this a misuse of Genesis.

2. 1 Corinthians 11:7-9. Paul argues for male headship because man is the image and glory of God and the woman the glory of the man (verse 7), because the man did not come from the woman but the woman from the man (verse 8; Gn. 2:21-22), and because the woman was created for the sake of the man (verse 9; Gn. 2:20). We have already considered the question of 'image' and 'glory'. We shall review them and consider his other points.

3. 1 Corinthians 14:34. Paul cites 'the Law' without making clear what he means. We have already discussed and dismissed the suggestion that he meant Genesis 3:16 and need not pursue this text further.

4. Ephesians 5:31. Paul cites Genesis 2:24 to point out the close unity of a husband and wife as 'one flesh'. None questions the appropriateness of Paul's point. We have already devoted considerable space to this text.

5. 1 Timothy 2:13-14. Paul appeals to the temporal priority of Adam's creation ('Adam was formed first'; cf. Gn. 2:20-22) and to Eve's having been deceived (Gn. 3:6; cf. 3:13) as showing that women should not teach or exercise authority over men. Both of these points need consideration.

The points at issue may be listed as follows:

(1) What is the relation between Adam and Eve's equality as the 'image of God' and women's subordination as taught by Paul?; (2) Do the facts that Adam was made first, that Eve was taken out of him, and that she was made 'for his sake' or to be his 'helper' mean that she should be subordinate? and (3) Does the fact that Eve happened to be deceived mean that all women should be subordinate to their husbands? With these in mind, we must turn to the Genesis narratives.

a. Genesis 1 and Paul's use of it

As part of our discussion of 1 Corinthians 11, we considered Paul's use of the terms 'image' and 'glory' in relation to Adam and Eve. According to Paul, the man is the image and glory of God and the woman is the glory of the man. In that discussion we noted that Genesis 1 was not in fact being cited by Paul. For the purposes of this chapter, we need to review our conclusions concerning the actual meaning of 'image' in Genesis 1 and the meaning of Paul's use of the term in 1 Corinthians 11.

We noted that the entire first chapter of Genesis is concerned with the rule of God over his creation and with his establishing of

a variety of realms with creatures to rule over them (day: sun; night: moon, sea: fish, air: birds, *etc.*). Mankind is distinct from all other kinds in its calling to image God by having dominion over *all* of the realms and their rulers. We noted that the chapter does not bring relationships within species into view. It does not comment on headship among animals, although there are clear dominant and subordinate roles among many of them. Our applications of Genesis 1 to Adam and Eve must therefore be carefully restricted to speak only where the text speaks. This means that the interpreter of the text can and must say that both men and women are to multiply and to rule over the creation as a joint task. The interpreter may not seek to read into the text any implications about the headship, subordination or equality of the sexes. To make Genesis 1 speak to such issues is a matter of projection of prejudice rather than of extraction of textual meaning.

We noted in our previous study that in 1 Corinthians 11 Paul was not discussing the idea of image in the sense of Genesis 1. The discussion of 1 Corinthians 11 does not focus upon the rule of mankind over creation, but upon the headship of the man in marriage and worship. Thus man 'images' God as 'head' and the woman does not. In a similar vein, we found that the concept of 'glory' deals with the showing or manifesting of the role or station of another. Man points to and honours the rule of God by being subordinate to him and by the manner of his headship with respect to his wife. The wife is the glory of her husband as she points to or honours his headship by her life and attitude. We concluded, therefore, that Paul did not teach that women are the 'image' of men, or that women are not the image of God in the sense of Genesis 1:26-28. He did teach that the relation of men and women in worship and in the home is such that the man images God and is his glory as he exercises his leadership role and that the woman is the glory of the man as she appropriately responds. In other words, Paul's use of 'image' and 'glory' is not an abuse of Genesis; indeed, it is not even an appeal to it.

b. Genesis 2 and Paul's use of it

We must now turn our attention to the teaching of Genesis 2 and to Paul's use of it. This chapter is the one upon which Paul draws to explain his view of the relation of the sexes. He develops three particular arguments to show that women should subject themselves: (1) Adam was formed first (1 Tim. 2:13; Gn. 2:20-22);

(2) Eve was taken out of him (1 Cor. 11:8; Gn. 2:21-22); (3) she was made for his sake (1 Cor. 11:9; Gn. 2:20). We shall consider these in order.

i. Adam was formed first, then Eve

As we have seen, 1 Timothy 2:8-15 teaches that men rather than women should teach and exercise authority in the church. Paul goes on to refer to the prior formation of Adam as supporting his conclusion. Recent debate has asked what the relevance of this might be and whether such a line of thought ought not to lead to the absurd position that land animals ought to rule mankind because they were formed first, or that the birds and fishes should rule all else by virtue of their formation on the fifth day, or even that the plants of the third day ought to be rulers over the animals and man. Reflection upon the meaning of primogeniture (being first-born) in the Old Testament and in Paul's writing suggests that such criticisms are not well founded.

In the Old Testament, as we noted in chapter 2, the first son inherited a 'double portion' of his father's goods (*i.e.* twice what his brothers received) and became the head of his father's house and leader of its worship upon the event of his father's death. The first-born inherited command of resources and the responsibility of leadership in the home and in worship. He became 'head' of the household. This law (Dt. 21:15-17) can be seen in effect in the cases of Reuben (Gn. 49:3) and Esau (Gn. 27:19) in the Old Testament, and is presumed in the New Testament in the parable of the prodigal son (Lk. 15:11-32). It appears figuratively in Elisha's plea for the 'double portion' of Elijah's spirit (2 Ki. 2:9). The oldest son had particular responsibilities for the younger ones, and to him was due certain respect. Paul's appeal to the prior formation of Adam is an assertion that Adam's status as the oldest carried with it the leadership appropriate to a first-born son (Adam, the first human, could not be 'first-born'. He was instead 'first formed').

The theme of the authority of the first-born finds expression elsewhere in Paul. Colossians 1:15-18 deliberately intertwines the themes of Christ's being temporally prior to the rest of creation and his having the authority of the first-born over it. It reads,

He (Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven

and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

Space limitations make it impossible to try to unravel all of the cryptic imagery of this complex passage, but it is well worth noting the interplay of themes which we have considered throughout this book. Christ is set out as (1) the Image of God, (2) the First-born, (3) the Originator or Source of creation, and (4) the Head of the church. All of these are drawn together as the basis of his supremacy or authority over everything. From this supremacy comes blessing to the church. Our earlier study of Ephesians 1:22-23 and of the parallel passage, 5:22-33, has shown that Paul pointedly called attention to the implications of this pattern of thought about Christ's headship and authority for the role of 'head' which is to be exercised by a husband for the sake of his wife. Christ's authority, the model for husbands, is tied with his being the 'first-born'. We should not be surprised that Paul saw Adam's being 'first formed' as implying authority! In the light of the strong Old Testament background and of the clear-cut Pauline parallels, I conclude that Paul's comment that men should teach and exercise authority because the man was formed first fits within his familiar patterns of thought and is intended to say, in effect, that the man is to exercise the role appropriate to the first-born male.

We are now in a position to respond to the suggestion that Paul's argument leads to the conclusion that animals or trees ought, by right of temporal priority, to rule over mankind. Proponents of this argument rightly call attention to the fact that the Scripture says that people are to rule over the animals and trees; Genesis 1:26-28 makes this point forcefully. They fail, however, to take into account the important considerations of the Old Testament precedent and other Pauline teaching which we have just examined. Further, they lose sight of the differences between mankind and the animals. They finally make Paul to be saying, in effect, the first bull born in a man's house should be ruler of his son upon his death. The laws of primogeniture apply to humans born in a home. They do not apply in such a way as to confuse the first animal with the first son! The idea that Paul's argument

makes mankind subordinate to the animals which were formed before him needs to be explored, and then firmly dismissed as inadequate.

We have noted Paul's view that Adam's priority of formation resulted in his being appointed to carry the responsibilities of the first-born. Is this view really compatible with the teaching of Genesis, or does it read in what the text would deny? The actual text of Genesis 2 makes clear the prior formation of Adam, but does not discuss its implications *as such*. Does it do so by implication? Some have suggested that the fact that the woman was made to be man's helper, to be a 'helper appropriate to him' ('*zr kngdw*), indicates that she was intended to be subordinate. This interpretation rests upon a misapprehension of the meaning of 'helper' ('*zr*'). In English, the term can mean 'junior assistant'. It is highly questionable whether this is a legitimate reading of the Hebrew. The term is used to describe one who lends a hand or helps out, frequently in a context of need. It is most often used of God in relation to Israel. Woman's role as 'appropriate helper', therefore, does not carry with it an implication of subordination. She is the needed helper whom God supplies to end man's loneliness and to work alongside him, not the junior assistant.

Are there other textual considerations which suggest that subordination was in view? Adam's naming of the animals and of his wife, as well as the explanation of the name given her, suggest so. These are best taken up in conjunction with Paul's discussion of the fact that the woman was taken out of the man.

ii. The woman was taken out of the man

In 1 Corinthians 11:8 Paul defends the headship of the man from the fact that the woman was taken out of (*ek*) him. His point has seemed obscure to modern readers, who often ask what is to be proven from her origin except that the two were literally one flesh. As we have seen, some have asked whether this line of argument does not lead to the conclusion that the ground ought to have authority over man because he was taken from it. Those who do not see man as a special creation of God have often dismissed Paul's point as ignorant of the evolutionary origin of man or have (condescendingly?) commented on the fact that by Paul's argument mankind ought to be subject to the apes and other species from which he has descended ('out of' which he came). We have noted that this sort of argument is to be dismissed as failing to

recognize the biblical distinction between man and the animals and the explicit assignment of man to the role of ruler of the rest of creation. It still remains, however, to make a positive statement about Paul's meaning.

1. Origin and authority. Biblical thought knows a strong respect for the power to originate and for the role of being derivative. We have already seen this in connection with Paul's discussion of Christ as the beginning or originator of all things (Col. 1:15-18). The same train of thought is to be seen in the respect due to parents from children. The child is derived from both parents ('out of' the father; 'through' the mother; cf. 1 Cor. 11:12) and to honour both. The father, the male origin, is the senior with respect to authority. This background, of itself, is sufficient to generate the authority of which Paul spoke. Adam's historical situation prevented Eve's developing from his 'seed' in a woman. She was instead specially formed by God, from his body itself, to be Adam's helper and the mother of all mankind. Adam was her 'source' and to him was due appropriate honour. Although it would have been present in Hebrew minds, this line of reasoning is not developed by the text itself. It is by another line of thought that we come to see the relation between origin and authority more clearly.

2. Naming the animals. The text of Genesis 1 and 2 makes it clear that both mankind and the animals were shaped by God. Mankind, however, was made to rule over the others and to guard the garden of God. His rule is expressed in his naming of the animals. This idea is foreign to modern readers. It is therefore worth considering briefly the function of 'names' in the Old Testament.

For the Hebrew a name was not simply a group of vocables which correspond to a thing or person. The 'name' of something was related to its essence or function. The various names of God, for instance, describe different aspects of his person and action. Yahweh or Jehovah was his identity as the covenant God who promised his blessing to Abraham and to his seed. To 'know' a person or a God, for a Hebrew, might mean either to know about that one, or to have experienced a relationship with him. Thus, when God says to Moses that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob knew him as God Almighty but not as Jehovah, he was not saying that they had never heard the name of Jehovah (Ex. 6:2-3). He was rather saying that they had experienced his power, reflected in the name 'God Almighty', but had not experienced his fulfilment of

the covenant promises which he had made. Moses, on the other hand, would 'know' him as Jehovah as he and the children of Israel experienced deliverance from Egypt and received the promised land. To them he 'revealed his name', *i.e.* acted in accord with his character as indicated in the name.

In the twentieth-century West we no longer give our children proper names reflecting their characteristics. We may, however, do so in people's nicknames: Shorty, Ginger, Fatty, *etc.* A friend of mine observed, 'Even people who don't name their children according to essence or function name their pets that way. Our Siamese cat is called Idle-wild because he *is*. Someone didn't understand and asked bewilderedly, "Why do you name your cat after an airport?"'

'Name' was associated with function and the power to assign or to change a name was connected with control. Jacob, whose name meant 'the supplanter', obtained his older brother's birthright by cunning (Gn. 27). In his later life he continued to operate by his own cunning rather than by trust in God. In Genesis 32 God meets with him in the form of an angel and wrestles with him. Jacob cannot prevail against his mysterious opponent, who ends the match by simply touching Jacob's thigh, putting it out of joint. Having thus shown his power over Jacob, God assigns him a new name, Israel, the one who wrestles with God. When Jacob asks God's name, God declines to give it. God is the ruler; he names Jacob but will not be named by him, nor even inform him of his name.

Within this context we can begin to see the importance of God's bringing of the animals to the man whom he has appointed to rule the earth 'in order to see what the man would call them' (Gn. 2:19-20). God was not waiting to see what sounds Adam would associate with each animal. The prerogative of assigning them names reflects control. He was allowing his viceroy to express his understanding of and to exercise his rule over the animals by assigning them names. Adam does so, and demonstrates his control: 'whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name'.

There was, however, no animal which was appropriate to be Adam's companion. God therefore put Adam to sleep and fashioned a woman from Adam's own body (2:21-22). It is what happened next which demonstrates the authority of the man with respect to the woman. The text says

Then Jehovah God made a woman from the part he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called "woman" (*'iššah*), for she was taken out of man' (*'iš*) (Gn. 2:22-23).

Adam's response to the woman both stresses their unity ('bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh') and also stresses his rule over her in that he assigns her a name ('she shall be called. . .'). This stress on unity and subordination is familiar to us from the New Testament texts which we have studied.

The name which Adam gave, *'iššah*, means 'woman' and sounds like the word for man, *'iš*. A pun of sorts may have been intended. Yet who knows what language was spoken? It is also possible that the actual name given is not the only thing in view when Adam says, 'because she was taken out of man'. It may be that he is commenting on the reason that he has the privilege of naming one who is, after all, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. If so, what he said may be paraphrased, 'She is indeed my own kind, from my own body. She is, however, derivative and it is my privilege to assign her a name. Let her be called by the name I give, "woman", because she was taken out of me.'

Adam's responsibility to act as God's subordinate ruler, even after the fall, is reflected in Genesis 3:20 where he assigns the woman a new name in response to God's promise that, despite the sentence of death as the result of sin, the woman will bring forth live children to continue the race (3:15-16). We read, 'Adam named his wife Eve (*hwh*; literally, 'living'), because she would become the mother of all the living.' His headship continued after the fall. It would be a mistake to say that it began with the fall.

I conclude that Paul's cryptic remark that the fact that the woman was taken 'out of' the man is faithful to the teaching of the Genesis narrative, which reflects the headship of the man over the woman who was taken out of him in the accounts of the man's naming of both the animals and his wife. Paul's faithfulness goes beyond his observation of male authority. He reflects its teaching by his emphasis that the unity of the sexes stands alongside a hierarchical or headship relation.

iii. Woman for the sake of the man

We come now to the final conclusion which Paul drew from Genesis 2 in support of the headship of the man. According to Paul the woman was made for the sake of the man. It is not at all difficult to grasp his point or to verify it from the text of Genesis. Adam was made and no appropriate companion and helper was found for him. For the sake of providing such a companion and helper, God formed the woman. There can be no question that she was made for his sake rather than vice versa.

Problems begin to arise as men and women interpret this fact. Men are prone to abuse it and to conclude that women were made to be either their slaves or their playthings. Women often feel deeply resentful, inferring that the text suggests that women were made as an afterthought and that their sole purpose is to be 'used' by men. They sometimes feel the text gives them no valid existence except as an appendage to men. These attitudes of men and women are in error and are tremendously destructive.

The text of Genesis and the text of 1 Corinthians do not say that women are made to be men's playthings. They do say that women were made to share with men in the service of God and in the custodial ruling of the earth. The woman was indeed made for the sake of the man's need, but it was his need of a companion and fellow-worker rather than his need for toys which was in view. When men conceive of their wives as less than a God-given help which they need, or, worse still, begin to treat them in such a fashion, they are unfaithful to the teaching of Genesis. They are also falling short of the example of Christ's headship; he is head and brother and husband to the church. His leadership is for its benefit. It is not his toy, but his love. The church is not depersonalized in its relation to Christ but fulfilled in its humanity. For men to adopt a lesser model is unfaithfulness.

The headship of men in the home and in the church does not rob women of their purpose in life or make them only appendages of men. Both sexes are members of Christ's body. They share in the ruling of God's creation and in the publication of the gospel. As we have noted, all humans are to serve God in a structure which includes appointive headship. The arrival of the kingdom has introduced a new situation in which the validity of women's existence apart from men is clearly demonstrated. Some men and women will be gifted to be eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom. Their service to God does not involve marital structures. Further,

in the resurrection marriage relationships will be done away with completely. Who then can be seen as an appendage?

c. Genesis 3 and Paul's use of it

We have now examined Paul's use of the first two chapters of Genesis. We have found that he does not contradict the teaching of Genesis 1 that both sexes are the image of God, called to rule the world and that he faithfully reflects the teaching of the second chapter in his teaching of male headship in worship and in the church. Paul's application of the teaching of these chapters which discuss events before the fall is in line with the teaching of Jesus that the arrival of the kingdom would enable humans to live out the Creator's original design for marriage. We must now turn our attention to his use of the third chapter and to relationships which resulted from the fall. This is of particular importance since numerous critics of Paul's teaching have argued that women's subordination was the result of the fall and that Paul, mistakenly, made the distorted relations after the fall to be normative. Our exegesis of pre-fall teaching has shown this view to be in error. It now remains to study the teaching of Genesis 3 and Paul's use of it.

i. It was the woman who was deceived

First Timothy 2:14 explains, 'Adam was not the one who was deceived; the woman, being deceived, became a sinner.' How did Paul think these cryptic words offered support for his view that women ought not to 'teach or exercise authority over men'? Did he mean that Adam knew better (was not deceived) and did not sin? Is he saying that women are therefore responsible for the fallen state of mankind and that, as a punishment for Eve's act, no women should be allowed to teach? Does he mean that Eve and other women are gullible and should not be allowed to propagate their ignorance?

Rabbinic schools and Jewish theologians debated the cause of the fall. Some laid responsibility at Eve's feet.⁵ Romans 5:12-21 make it clear that Paul was not among their number. He placed the responsibility specifically upon the shoulders of Adam. Comparing Adam's sin to Christ's obedience, he said, 'Sin entered the world through one man'; 'death reigned through that one man'.

⁵ N. P. Williams' study, *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin* (London, 1927), remains one of the most valuable sources of information in this area.

(Rom. 5:12, 17). Paul's clear statement leads us to discount the possibility that 1 Timothy 2:14 is saying that the fall was Eve's fault. A straightforward reading of the text suggests another possibility. Paul seems to be saying that Eve was *not* at fault; she was deceived. Adam, on the other hand, was not deceived but, deliberately and with understanding, chose to sin.

We may similarly dismiss the likelihood that Paul was saying that all women are gullible, as was Eve, and therefore are untrustworthy teachers. Titus 2:3 directs the older women to teach the younger. Paul urged Timothy to continue in the teaching of the Scriptures, which he had known from infancy (2 Tim: 3:15). Inasmuch as his father was a Gentile and Paul commended the sincere faith of his Jewish mother and grandmother (2 Tim. 1:5), we can only presume that it was they who taught Timothy from his infancy. In the same vein we note Priscilla and Paul's female fellow-workers. In the light of the central role of all these women, I think it very unlikely that Paul meant to say that the fact that Eve was deceived shows that all women are too gullible to teach.

Another simple reading of 1 Timothy 2:14 is possible. If we ask who was at fault in the fall, the verse answers: 'Adam was not deceived; the woman, being quite deceived (*exapatētheisa*), fell into transgression.' We know from Romans that Paul considered Adam at fault. The verse under consideration appears virtually to excuse Eve on the basis that she was in reality deceived by the serpent. Adam, on the other hand, is said not to have been deceived. His sin was therefore with understanding and deliberate! Christian men cannot indulge themselves by saying, 'Oh, that Eve had kept her mouth shut and not done it!' Paul says that Adam, not Eve, did it and that he did it knowing full well what he was doing.

But how, then, does Paul's point help his case about women in authority? Would you rather be led by an innocent but deceived person, or by a deliberate rebel? Our study of other Pauline uses of Genesis provides some help. In 1 Corinthians 11:8-9 and in 1 Timothy 2:13 we saw that Paul appealed to the divinely established relationship of the partners as supportive of his understanding, arguing that the *pre-fall* role relations should be normative for the church. Can verse 14, which discusses the fall itself, be understood from such a perspective?

Consider the topic under discussion in this section of the chapter: teaching and exercising religious authority. Paul points out in verse 14 that Eve was deceived by the serpent about the central

theological issue of the truthfulness of God. Adam was not, and became responsible for their falling into sin. We have seen that Paul considered that headship (responsibility to lead and final accountability) was given by God to men in the home and in worship. Could it be that his point in verse 14 is that Adam was the one appointed by God to exercise religious headship, and that he was the one prepared by God to do so? On this basis there is no need to generalize to the preparation of other women to make religious decisions, as the divine assignment of headship in religious affairs to the husband is the point in view. Paul's point might then be paraphrased, 'The man, upon whom lay responsibility for leadership in the home and in religious matters, was prepared by God to discern the serpent's lies. The woman was not appointed religious leader and was not prepared to discern them. She was taken in. Christian worship involves re-establishing the creational pattern with men faithfully teaching God's truth and women receptively listening.' This interpretation brings Paul's remarks into line with his other uses of Genesis. It is yet another call to re-establish the creational relationship in the time before the return of Christ. How does this view stand up to the teaching of Genesis? An examination of the fall and of the curse sanctions in Genesis 3 offers further understanding.

ii. The curses of Genesis 3

The first part of Genesis 3 relates the temptation of Eve and the consequences of the fall in the hiding of the man and his wife from one another and from God. It is from verse 8 that the text is most relevant for our present purposes. In verse 9 God addresses the man to ask where he is and why he has hidden. While it is precarious to build much upon the fact, it is worth noting that it is the man who is addressed and questioned. It is apparently he who is the family spokesman. The exchanges with God and the curses give further insight into the roles of the man, the woman and the serpent.

We shall consider first the curse upon the serpent. Whereas both the man and the woman are questioned as to why they have acted as they have, the serpent is asked no questions, but only cursed. The first part of the curse (3:14) marks him as cursed beyond all animals and comments on the manner of locomotion which marks serpents. It is not clear whether this portion announces a new situation (*i.e.* that serpents, who formerly walked or flew, will

now crawl) or whether the serpent's lowly posture and constant licking of the dust will now be a sign of God's curse (thus negatively paralleling the adopting of the rainbow which follows rain as a sign of God's promise to Noah). The latter seems the more likely.⁶ The second half of the curse (3:15) discusses a new relation which will obtain between the woman and the 'serpent' and between their respective seed. It should be carefully noted that the new thing is not that they relate to one another but the manner in which they relate. It is not simply relations with snakes which are in view, but relations between Satan and mankind. Mankind should have ruled over Satan, but yielded instead to his seduction and will suffer at his hand as he seeks to destroy them. The warfare between Satan and the woman's seed comes to its climax in the death of Christ. That hour of Satan's apparent victory is in fact the hour of his defeat and the redemption of the fallen race. Returning, now, to the curse on the 'serpent', we see that the fall has distorted relations between actual snakes and humanity (real snakes strike people; people crush snakes) and between the one who used the serpent, Satan, and humanity (Satan seeks to destroy the race; Christ's victory will overcome Satan's effort). The curse on the serpent declares that the pre-fall relations of mankind and the 'serpent' will be (1) painfully distorted but (2) God will prevent the distortion from overthrowing his original plan.

The same basic pattern is discernible in the curse upon the man (3:17-19). It has often been noted that the man sought to evade his responsibility by explaining that the woman whom God gave him led him into sin (3:12). The curse upon the man denies his plea. He is cursed because he listened (*i.e.* yielded) to the voice of his wife. His responsibility was to obey God; it cannot be evaded. The curse itself is of importance. As a consequence of his disobedience the ground itself is changed and their relation distorted. Whereas he had previously dressed the garden and eaten of the earth with freedom (2:15-16), he would henceforth eat of it in sorrow (3:17). Although it would continue to yield its fruit and he would continue to eat of it, the ground would now resist his efforts and raise up thorns and thistles to cause him pain (3:18). Man's role as guardian of the garden in fellowship with God was changed to that of an exile labouring in the sweat of his face until

⁶ For substantial yet readable discussion of the curse contents, see G. Vos, *Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, 1948), pp. 52-55. A less technical treatment is available in E. J. Young, *Genesis Three*, (London, 1966).

he dropped from his toil as a result of God's judgment upon his sin (3:19). It should be noted that what was new was not the relation of man to the ground. He had previously ruled over it and it had yielded its fruit peaceably. The new element introduced by the fall is the conflict and the pain. Once again we have (1) a painful distortion of an existing relation and (2) a divine promise that the disruption, despite the pain, will not overthrow the original plan.

Against this background, let us turn to the curse upon the woman. She, as her husband, is questioned about her disobedience (3:13). She explains that she was deceived and ate. It is striking that, while the serpent was specifically cursed because of his deed (3:14) and the man cursed for his deed (3:17), the woman is not told that her curse flows from *her* deed. If we bring to bear an idea of Adam's headship, we may *speculate* that her curse may be the first example of 'original sin', *i.e.* that her curse comes not only for her sin, but also because Adam, the head of mankind, has sinned and those whom he represented suffer as a consequence. Whatever the relation of her curse to original sin, we must consider its content.

The curse upon the woman divides into two parts. The first concerns child-bearing, the second her relation with her husband. The commands of creation (1:28) include a calling to multiply and to fill the earth. Childbirth was therefore a part of the pre-fall pattern for humans. As a result of the fall this process will become very painful (3:16). By the grace of God, however, the process will not fail and live children will be born. As before, (1) an existing relation has been distorted painfully, but (2) the grace of God will prevent its destruction.

We now come to the relation of the wife to her husband (3:16). Here God says, 'Your desire shall be to your husband; nevertheless he shall rule over you.' Does he mean that she will begin to want a husband and that a new relationship of subordination will be set up? The text is often understood in this way. It is thought by many that the previous relation had been that of partners with no subordination and that the change is her great desire for a husband which will lead her even to subject herself. The analogy of the preceding curses and an examination of the wording of this portion suggest another alternative.

All of previous curse sections involved the painful distortion of an existing relation and its preservation by God's grace. Can this

section be seen in the same light? It might be said that her desire for her husband was new and his rule a painful distortion, but this approach leaves no gracious preservation despite the pain. A study of the words 'desire' (*šwq*) and 'rule' (*mšl*) provides a better insight. In what sense does the woman 'desire' her husband? We have already noted that the word can be interpreted as 'long for' or 'want' in a positive sense. Genesis 4:7 offers quite a different perspective. Cain is told, 'sin is lying in wait at the door and his desire (*šwq*) is to (rule over) you, but you must rule over (*mšl*) him'. The parallel to the curse is obvious. Sin's desire is to overcome or overthrow Cain. If this negative meaning of *šwq* in Genesis 4:7 is brought back into the preceding chapter, the woman is being told that she will come to desire (*šwq*) to overthrow her husband, but that he will rule (*mšl*) over her. This meaning, warranted by the use of desire and rule in chapters 3 and 4, brings this curse in line with all the others. The relation of the man and woman will be (1) painfully distorted by her desire to overthrow him, but (2) she will not succeed; he will nevertheless rule over her. History shows that because of his sinfulness and her resentment his rule itself will often be painful and abusive.

The net result, then, is that God's words to the woman concerning her relation to her husband are not pointing to the establishment of a new marital hierarchy, but to the painful distortion of an already existing hierarchical relationship, the existence of which we have already noted in connection with Genesis 2. The latter half of the curse is intended to show that God will prevent her effort to overthrow her husband from succeeding.

With respect to the deception of Eve, to which Paul makes reference, note that she seeks to excuse herself on the grounds of her deception and, although cursed by God, is not contradicted on the point. She was, in fact, deceived and her husband was not. His judgment was for wanton disobedience. The exchange between God and the couple suggests throughout that the husband was presumed to be the one responsible for religious decisions and the spokesman for the couple with God.

iii. Multiple roles: a problem when interpreting the first pair

Interpreters of the first couple have a major problem: their relation involves an intricate superimposing of numerous roles. Adam functions as priest, husband, and perhaps as head of the social unit. It is impossible to separate one role from another. It is im-

possible to derive principles from their situation for application to more complex social arrangements without further information. It is in this context that the rest of Scripture becomes important. We have noted that the headship of men in domestic and religious affairs continues from the pre-fall period through the time of Christ's advent and will continue until his return and the end of marriage relations. In the religious sphere we found that the larger social units of the tribe and nation were accompanied by the appointment of certain representative males in the area of worship. This same principle evidently continues to hold true in Paul's arrangement of the church.

d. Conclusions

We have now surveyed each of the texts in which Paul drew upon the opening chapters of Genesis in support of his teaching about the relation of men and women. We have found that those chapters teach that both sexes are the image of God and called to rule the earth. They also demonstrate male headship in the accomplishment of that task. We noted, however, that this headship is not such that women are demeaned or made less worthy. It has to do with the service of God by mankind, not the service of men by women. Genesis 1 stressed the joint task of the race in ruling the earth. The second chapter described the formation of the man and his exercise of authority in the naming of the animals. Because no appropriate co-worker was found, a woman was formed by God out of the man. Her purpose was to share in man's rule. We found that his naming of her reflected his role with respect to her. In the third chapter we noted that the headship of the man was reflected in his being called upon to answer for the pair and possibly in the lack of explanation of the basis of her curse.

Our study of the curses themselves indicated that in each case an existing relation was painfully distorted by the fall but, by the grace of God, those relations were not allowed to be entirely destroyed. Thus the serpent was hostile to the woman, but would be destroyed by her seed rather than destroying it. The land, likewise, resisted the man's efforts to gain food, but would nevertheless yield it. Pain would accompany child-bearing, but live children would be born. In the marriage relation the woman would seek to overthrow the man, but would not achieve her end.

It is interesting to note that the temptation itself was connected with this matter of hierarchy. Satan through the serpent led Eve

to persuade her husband that God had lied about the fruit for selfish reasons. The order of authority thus established is Satan, serpent, woman, man. The order which should have prevailed in this debate over religious authority (*i.e.* should God or Satan be accepted as the source of truth) should have been: *God* the definer of truth, who spoke first to the *man*, who communicated with his *wife*, who shares in the rule over creation, including the *serpent*, which may be in the garden-sanctuary of God, while *Satan* the liar is excluded.

It appears that Paul's cryptic references to the early chapters of Genesis are in line with the actual teaching of the chapters and in line with his own teaching elsewhere as well as with the teaching of Jesus that the present state of the kingdom calls for the renewal of the creational relationships by a renewed mankind. Contrary to much current thinking, we found that Paul did not build his view of the relationship of men and women from Genesis 3 and events after the fall, but rather appealed consistently to Genesis 2 and relationships prior to it.

4. Saved through childbirth?

We have found that Paul's prohibition of women teaching or exercising authority over men in the church is in fact a call to make things as they were 'in the beginning'. One more element needs attention before we complete our study of 1 Timothy 2. Verse 15 reads, 'women will be saved/kept safe through (the?) childbirth, if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety'. This verse is difficult to follow and presents two difficult linguistic problems.

First, it is difficult to know which of several things Paul meant when he wrote 'she will be saved through (the) childbirth'. His verb, *sōthēsetai*, may mean either 'she shall be saved' or 'she shall be kept safe'. If the former refers to salvation from sin, it is a flat contradiction of Paul's view of salvation by trust in Christ and thus raises impossible contradictions. The second option makes Paul's words say, in effect, that she will survive childbirth if she is pious. This seems almost totally irrelevant to the context and quite unlike Paul. Other options are available; we shall discuss them below.

A second interpretative problem with the verse has to do with 'the childbirth' (*teknogonia*). The expression which Paul uses is unusual. It is optional whether 'the' should be included. If it is,

it suggests that a particular childbirth is in view. We shall explore this further.

A final problem with the verse has to do with the shift from a singular to a plural subject. Paul has been discussing Eve and moves in his discussion to women in general. The singular subject suggests that at that point in his sentence he had either woman-kind, 'woman', or Eve in particular in view. The plural subject at the end indicates a general application to women. Why the shift?

It is possible that Paul's reference to 'the childbirth' is a reference to the birth of Jesus, the promised child. In recent years this view has been challenged by many, but remains quite possible. It would be an obscure reference. Paul has, however, been discussing Eve and the fall. It would not be surprising for him to turn in his thinking to the remedy for the fall. His words would then be interpreted as meaning, 'Eve will be saved from the curse through the birth of the promised child, Jesus, and other women who exhibit obedient faith will similarly be saved.' This accounts for his shift from the singular to the plural subjects in quite a natural way, for other women will be saved on the same basis as Eve. The drawback of this reading is the fact that it breaks with the flow of the passage. Paul does make such shifts of thought, but a reading which maintains the flow might be preferable.

It is possible to understand this verse as a continuation of the discussion of women's role. The passage has been discussing patterns of conduct for men and women in prayer, in adornment and in teaching and worship. The interpretations thus far proposed have assumed that Paul meant that women would be saved either from judgment or from death in childbirth. I would propose the possibility that he is thinking instead that Eve and women in general will be saved or kept safe from wrongly seizing men's roles by embracing a woman's role. This allows the text to be read as it stands and keeps it in line with the issue at hand. It also raises a question: did Paul mean that all women should marry? That is a possible implication of verse 15. Lives of 'faith, love and holiness with propriety' can be for all women; childbirth is only for the married and, indeed, not for all of them. We know from 1 Corinthians 7 that Paul considered *both* celibacy and marriage divine callings and actually preferred the former. In the light of his attitude to marriage it is unlikely that he would call all women to marry. It is, therefore, more likely that he is speaking generally

of a woman's role when he speaks of childbirth, using a typical part to represent the typical whole.

Twentieth-century cultural developments make the selection of child-bearing as the part to represent the whole seem inappropriate or strange. Public opinion is increasingly against the bearing of children. Both men and women often look upon children as a problem and a burden. In some circles the bearing and raising of children is viewed as a prime means of reducing women to bondage. This sentiment is sometimes expressed in the remark 'keep 'em barefoot and pregnant'. It is easy to see that Paul's remarks here will be abrasive if received from such a perspective. We have already considered biblical attitudes toward child-bearing. The bearing and raising of children were considered by women and men alike to be activities of surpassing personal and social worth. The bearing of children was a central element in the definition of womanhood and in the fulfilling of God's calling to mankind. The selfishness of our twentieth century, which does not want its enjoyment of pleasures undercut by the financial and personal obligations entailed in raising a family, was not common in the first century. In his day the bearing of children which Paul selected as a part to represent the whole of the high calling of women was a valued activity which women embraced with joy and with pride and for which they were deeply respected.

On the interpretation which I am proposing, we may paraphrase Paul as saying that women in general (and most women in his day) will be kept safe from seizing men's roles by participating in marital life (symbolized by childbirth), which should be accompanied by other hall-marks of Christian character (faith, love and holiness with propriety) which will produce the adornment of good deeds for which he called in 2:10.

C. ELDERS, DEACONS AND 'WOMEN': 1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13

Our study of 1 Timothy 2:8-15 has shown that Paul's use of the primogeniture concept and the roles reflected in the early chapters of Genesis is in keeping with both his and Jesus' view that the followers of Christ should follow the Creator's patterning of the relation of men and women. In the area of the church, this meant that certain men should teach and exercise authority and that women should learn responsively. The next chapter of 1 Timothy raises the question of formal offices within the church. The topic

is as important today as it was in Timothy's day. Indeed, it is probably more of a battleground today than it was then. 1 Timothy 3 describes the qualifications required of persons who will be elders and deacons in the church. The requirements for elders are such that women cannot hold the office. The verses dealing with the office of deacon are less clear and will need close attention. Before considering these issues, however, a brief discussion of church offices is in order. This is particularly important in view of the difference in church government found among modern churches.

1. Church office in the New Testament

We noted in our examination of Jesus' ministry that he did not establish an ecclesiastical structure during his personal ministry on earth. It was only after the resurrection and ascension that the church began to wrestle with questions of that sort. The book of the Acts gives indications of an emerging structure, but does not give sufficient detail to gain a full picture. The letters provide more insight. Our study below of the 'eldership' will not be a balanced one. We shall be paying particular attention to the question of teaching and authority. This stress is *not* the dominant or central note in biblical discussions of the office. As we have noted, Christian authority is for the sake of service. The elders are to nurture, guard, teach, build up, and be examples to the flock. Deacons minister to it. Responsibility to foster growth and to ensure faithful teaching necessarily entails authority. Authority can be abused. We have already noted Jesus' concern to prevent abuse of authority (Lk. 22:24-26). His concern is reflected by Peter (1 Pet. 5:1-2). I hope that the concentration on authority in the study which follows will not mislead any into thinking that I am suggesting that the eldership should be conceived of primarily in terms of authority and the right to command. The eldership should be seen primarily in terms of shepherding.

In Acts we see apostles and 'elders' (Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2-23; 16:4; 20:17; 21:18) and the appointment of 'deacons' (*diakonoi*, men who serve needs) to ensure fair treatment of Hebrew and Hellenistic widows (Acts 6). We do not know if this last category represents a unique case or is to be related as prototypes to the 'deacons' of the letters of the New Testament.

Acts witnesses the appointment of 'elders' (*presbyteroi*) in cities such as Ephesus. We shall consider their tasks and then those of

the deacons. We get some indication of their function when Paul charges them, 'guard . . . all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers (*episkopoi*, 'bishops'). Be shepherds of the church of God . . .' (Acts 20:28). The elders (or bishops or presbyters; the terms are used interchangeably in the New Testament) were charged with the welfare of the congregations. Their shepherding responsibilities involved guarding their people against false teaching (20:29) and teaching them by word and example to live as Christians (1 Pet. 5:1-3; Eph. 4:1, 12). Acts knows other roles in the church such as prophet and evangelist. In many cases it is difficult to know whether a function (*i.e.* activity) or a formal role (*i.e.* office) is being mentioned. For our purposes it is not necessary to resolve questions about all of the offices.

The New Testament letters, especially those to Timothy, Titus and the Philippians, witness to the establishment of the categories of elder and deacon in a formal way. Paul and Timothy are teachers of the apostolic message and Timothy is charged to entrust that message to qualified men who will in turn teach others (2 Tim. 2:2). These men are not just congregational members, but have formal responsibility for passing on correct teaching, which teaching is to be lived out in the lives of the Christians (2 Tim. 1:13-14; 3:10-12). Such men are elders who direct the life and work of the church. Paul commands that 'the elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honour [possibly 'honorarium', *i.e.* wage], especially those whose work is preaching and teaching' (1 Tim. 5:17). The author of the letter to the Hebrews comments on such men from a slightly different perspective. He calls upon his readers to be mindful of those who rule over them (13:7) and to 'obey those who rule over you and submit yourselves to them, for they watch over your souls, and they must give account' (13:17). Paul charged the elders/shepherds to watch over the sheep which God had placed in their charge. The author to the Hebrews charged the sheep to obey and noted that the shepherds are accountable for them. These texts from the letters to Timothy and Hebrews supplement what we have seen in Acts and provide a picture of the elders as men who are involved in the direction of the congregations and who are charged particularly with teaching, ensuring that the message is faithfully taught and directing the outworking of the message in the life of the church. These tasks involve distinctive leadership and authority, extending to formal actions to rid the flock of the 'savage wolves' whom the

apostle warned would rise up within the flock (Acts 20:29; cf. 1 Cor. 5).

We need not pursue the work of the elder here at length. Sufficient has been said to show that his task of instruction, shepherding and discipline falls easily within the areas of 'teaching and exercising authority over men' which Paul reserved to men in 1 Timothy 2. These basic considerations will be of importance when we look at 1 Timothy 3.

The role of deacons is more difficult to define precisely from Scripture. Our task is additionally complicated by the complexities of various contemporary forms of church government and by their diverse understandings of church office. In many Baptist church governments, the 'minister' is also considered *the* 'elder' of the congregation. He sometimes shares in the disciplinary (although not necessarily in the preaching) responsibilities with a board of 'deacons'. Such 'deacons' are thus exercising some of the tasks which fell to the 'elders' of Acts 20 and to the qualified men who were 'elders' in the letters to Timothy.

We shall first consider the biblical data. The term *diakōnos* means 'one who serves', 'servant' or 'minister'. It can be used to describe the activity of 'one who serves' the needs of another (Mk. 9:35; 10:43). It can also describe one who represents or acts on behalf of another as his servant or minister (Acts 6; Eph. 3:7). In this sense it takes on a slightly more formal meaning. The formal, representative aspect and the idea of serving others can come together, as with the deacons of Acts 6 who ministered to the needs of the widows as representatives of the church. The term 'deacon' points both to their representative role and to their actual function in serving. It is clear that the deacons of Acts 6 possessed a certain amount of authority in their distribution of food. A question arises, however, if we ask whether, for instance, this authority is of a sort which, if given to women, would violate the restrictions upon them as set by Paul in 1 Timothy 2:11. He seems to have had in view teaching and discipline rather than serving through distribution of goods. We shall discuss this further when we discuss 1 Timothy 3.

The biblical data are not the only data to be considered when using the terms 'elder', 'bishop', 'minister' and 'deacon' today. The terms are used differently in different forms of church government. Virtually all are agreed that the role of the bishop, elder or presbyter is one which involves responsibility to direct the life

of the flock, teaching with authority, and the exercise of disciplinary authority to guard the faith. The term 'minister' is most frequently used of a man who preaches regularly and supervises the pastoral care of the congregation. His function is thus that of an elder. The term 'minister' can, however, be used in a less technical way to describe someone who meets the needs of others (ministers to their needs). In this sense it has little to do with church office as such. It is important to be careful to grasp which sense is intended in a given context.

The term 'deacon' is more varied in its meaning than the others. In some polities (forms of church government) the elders are concerned with the spiritual oversight of the congregation and for the faithful teaching of the apostolic message, while the deacons are responsible for ministering to the physical needs of the congregation and the practical demonstration of Christian love. In such situations the deacons, as other believers, may be involved in 'teaching' in the sense of sharing the Word, but are not involved in 'teaching' in the sense of having primary responsibility to ensure the faithful passing on of the Word and to correct or to discipline where that does not occur.

In other polities the 'deacons' do share in the spiritual oversight of the flock and are differentiated from the 'pastor' or 'elder' more by training and by the fact that they are not full-time servants and teachers in the church. In such cases, the activities of deacons overlap the activities of elders in the exercise of authority and even in teaching.

A third basic use of the term 'deacon' occurs in churches which ordain men as deacons as a first step to the eldership or priesthood. In such cases the authority involved depends upon the definition of the office by the particular church.

Other meanings of 'deacon' exist and some churches combine more than one of the above. Each reader must consider his or her own church situation and make appropriate allowances in the discussion which follows. It will become clear that I prefer the first of the three understandings.

We have noted that the central element in the role of the elder is related to the shepherding of the flock. The flock is to be directed and guarded so that it may be nourished and grow. Teaching and correction are included in the task. The 'deacons' of Acts 6 were men who were well respected in the congregations and would not be suspected of favouring either Jews or Greeks. Their task was

not in directing the flock, but in distributing resources. The apostles, on the other hand, continued in prayer and the ministry of the word (Acts 6:4). This basic division is not identified as corresponding to that of elder and deacon in the letters to Timothy, but is very suggestive, especially when coupled with those passages in the letters to Timothy which call for the committing of the apostolic message to men who will faithfully teach and for special respect for elders who direct the church by teaching and by preaching (1 Tim. 5:17; 2 Tim. 2:2). This impression is strengthened by the coupling of apostles and elders in the authoritative decrees of the Council held at Jerusalem (Acts 15). Those elders were certainly carrying out functions parallel to those of the apostles.

If the elders preach and teach and shepherd, what did the deacons do? 1 Timothy 3 isolates elders and deacons as special classes of persons, with special qualifications, and also clearly distinguishes them from one another. In Acts 20 Paul met with the elders, but not with the deacons of Ephesus, addressing them as the shepherds of the flock (Acts 20:28). The deacons of Acts 6 did not teach and rule but served physical needs. Could it be that the deacons of 1 Timothy 3 are to be distinguished from the bishops by a similar division of labour? I think so.

The discussion which follows will presume that both deacons and elders are congregational representatives and are distinguished by their tasks. The elder's calling is to foster the spiritual growth of the congregation, and the deacon leads in ministering to its physical needs and showing the love of Christ to outsiders through meeting their physical needs. Elders teach with formal authority and exercise disciplinary authority to protect the flock; deacons do not share this task. As described, the task of a deacon does not involve the sort of teaching and exercising of authority which 1 Timothy 2:11-12 reserves to men. With this understanding of the office of the deacon, therefore, there is no violation of biblical restrictions on authority if women serve as deacons. This fact does not authorize the appointment of women deacons, but it does remove a problem which many face when they think of women deacons. *Other understandings of the office of deacon*, it must be re-emphasized, *may include types of authority which would reserve the office to men*. During the discussion which follows, further reasons for adopting the definition of the diaconate which I have preferred will emerge. If we are going to avoid confusion, it is

important to keep in mind the view of the diaconate which I have adopted above.

2. Elders, deacons and women

Our preceding discussion has pointed out that the responsibilities of elders are such that they are within that area of teaching and authority reserved by Paul to men. The qualifications for elders (*episkopoi*, 'bishops' or 'overseers') reflect this. The office is specifically for men as indicated by the requirement that they have but one wife. It should be noted, however, that one woman married to two men would have been unthinkable and would therefore not require comment. The remainder of the set of qualifications is cast exclusively in male terms. I conclude that the teachings of 1 Timothy 2 and the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3 restrict the office of elder (bishop, presbyter) to men only.

1 Timothy 3:11 mentions a group of 'women' (*gynaiikes*) who have become the centre of much controversy. Their significance is derived from the fact that they appear in the midst of a discussion of the qualifications necessary for the office of deacon. Are these women wives of the deacons mentioned, or of the elders mentioned previously; or are they themselves deacons? Paul's actual wording is ambiguous. *Gynaiikes* means 'women', but that is the standard word used to speak of wives as well. Its definition is therefore dependent upon considerations relating to the context and to other biblical instruction rather than to translation as such. The relevant verses read as follows:

⁸Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain.

⁹They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. ¹¹In the same way, wives/women are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

¹²A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. ¹³Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 3:8-13).

A number of factors make the mention of these women worthy of close attention. The basic options as to their identity are:

(1) they are women in general, (2) they are the wives of bishops and deacons, (3) they are wives of deacons, (4) they are themselves deacons, and (5) they are a group similar to but distinct from deacons.

It is virtually impossible that Paul interrupted a list of qualifications for deacons to list desirable attributes for women in general. We may dismiss the first option.

If he had the wives of deacons and elders in view, it is strange that he should place them in the midst of a discussion of deacons. They would more naturally follow the deacons. This option must be classed as unlikely but possible. It is more likely from their location that they would be wives of deacons. Other issues, however, raise questions about such an identification.

1. The location of the 'women' makes it unlikely that they include elders' wives. Yet it is strange that the wives of deacons should be singled out for close scrutiny and the wives of elders neglected.

2. If Paul intended to talk of wives, he could easily have made his intention clear by saying 'their wives' or even 'the wives'. Translations wishing to adopt the meaning 'wives' have generally supplied one of the two words. The biblical text offers no support for this.

3. Paul might have introduced the 'wives' in a manner similar to that which he used for the children in verse 4: 'having wives' (*gynaikas echontes*). He did not so choose.

4. Instead of using a pronoun which would have clearly shown the women to be wives ('their') or introducing them in a manner which showed them to be family members like the children ('having wives . . .'), Paul chose to introduce the women in a manner which set them parallel to the elders and deacons, implying a new, similar class of persons. He said, 'Women, likewise . . .' (*gynaikas hōsautōs*). The importance of this becomes clear when set alongside the introduction of the bishops (verse 2) and of the deacons (verse 8). He said, 'Elders must be . . .', 'Likewise, deacons (must be) . . .', 'Likewise, women (must be) . . .'. The relation between the three is clear. It is further strengthened by the fact that both the sentence introducing the deacons and the one introducing the 'women' have no verb of their own but presume the verb used to describe the elders: *dei*, 'must be'.

5. Consideration of the qualifications of the three classes shows a particular relation between the deacons and the women. All

three classes must be persons who hold public respect. This would naturally be important if they were to act on behalf of the church. The qualifications for the deacons include some elements which are distinctive and probably indicative of their particular role. The lists below compare the qualifications for the deacons and the 'women' of verse 11.

deacons:

worthy of respect

(*semnous*)

not double-tongued

(*mē dilogous*)

not given to much wine

(*mē oinō pollō prosechontas*)

not pursuing dishonest gain

(*mē aischrokerdeis*)

women:

worthy of respect

(*semnias*)

not slanderers

(*mē diabolous*)

sober/temperate

(*nēphalious*)

trustworthy in all things

(*pistas en pasin*)

The qualifications are point for point parallel. The final item in each list has to do with trustworthiness. In the case of the deacon it looks to his business life. In the case of the women, it looks to their handling of daily affairs and relationships, perhaps because few women were involved in business affairs.

The list for the deacons goes on after the first four items to require a firm commitment to the truths of the faith and that he be 'tested' (*dokimazesthōsan*) prior to being admitted to office. The word used for tested may simply mean 'examined'; it is, however, also used for a financial audit or examination. If the deacons were responsible for the administration of financial resources, the inclusion of an investigation of his financial affairs makes good sense. The fact that most women were not involved in financial affairs explains the lack of an audit for them.

3. Phoebe and the title 'deaconess': Romans 16:1

The combination of Paul's setting the women parallel to the elders and deacons as a distinct class and his setting out parallel lists of qualifications strongly suggests that the function of these women was parallel to that of the deacons. Why did he not simply call them deaconesses? In Paul's time the word did not exist. As we saw in the case of Phoebe, *diakonos*, the masculine form of 'deacon' or 'servant', was used for both men and women. The fact that

Paul used *diakonos* to introduce the men in 1 Timothy 3:8 explains the necessity of another word in verse 11 if he wished to turn attention to women deacons. All debate would have been settled if he had said 'women who are deacons' instead of 'women'; yet, if they had women deacons, it would have been quite unnecessary as everyone would have understood what he meant. Further, the expression *gynaikes diakonoi* would be clumsy. If they had a category of 'women' (perhaps 'women of the church?') who corresponded to the deacons but were not called by that name it would be unnecessary to identify them more specifically than verse 11. The likelihood of such a group is somewhat lessened by the fact that these women appear in the middle of the discussion of deacons.

A final matter needs attention before we finish with 1 Timothy 3. After discussing the women of verse 11, Paul returns to the topic of deacons. Verse 12 sets out two additional requirements for deacons which parallel those needed for elders (being husband of one wife and managing their households well). Two points need to be made concerning these. 1. These requirements are uniquely applicable to men. Their position after the similar lists for deacons and women may be because they are distinctive in this sense. 2. Verse 13 uses an aorist participle, 'those who have served well' (*hoi kalōs diakonēsantes*). It is not, therefore, looking at qualifications for but at performance in office. It has been suggested in various places, perhaps with good reason, that verses 12 and 13 have in view deacons who have served well and who, because of their outstanding character, might be considered for the election to the office of elder. If such a change of role is in view, it would explain the mention in verse 12 of these two qualifications which are also required of elders.

I conclude, then, that 1 Timothy 3:1-11 sets out qualifications for three groups of persons: bishops (elders), deacons and women who probably served as deacons as well. For this latter group the church soon coined the term 'deaconess' (*diakonissa*). Pliny seems to echo such usage in his letter to Trajan (AD 112) speaking of them by the Latin form *ministrae*. Verses 8-10 describe qualifications for men being considered as deacons. Parallel qualifications are given for the women in verse 11. Verses 12 and 13 comment further about persons who have served as deacons in terms appropriate only to men, possibly thinking of men who may be chosen for the office of elder. Verse 13 indicates by its aorist (past)

tense that it is talking of performance in office; it is possible that verse 12 is as well.

D. CONCLUSIONS

In the light of our consideration of 1 Timothy 2 and 3, I conclude that Paul taught that the office of elder/bishop/presbyter was restricted to men. He felt that the creational pattern of male headship in both home and church required that women should not exercise spiritual oversight of the flock. They could not be in positions of authoritative teaching or exercising discipline over men. He grounded his view in the relationship of the man and his wife before the fall (although we have noted that it continued beyond it) rather than on relationships established as a result of the fall of Adam. He did not make any appeal to cultural factors such as the relative lack of education for women or the response which outsiders might have to women in positions of responsibility. The nature of his argument leaves virtually no room for modification of his conclusions as a result of alterations in cultural situations.

Conclusions concerning the office of deacon are different. If we understand the deacon's office to involve leading and representing the congregation in ministering to the physical needs of its poor and needy and in expressing Christian love through physical ministry to those outside, the office does not entail authority of the sort prohibited to women in 1 Timothy 2. The 'women' of 1 Timothy 3 are best understood as a group of persons set parallel to the bishops and deacons. They would most naturally be assumed to be women deacons. The example of Phoebe, who is identified in Romans 16:1 as a *diakonos* (deacon/servant) of the church in Cenchraea, lends positive (but not indisputable) support to this conclusion. 1 Timothy 3 does not specify the relation of the female deacons (or women) to the males.

In the lack of such information, each church which establishes women as deacons or in some parallel role must determine their specific responsibilities in the light of passages such as 1 Timothy 2.