

as Keshishian would advocate, such a conciliar fellowship should be empowered to make decisions on behalf of the united church.

However consoling this may be to evangelicals, it makes the whole concern with conciliarity seem almost irrelevant. When all the agreements the author envisages are already present, the form of unity, conciliar or otherwise, will be a secondary matter. The reality will already have been achieved.

It is very well possible, however, that many Protestant member churches would be satisfied with a conciliar fellowship achieved without the painstaking work of establishing this kind of essential agreement. Are they ready to adopt Keshishian's vision as their own?

This book is a noble effort, providing some answers to questions as to what conciliarity is, might be, or ought to be. But the answers are not agreed answers, and therefore the groping is not yet ended.

— John H. Kromminga

I Suffer Not A Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11-15 in Light of Ancient Evidence, by Richard Clark Kroeger and Catherine Clark Kroeger. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992. Pp. 253. \$12.95 (paper).

In the current debate about women's ordination, 1 Tim. 2:11-15 continues to be one of the main bones of contention, and has occasioned a spate of exegetical studies (see the recent article by Gordon P. Hugenberger, "Women in Church Office: Hermeneutics or Exegesis? A Survey of Approaches to 1 Tim 2:8-15," in *JETS* 35 [1992], 341-60). In the present volume, the first book-length study of this disputed passage, Richard and Catherine Kroeger offer the most extensive presentation of their approach to this text, expanding on the briefer statements found in their joint article "Women in the Church" in the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (1984), and in Catherine Kroeger's essay "1 Timothy 2:12 — A Classicist's View" in *Women, Authority & the Bible* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1986), pp. 225-44. To a more limited extent, the book also carries forward themes found already in Catherine's first attempt to find an alternative to the traditional interpretation, published as "Ancient Heresies and a Strange Greek Verb" in the *Reformed Journal* 29.3 (March 1979), 12-15. The book is therefore an updating and an elaboration of more than a decade's work on these disputed verses.

Although the book is written for a general audience, it also makes a serious attempt to observe high standards of scholarship. The footnotes are replete with references to the ancient sources in their original languages, and to secondary literature up to 1990 in Latin, French, German

and Italian, as well as English. Clearly, the Kroegers are concerned to demonstrate to their evangelical readers that their proposal is based on extensive, solid, and up-to-date scholarship. They deplore the fact that "evangelical scholarship has not always been of a level of excellence that earned the respect of nonevangelicals" (p. 38), and are evidently determined to present a case which can withstand scholarly scrutiny. In this review I intend to subject the Kroegers' book to just such a scrutiny, focusing on the exegetical, historical, and methodological aspects of their argument, and leaving to one side the rhetoric engendered by the women's ordination debate.

The Kroegers' basic thesis has a philological and a historical component. Philologically, they argue that verse 12 should be translated "I do not permit woman to teach nor to represent herself as originator of man, but she is to be in conformity [with the Scriptures] [or that she keeps it a secret]" (p. 103), and maintain that "to teach" in this context means "to teach a wrong doctrine" (p. 81). Historically, they argue that there had arisen in the first-century Christian community in Ephesus a Gnostic (or "proto-Gnostic") heresy characterized by the following teachings: (1) Eve was the origin of Adam; (2) Eve came before Adam; (3) it was Adam that was deceived, Eve was in fact his enlightener; and (4) childbearing is something religiously unworthy. If we put the philological and historical arguments together, it becomes clear that the apostle in 1 Tim. 2:12-15 contradicts each of these Gnostic teachings in turn: verse 12 counters (1), verse 13 counters (2), verse 14 counters (3), and verse 15 counters (4). In short, the passage is concerned to refute a specific heresy at a specific time and place, and we should not read it as a universal restriction on the role of women in the church.

It is clear that this bold and ingenious exegetical proposal has a claim to be taken seriously. After all, it is sound exegetical procedure to try to determine the specific historical situation to which a portion of Scripture was originally addressed, and there are certainly difficulties surrounding 1 Tim. 2:11-15 (both in terms of its detailed exegesis and its implications for Christian obedience today) that justify a reconsideration of the traditional interpretation. Moreover, the Kroegers have amassed a wealth of documentation in support of their interpretation that is impressive in its range.

Nevertheless, it needs to be said that their proposal, both philologically and historically, is a signal failure. In fact, it is not too much to say that their book is precisely the sort of thing that has too often given evangelical scholarship a bad name. There is little in the book's main

thesis that can withstand serious scrutiny, and there is a host of subordinate detail that is misleading or downright false.

Consider, for example, their proposed new translation of verse 12. They are unable to adduce a single example, either from biblical or secular Greek, of διδάσκειν meaning "to teach a wrong doctrine." (Nor does that meaning follow, as they suggest on p. 81, from the fact that this verb and its cognates in the Pastorals generally imply positive or negative content.) As for the interpretation of ἐν ἡσυχία εἶναι as either "be in conformity [with the Scripture]," or "keep it a secret," this is equally arbitrary and unfounded. The fact that ἡσυχία can on occasion have the connotation of "peace" or "harmony" hardly warrants the translation "conformity" (this simply trades on the ambiguity of the word "harmony" in English), much less the gratuitous insertion of "[with the Scriptures]" as part of the translation (p. 103). Nor is there any warrant for the claim that ἐν ἡσυχία εἶναι can mean "keep it a secret," a translation which seems to be based on a confusion with ἐν ἡσυχία ἔχειν τι (LSJ s.v. ἡσυχία, 3).

The authors go to great lengths to argue that the verb αὐθεντεῖν can mean "to represent oneself as originator of" or "to proclaim oneself author of" (p. 103), but their argument can hardly be taken seriously. Ignoring the fact that αὐθεντεῖν is attested in New Testament times in the meaning "have authority over," they take their point of departure in the meaning "originate," a rare sense of the verb which is not attested before the fourth century A.D. Moreover, for the Kroegers' overall proposal to work, they need to find evidence that the verb can mean "claim to originate." They find this evidence in the sixteenth-century Greek-Latin dictionary of Stephanus (and some of its derivatives), which states that αὐθεντέω means *praebeo me auctorem*. They then interpret this Latin definition to mean "to represent oneself as author," and go on to equate this with "asserting oneself to be the author or source of." Having established the sense in this way, they proceed to find this new meaning in three patristic texts of the fourth and fifth centuries (pp. 102-5).

All of this makes an initial impression of great erudition, but masks the fact that the Latin idiom has been misunderstood (it simply means "behave as originator of," a Latin way of saying "originate"; see under "praebeo" in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* [5, b-c] or the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* [I,B,1 and II,B,I]; compare Calvin's Latin rendering of Heb. 5:2 and 2 Pet. 3:9) and that in the long history of classical scholarship the Kroegers are the first to find this sense in the three patristic texts cited (all three are listed under the meaning "be primarily responsible for, instigate, authorize" in Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, s.v. 4). They even

go so far as to suggest that Stephanus must have had access to Greek texts that are now lost (p. 102), and that the failure of contemporary Greek lexicons to list this sense has something to do with the rise of feminism (p. 230, note 29).

Furthermore, although they cite a good deal of secondary literature on *αἰθενεῖν* and its cognates (p. 228, note 1), they repeatedly misunderstand the sources they cite, and they fail to mention important recent literature which counts against their own interpretation. For example, a Latin quote from Guillaume Budé is completely misunderstood on p. 102 (to make matters worse, the original is cited in a badly garbled form; see p. 230, note 27), and their mistranslation of a German citation about *αἰθενεῖν* shows similar incompetence (p. 101). Conspicuous by its absence is any reference to the important article by L. E. Wilshire, "The TLG Computer and Further References to *Αἰθενεῖω* in 1 Timothy 2:12," *New Testament Studies* 34 (1988), 120-34, which provides extensive evidence that supports the traditional interpretation of *αἰθενεῖν* in 1 Tim. 2:12. (They do quote other literature from 1988, and have at least five references to items published in 1990). They also repeat the common mistake of asserting that the verb *αἰθενεῖν* means "to murder" in ancient Greek (pp. 86, 185, 203); in fact, this meaning is not attested for the verb (not to be confused with the noun *αἰθένης*) before the tenth century A.D.

Philologically, it seems, the Kroegers are adept at making a Greek text say what they would like it to say, and their scholarly documentation is riddled with elementary linguistic blunders. Further examples in the latter category are the assertion that *παραθήκη* in the Pastorals refers to Paul's "will and testament" (p. 44; an apparent confusion with *διαθήκη*), and the made-up Greek sentence in which the accusative singular of *ἄνθρωπος* is given as *ἄνθρωπον* (p. 191).

Unfortunately, things are not much better with the Kroegers' historical argumentation. There is in fact no direct evidence that their postulated Gnostic sect ever existed in first-century Ephesus, or indeed that a Gnostic group fitting their description ever existed at all. The sect which, on their view, is the key to understanding 1 Tim. 2:11-15 is really nothing more than a hypothetical reconstruction based on disparate features of pagan religion in Ephesus and Anatolia, and on a few much later Gnostic documents. For example, for the Gnostic view that Eve precedes and creates Adam (points [1] and [2] above) they adduce only passages from the two related Nag Hammadi tractates called *The Hypostasis of the Archons* and *On the Origin of the World* (p. 121), found in Egypt and dated to the third or fourth century. There is no evidence

that any other Gnostic group ever held this view, despite the impression which the Kroegers seek to create on pp. 119-20. Since there was a plethora of such groups in the second century, it is very forced to appeal to these third-century documents from Egypt to establish a point about a hypothetical first-century sect in Ephesus.

Furthermore, the appeal to the two Nag Hammadi texts is itself seriously flawed. Even if we grant that the passages cited (*Hyp. Arch.* 89.12-18; *Orig. World* 115.30-116.8) do refer to Eve *creating* Adam, and not just rousing him from sleep (which seems the much more likely reading) it needs to be pointed out that the Eve in question is the *heavenly* Eve, which the Gnostics distinguished from the earthly Eve who was Adam's human partner. Consequently, even if this *could* be shown to be the view of the Kroegers' hypothetical Ephesian Gnostics, it would not be refuted by Paul's statement in 1 Tim. 2:13 that "Adam was formed first, then Eve," since Paul is clearly referring to the earthly Eve of the biblical story.

Space does not permit a discussion of the Kroegers' attempt to find evidence in Gnostic writings of the views numbered (3) and (4) above. It is enough to say that they can find that evidence only by picking and choosing from a number of different Gnostic groups, from different times and places. It is significant that they can find no group which holds all four of the required doctrines, and that none of the Gnosticisms adduced has any connection with first-century Ephesus. Furthermore, it seems to have escaped the Kroegers that view number (4) contradicts their earlier assertion that their hypothetical Gnostic group "acclaimed motherhood as the ultimate reality" (p. 112).

Perhaps even more damaging is their failure to refer to the extensive ancient sources which *do* refer directly to the Christian church in late first-century Ephesus — none of which supports the presence there of the kind of Gnosticism that the Kroegers postulate. (Note that they consider the Pastorals to be post-Pauline, but date them before 100 A.D.; see p. 44). They make no mention, for example, of the works of Polycarp, Papias, or Ignatius. Nor do they make any reference to the Gospel of John, which was in all likelihood written in Ephesus in the late first century. Presumably the Kroegers are silent about these sources because they do not support the hypothesis that the authors are advocating. For a recent synthesis of the relevant evidence, see Thomas A. Robinson, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Western Asia Minor in the First Christian Century* (Ph.D. dissertation, McMaster University, 1985), especially Chapter 2: "Ephesus and Western Asia Minor: The Key Christian Centre, 70-100 C.E."

The Kroegers' silence about the Fourth Gospel is especially telling, because Irenaeus claimed that John wrote his gospel specifically against Cerinthus, an early Gnostic who was active in Ephesus. One would think that they would have seized upon this bit of evidence as support for their basic hypothesis of a Gnostic group in Ephesus at that time. However, they mention Cerinthus only in passing (pp. 65, 101). How are we to account for their reluctance to pursue this line of inquiry? No doubt the reason is once again the fact that this evidence, on closer examination, does not support their theory. The Cerinthian Gnostics seem not to have espoused the doctrines which the Kroegers need to make their case.

Another reason may have to do with Cerinthus' use of the Greek word *αἰθερία* as the name of his supreme deity. This is a word meaning "absolute sway, authority," and might be taken as evidence that Gnostics in first-century Ephesus would have connected the cognate verb *αἰθετεῖν* with the notion of authority. This, however, is a suggestion which the Kroegers are at some pains to avoid. As it happens, *αἰθερία* (and its adjectival cognate *αἰθετικός*) figures quite prominently in the vocabulary of many Gnostic groups, and scholars are generally agreed that it conveys the notion of sovereignty or authority. The Kroegers, however, although they cannot avoid referring repeatedly to this common Gnostic term and its adjective, generally refrain from translating them (see pp. 101, 110, 118, 152, 222) or else use the word "power," which is less likely to give people the wrong idea about *αἰθετεῖν* (pp. 87, 90, 100, 213).

In addition to all of this, there are innumerable minor errors throughout the book. There is the consistent misspelling of the Greek name Hygieia as "Hygeia" (pp. 131, 162, 163, 248), and of "aretology" as "aretology" (pp. 158, 159 *bis*, 231, 245), the astonishing claim that 2 Corinthians was written "from Asia, probably from Ephesus" (p. 163), the amusing failure to recognize the phrase "perform the rites of Venus" as a seventeenth-century euphemism for sexual intercourse (p. 198), and much more. This review is not the place to list them all.

It is clear from the foregoing that, in the opinion of this reviewer, the Kroegers have conspicuously failed to make their case. No doubt the book will have considerable influence in the evangelical world, but it is very doubtful whether any serious commentary on 1 Timothy will ever adopt its basic thesis. (It is very telling that the authors' display of erudition is contained in a popular book aimed at a broad evangelical audience, not at their academic peers in classical and biblical scholarship.) The book will do its work within the context of current ecclesiastical debates, but its argumentation is a travesty of sound scholarship.

— Albert Wolters



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