

Man and Woman in Genesis 1-3: Ontological Equality and Role Differentiation

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1. Introduction

The question of the relationship between man and woman in Gen 1-3 has received polarized scholarly interpretations that have immensely contributed to a divergence of perspectives on women's ordination. Thus, Gen 1-3 has been used both *for* and *against* women's ordination.¹ As Richard M. Davidson has observed, these chapters "provide a canonical paradigm for the Pentateuch, and also for the whole of Scripture."² He has also noted that "one of the basic issues in the discussion of the role of women in Scripture concerns the questions of headship, submission, and equality in male/female relationships. The answers to these questions are foundational to determining whether or not women should be ordained as elders and pastors in the church."³ Historically, it has been understood that God instituted male headship at creation (Gen 1-2) and reaffirmed it after the Fall (Gen 3) and that God-ordained male headship at creation is binding both within the family and in the church (i.e., complementarian view).

¹ For a recent debate among evangelicals, see Stanley N. Gundry and James R. Beck, eds., *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005); see also John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006).

² Richard M. Davidson, "The Biblical Worldview: Insights from the Introductions and Conclusions of Scripture," a paper presented at the SID Conference on Biblical Foundations to Adventist Education, July 26-August 5, 2012, Bloemfontein, RSA.

³ Richard M. Davidson, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Women in Ministry* (ed. Nancy Vyhmeister; Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 259.

Beginning in the 1960s however, the idea of male headship especially in Gen 1-2 began to be challenged. Typically it is argued that, in addition to both man and woman being created in the image of God and therefore ontologically equal, neither have a headship role (i.e., egalitarian view). With regards to headship in Gen 3, two positions have emerged within the egalitarian view. One position is that, although male headship was instituted in Gen 3, Christ's death has abolished such headship, for in Christ there is "neither male nor female" (Gal 3:28). The other position is that, although male headship is instituted in Gen 3, headship applies only within marriage, not in the church. It must be stated that how headship in Gen 1-3 is understood determines to a large extent one's perspective on women's ordination. So those who hold the complementarian view would generally argue *against* women's ordination to the office of elder/minister, while those who espouse an egalitarian view would argue *for* women's ordination.⁴ On both sides, however, male headship and female submission are often mistakenly conflated with notions of superiority and inferiority.

The debate over women's ordination in the Seventh-day Adventist Church has likewise seen scholars and theologians divide over the interpretation of Gen 1-3.⁵ Yet the early chapters of

⁴The idea of male headship leads to another conclusion, namely, male dominance in OT ministry. Does the male dominance we find in OT priestly and (to a large extent) prophetic ministries assume and reflect a male headship established in Gen 1-3 or does it reflect the general ancient Near Eastern cultural influence? This larger OT discussion lies outside the scope of this study.

⁵See e.g., Frank B. Holbrook, "A Brief Analysis and Interpretation of the Biblical Data Regarding the Role of Women," *Symposium on the Role of Women in the Church* (The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1984), 86-108; Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in Mercedes H. Dyer, ed., *Prove All Things: A Response to Women in Ministry* (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Affirm, 2000), 65-110; Davidson, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," 260-264. For arguments in favor of women's ordination, see, e.g., Caleb Rosado, *Broken Walls* (Pacific, 1989); idem, *Women, Church, God: A Socio-Biblical Study* (Loma Linda, CA: Loma Linda University Press, 1990); V. Norskov Olsen, *Myth and Truth: Church, Priesthood and Ordination* (Loma Linda, CA: Loma Linda University Press, 1990); Jennifer Knight et al., *The Adventist Woman in the Secular World: Her Ministry and Her Church* (North Ryde, NSW: Australia, 1991); Rosa Taylor Banks, ed., *A Woman's Place* (Review and Herald, 1992); Sakae Kubo, *The God of Relationships* (Review and Herald, 1993); Lourdes Morales-Gudmundsson, ed., *Women and the Church: The Feminine Perspective* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1995); Patricia A. Habada and Rebecca Frost Brillhart, eds., *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women* (Langley Park, MD: TEAMPress, 1995); Nancy Vyhmeister, *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998),

the book of Genesis are important in the ordination discussion, as these relate to pertinent issues of the discussion such as male-female equality, role differentiation, and headship/leadership. The main task of this paper is to re-examine Gen 1-3 in order to determine whether the traditional understanding of male headship in the text is exegetically sustainable. Our starting point is to list the major arguments against male headship in Gen 1-3. For the sake of time, we limit this brief review to one Adventist scholar, Richard M. Davidson, and one non-Adventist scholar, William J. Webb.

Davidson has written much on the subject over the past three decades and maintained, to a large extent, a consistent position on the issue of headship in Gen 1-3.⁶ In Gen 1, Davidson observes that “there is no hint of ontological or functional superiority or inferiority between male and female.”⁷ Why? Because (1) both male and female are *ha’ādām* “human”; (2) both are given

135. For those against women ordination, see Mercedes H. Dyer, ed., *Prove All Things: A Response to Women in Ministry* (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Affirm, 2000); Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Study on the Role of Women in Church* (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 1987); idem, *Women in the Church* (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 1982), 36-39; C. Raymond Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg: Biblical Authority, Biblical Interpretation, and the Ordination of Women in Ministry* (Berrien Springs, MI: Pointer Publications, 1994); Lawrence Maxwell, “One Chilling Word,” *Adventists Affirm* 9 (1995): 39-40; Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Searching the Scriptures: Women’s Ordination and the Call to Biblical Fidelity* (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventists Affirm, 1995); idem, *Receiving the Word: How New Approaches to the Bible Impact Our Faith and Lifestyle* (Berrien Springs, MI: Berean Books, 1996); idem, *Must We Be Silent? Issues Dividing Our Church* (Ann Arbor, MI: Berean Books, 2001), 125-297. On the role of women in ministry, see General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Symposium on the Role of Women in the Church* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1984). See also Camp Mohaven documents (1973) (<http://adventistarchives.org/1973-5-mohaven>). For a recent review of the ordination debate in the SDA Church, see David Trim, “Ordination in Seventh-day Adventist History,” a paper presented at the first meeting of the Theology of Ordination Study Committee, January 15-17, 2013, Maryland, USA; also Jan Barna, *Ordination of Women in Seventh-day Adventist Theology: A Study in Biblical Interpretation* (Nova Pazova, Serbia: Euro Dream, 2012).

⁶ See Richard M. Davidson, “Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture,” 260-264; idem, “The Theology of Sexuality in the Beginning: Genesis 1-2,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 26/1 (1988): 5-24; idem, “The Theology of Sexuality in the Beginning: Genesis 3,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 26/2 (1988): 121-131; idem, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 24-35; idem, “The Bible and the Ordination of Women Pastors” (<http://ordination.lakeunion.org/assets/95168>), 1-9.

⁷ Davidson, “Genesis 1-2,” 7.

dominion over the earth and other living creatures; and (3) both share in the blessing and responsibility of procreation.⁸ Simply put, “both participate equally in the image of God.”⁹

“Does Gen 2 affirm the equality of the sexes, or does it support a hierarchical view in which man is in some way superior to the woman or given headship over woman at creation?”¹⁰ Davidson answers his own question by refuting what he deems central arguments for the so-called “hierarchical view.” Unfortunately, both this label and the following description of the view presented here are negative and polemical (a fact which will become increasingly evident as we proceed):

(a) man is created first and woman last (2:7, 22), and the first is superior and the last is subordinate or inferior; (b) woman is formed for the sake of man—to be his ‘helpmate’ or assistant to cure man’s loneliness (vss. 18-20); (c) woman comes out of man (vss. 21-22), which implies a derivative and subordinate position; (d) woman is created from man’s rib (vss. 21-22), which indicates her dependence upon him for life; and (e) the man names the woman (vs. 23), which indicates his power and authority over her.¹¹

Against argument (a), Davidson suggests in Gen 2 that there is an *inclusio*, a literary device “in which the points of central concern to a unit are placed at the beginning and end of the unit.”¹² Accordingly, “the creation of man at the beginning of the narrative and the creation of woman at the end of the narrative correspond to each other in importance. The movement in Gen 2 is not from superior to inferior, but from incompleteness to completeness. . . She is the crowning work of creation.”¹³ Davidson’s response to argument (b) is that *’ēzer k^eneḡdô*

⁸ Davidson, “Women Pastors,” 4, adds, “Genesis 1 proclaims the fundamental equality of man and woman, in both value (in God’s image) and function or role (both together to procreate and subdue the earth).” Thus, function/role is defined in terms of the procreation mandate.

⁹ Davidson, “Genesis 1-2,” 7.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.* See also Davidson, “Headship,” 261, where he adds that equality between man and woman is further revealed by through the use of equal number of Hebrew words to describe the creation of woman as of the man.

“indicates no less than equality”—the man and woman are equal partners.¹⁴ He also argues, against (c), that “derivation does not imply subordination,” so that even though the man was “derived” from the ground, we are not to conclude that the ground is superior to him.

Furthermore, the “man had no active part in the creation of woman that might allow him to claim to be her superior.”¹⁵ In response to argument (d), he states that the “very symbolism of the rib points to equality and not hierarchy.”¹⁶ God created the woman from the man’s side “to stand as an equal.”¹⁷ Accordingly, the man’s exclamation in 2:23 affirms the woman’s equality with man rather than her subordination. Finally, he argues against (e) that while “assigning names in Scripture often does signify authority over the one named,” the term *’iššâ* “woman” is only a generic identification, so that naming does not actually occur here.¹⁸ Davidson would agree with Jacques B. Doukhan’s suggestion that it is the Lord, not the man, who gives the generic title “woman” in 2:23.¹⁹

Following an assessment of major interpretations of Gen 3:16, Davidson concludes that though no “subordination or subjection of woman to man was present in the beginning” (Gen 1-2),²⁰ in 3:16 “a change is instituted in the relationship between the sexes after the Fall, a change which involves the subjection/submission of the wife to the husband.”²¹ The “irrevocable sentence” in v. 16 is “not merely a culturally conditioned description.”²² But while Davidson sees here “a normative divine sentence,” he believes that the headship of man and submission of

¹⁴ Davidson, “Genesis 1-2,” 15.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 16; *idem*, “Headship,” 262.

¹⁶ Davidson, “Genesis 1-2,” 16.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* It is argued that “divine passives” in Gen 2:23 imply the designation “woman” comes from God: “Just as woman ‘was taken out of man’ *by God*, with which the man had nothing to do, so she ‘shall be called woman’ a designation originating in God and not man” (Davidson, “Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture,” 263).

²⁰ Davidson, “Genesis 3,” 126.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 127.

²² *Ibid.* See also Davidson, “Headship,” 267.

woman are applicable to the marriage context, “not a general *subordination* of woman to man. Any attempt to extend this prescription beyond the husband-wife relationship is not warranted by the text.”²³ He finds New Testament texts where male headship is taught to apply only to the husband-wife relationship (1 Cor 11:2-16; 14:34-35; Eph 5:22-24; 1 Tim 2:11-14; 1 Pet 3:5, 6).²⁴

On the basis of the arguments above, Davidson concludes that “there is nothing in Gen 2 to indicate a hierarchical view of the sexes. The man and woman before the Fall are presented as fully equal, with no hint of a headship of one over the other or a hierarchical relationship between husband and wife.”²⁵ In his recent paper summarizing the position for women’s ordination, he affirms the earlier conclusion, “The alleged ‘male headship’ impediment to women’s ordination has been shown to be unfounded in Scripture.”²⁶ We wish to state that Davidson is right in pointing out that Gen 1-3 does not teach male superiority or female inferiority. One of the flaws we find, both in Davidson’s work and in the works of those scholars to whom he appeals for support, is that they confuse headship/leadership with superiority and submission with inferiority. Further, Davidson has not explained why Gen 2-3 places primary focus on the man as opposed to the woman. The question at issue is not whether Gen 1-3 teaches male superiority and female inferiority, but whether it teaches male-female equality and male-female role differentiation simultaneously, and whether the text accords a primacy of responsibility to one of the sexes which can be understood to mean headship. In this study, we argue that man and woman are fully equal, but that such equality is ontological (i.e., equality in nature/essence/being) with functional complementarity (i.e., difference in role/responsibility). Ontological equality does not rule out role differentiation. In 1973 Gerhard F. Hasel presented a

²³ Davidson, “Genesis 3,” 130.

²⁴ Ibid., 130-131; idem, “Headship,” 273-284; idem, “Women Pastors,” 7-9.

²⁵ Davidson, “Genesis 1-2,” 18-19.

²⁶ Davidson, “Women Pastors,” 9.

paper on Gen 1-3 in which he held most of the views espoused by Davidson.²⁷ For example, he stated that in Gen 1-2 “man and woman are equal sexes with neither one having power and authority over the other” and that “these chapters militate against the notions of superiority or inferiority on the part of either man or woman.”²⁸ It may be noted that in this article Hasel did not deal directly with the question of women’s ordination, though (based on questions he raised in his conclusions) some have incorrectly concluded that he supported women’s ordination. Fifteen years later, Hasel presented another paper to the General Conference Commission on the Roles of Women in the Church in which he took a position against women’s ordination to pastoral ministry,²⁹ and Jan Barna rightly includes Hasel among the opponents.³⁰ This paper, published in part by *Adventists Affirm* (1989),³¹ does not deal specifically with the book of Genesis; yet while discussing hermeneutical issues relating to the ordination of women with special focus on Gal 2:28 and 1 Tim 2:11-15, Hasel makes significant references to Gen 1-2. He writes, for example,

The creation order emphasizes an ontological (personal) equality with functional differentiation. The creation narrative reveals the equality and unity of man and woman from the start (Gen 1:27) without obliterating functional diversity or differences as being male and female (Gen 1:27; 2:18-25). The ontological and functional aspects of humankind have not always been recognized as being present in Gen 1-2 and inadequate conclusions have been drawn from the equality in Gen 1-2 without considering the functional differentiation between the sexes. There is perfect harmony between the ontological and functional aspects of the creation order.³²

²⁷ Subsequently published by the Biblical Research Institute: Gerhard F. Hasel, “Man and Woman in Genesis 1-3,” *Symposium on the Role of Women in the Church* (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1984), 1-22.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

²⁹ Gerhard F. Hasel, “Biblical Authority, Hermeneutics, and the Role of Women,” a paper presented to the 1988 General Conference Commission on Roles of Women in the Church (1988), later redistributed under the new title “Hermeneutical Issues Relating to the Ordination of Women: Methodological Reflections on Key Passages” (May 23, 1994).

³⁰ Barna, 46, 61-62.

³¹ Gerhard F. Hasel, “Biblical Authority and Feminist Interpretation,” *Adventists Affirm* (Fall 1989): 12-23.

³² Hasel, “Hermeneutical Issues,” 9.

The fundamental difference between the work of Hasel and that of Davidson is that while Davidson holds both ontological and functional equality in Gen 1-2 and declares the path cleared for women's ordination, Hasel sees ontological equality and role differentiation between man and woman in Gen 1-2, and finds it confirmed in the New Testament and modeled after the relationship within the Godhead: "Subordination does not infer inferiority; equality does not demand role interchangeability; difference does not imply subordination. . . . Since there is role differentiation in the triune Godhead but there is still equality, there can be role differentiation in the male-female relationship without inferiority."³³ This allows Hasel to conclude, "The functional differentiation must not disallow women to teach or minister in the church, but it seems to disallow her from teaching authoritatively (1 Tim 2:8-15; 3:1-7)."³⁴

Unlike Davidson, the evangelical scholar Webb concedes that male headship exists in Gen 2.³⁵ Out of the eight features of the creation narrative cited, Webb finds two to "reflect an egalitarian spirit" while the rest "convey subtle overtones of patriarchy."³⁶ First, Gen 1:26 affirms "the equality of male and female as joint recipients of the image and likeness of God."³⁷ Second, man and woman have an "equal share in the mandate to rule over creation" which suggests a "shared and balanced power-and-responsibility model in the relationship."³⁸ Third, the woman is described as "helpmate" though Webb adds that "only contextual factors beyond the word [*'ēzer*] should be used to establish whether the status of the helper is higher, lower or equal to the one being helped."³⁹ Fourth, woman's creation from man's rib must not be overstretched,

³³ Ibid., 17.

³⁴ Ibid., 53.

³⁵ William J. Webb, *Slaves, Women, and Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2001), 127-131.

³⁶ Ibid., 127.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., 128.

for “at the most, the rib imagery depicts the solidarity and unity of man and woman in their one-flesh relationship (cf. Gen 2:23).”⁴⁰ Fifth, the man names the woman, though this “is at best a very subtle dimension of patriarchy.”⁴¹ Sixth, the man leaves and cleaves, not the woman. But Webb quickly adds that “the leave-and-cleave statement should probably not be used to support an original creation hierarchy. It is doubtful whether such a statement reflected pre-Fall conditions.”⁴² Seventh, that God addresses man first in Gen 3:3-11 “places a heightened focus” on the man and serves as “a quiet whisper of patriarchy within the garden.”⁴³ Finally, for Webb, creation order—man first, woman second—is “the most credible piece of data in support of patriarchy in the creation story.”⁴⁴ The man-woman sequence of creation, however, is “written and read through a primogeniture framework,” so that the reason “modern readers do not see its patriarchal significance today relates to a lack of primogeniture practices within our contemporary culture.”⁴⁵ Webb suggests, in effect, that the creation of man before woman is meant by the writer of Genesis to be understood through the ancient Near Eastern primogeniture practice as the apostle Paul does in 1 Tim 2:13.⁴⁶ For him, “Eden’s quiet echoes of patriarchy might be a way of describing the past through present categories. The creation story may be using the social categories that Moses’ audience would have been familiar with.”⁴⁷ Webb then argues that because primogeniture practice is not a Christian mandate, male headship in the man-woman relationship in Gen 2 and 1 Tim 2, which is associated with the primogeniture practice, is

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 129.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 131.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 130.

⁴⁶ Webb devotes several pages to in his work to argue that “Paul uses primogeniture logic in 1 Tim 2:13 in order to establish his point about the status of men over women” but that “such logic . . . should be viewed as having a significant cultural component” (ibid., 136).

⁴⁷ Ibid., 143.

to be deemed cultural rather than transcultural. This conclusion is in line with his assumption that “a component of a text may be transcultural if its basis is rooted in the original-creation material”⁴⁸ but that “one cannot automatically assign a transcultural status to all that is found within the garden—some things will be transcultural while others will be cultural.”⁴⁹ For example, among the nine cases cited,⁵⁰ he finds biblical teaching against “divorce”—on the basis of Gen 2—to be transcultural while the “Sabbath” is “a good example of a creation pattern with a significant cultural component.”⁵¹

This paper does not intend to specifically engage Webb’s arguments on Gen 2. Suffice it to note that while he acknowledges “possible hints” of male headship in the creation text, he consciously downplays these “hints” and finally rejects headship through his redemptive-movement hermeneutic in which he invites Christians to move beyond Scripture towards an ultimate ethic wherein headship does not apply. With regards to Gen 1-2, Webb’s hermeneutic is unsafe as it suggests that the creation account is not “very helpful in assessing what is cultural and what is transcultural” and that “the original creation material should play a *supplementary* role in the evaluation of what is cultural and transcultural within Scripture.”⁵² Further, his suggestion that the man-woman creation order is influenced by primogeniture practice in later history is tantamount to denying the historicity of Gen 2.⁵³ It should be noted that unlike Gen 2 where the woman is created *from* the man, later primogeniture practice never assumes that siblings of a particular family are created *from* the firstborn son. In other words, the

⁴⁸ Ibid., 123.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 124.

⁵⁰ These are divorce, polygamy, singleness, farming as an occupation, ground transportation, procreation command, vegetarian diet, Sabbath, and length of workweek (ibid., 124-126).

⁵¹ Ibid., 126.

⁵² Ibid., 133.

⁵³ For example, he states that “the whispers of patriarchy in the garden may have been placed there in order to anticipate the curse” (ibid., 143).

primogeniture custom does not explain why Eve should be created *from* Adam. It is possible for Gen 2 to provide some meaning for primogeniture, but the reverse is certainly not the case. The custom of primogeniture has not influenced the writing of the text. Wayne Grudem and Benjamin Reaoch have shown the weakness of Webb's hermeneutic and his claims about primogeniture logic in Gen 2 and 1 Tim 2.⁵⁴ Definitely, a hermeneutic that questions biblical authority and the historicity of Gen 2 as Webb's does cannot fit the Adventist understanding of Scripture. As Hasel states so well,

It is evident that a totally and completely egalitarian stance on women without any male and female role differentiation demands a limitation of the authority of the Bible. The limitation of such authority in these matters is justified by the limitation of the binding nature of the Sabbath (culturally limited to Jews), the adornment of women (culturally limited to Ephesus), and the footwashing ceremony (culturally limited to the disciples of Jesus) in current evangelical feminist literature. In short, whatever position is taken on the issue of the role of women in the church cannot be separated from such items as the Biblical authority for the Sabbath, footwashing, and adornment . . . Once the Pandora's box of limited authority is opened, who can close it? If we use principles or norms of our culture for decisions as to what in the Bible is or is not of a binding and lasting transcultural nature, then the Bible no longer transforms culture but culture transforms the Bible.⁵⁵

2. Ontological Equality

The creation account shows that man and woman are equal in essence. God created 'āḏām "man" in His image, and 'āḏām is both "male" and "female" in Genesis 1:

Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them' (Gen 1:26-27, NKJV).

⁵⁴ Wayne Grudem, "Should We Move Beyond the New Testament to a Better Ethic? An Analysis of William J. Webb, *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis*," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 47/2 (2004): 299-346; Benjamin Reaoch, *Women, Slaves, and the Gender Debate: A Complementarian Response to the Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2012), 85-160.

⁵⁵ Hasel, "Hermeneutical Issues," 49.

In verse 26, God’s intention to create human beings is expressed, unlike the other acts of creation in the chapter, by the first common plural verb form *na^aśeh* “let us make.”⁵⁶ While scholars have debated the specific use of the cohortative plural for *Elohim* “God” in this verse, the form is probably used to emphasize the point that the decision to create humans was taken by the Godhead.⁵⁷ The idea of plurality in *Elohim* is further revealed through the use of plural pronominal suffixes in the phrases *beśalmēnū* “in our image” and *kiḏmūtēnū* “according to our likeness,” though these too have received differing interpretations.⁵⁸ What is clear is that the parallel phrases “our likeness” and “our image” indicate that the human being God created (v. 27) shares some characteristics with his Creator that other creatures in Gen 1 do not share, be they spiritual, physical or both.⁵⁹ That both “male” and female” are created in God’s image underscores an ontological equality. There is no indication in the creation account of ontological superiority or inferiority between “male” and “female.” Man and woman *as individual male and female human beings* are equally God’s image. As a result of their being created in God’s image, both man and woman are charged with responsibility and dominion over the earth and the animal creation.⁶⁰ The expression *yirdū* “let them rule” is plural, implying that both the man and the woman are given dominion over the animal kingdom (v. 26). The use of plural pronouns and

⁵⁶In the words of Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 64, “the impersonal ‘let there be’ (or its equivalents) of the seven preceding creative acts is replaced by the personal ‘let us’. Only in the creation of humanity is the divine intent announced beforehand. The formula ‘and it as so’ is replaced by a threefold blessing. In these ways, the narrator places humankind closer to God than the rest of creation.”

⁵⁷See, for example, Gerhard F. Hasel, “Meaning of ‘Let Us’ in Genesis 1:26,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 13 (1975): 58-66.

⁵⁸See the summary of interpretations in Daniel K. Bediako, *Genesis 1:1-2:3: A Textlinguistic Analysis* (Saarbuecken, Germany: VDM, 2010), 216-223; John M. Frame, “Men and Women in the Image of God,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 225-232; Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 132-138; Hasel, “Genesis 1:26,” 58-66.

⁵⁹See e.g., Davidson, “Genesis 1-2,” 8-9; Frame, 225-232.

⁶⁰Special importance is thus attached to the creation of humans. It is apparent that the other creatures are so created for the benefit of humans. Such prime importance of human life comes with the concept of human responsibility with its attendant dominion over creation.

verbs in the divine blessing in verse 28 reiterates the full equality of man and woman in their exercise of this dominion.

The use of singular and plural verbs and pronouns for *'ādām* in vv. 26-27 is interesting. In v. 26, the use of the plural verb, *yirdû* “let them rule,” suggests that the term *'ādām* has both man and woman in view. In v. 27 a singular pronominal suffix *'ōtô* “him” is used for *'ādām* as if the reference were to the man, but the last clause of the same verse makes clear that *'ādām* is both *zākār* “male” and *n^eqēbâ* “female.”⁶¹ The implication is that while *'ādām* can refer only to the man, the same term can refer to both man and woman (also in 5:1-2). This singularity-plurality feature of *'ādām* may reflect some aspect of *Elohim* who is both singular and plural even in vv. 26-27.⁶² In other words, the ontological equality of “male” and “female” human beings is somehow comparable to that of the persons of the Godhead. As in the Godhead, the persons of the human family are equal in essence (nature/being). We shall return shortly to this comparison with the Godhead of the man-woman relationship.

The ontological equality of man and woman is reaffirmed in Gen 2. We find that the woman is the only comparable partner to the man among God’s creation (v. 18). As *'ēzer k^eneḡdô* “helper comparable to him” (NKJV), woman equals man both in *status* and *value*. When the Lord presents the woman to the man, he joyously proclaims, “This *is* bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” (v. 23, NKJV). In his proclamation the man testifies to the equality of nature that the two have in common. Created from the man’s rib, the woman stands equal in essence with the man (v. 21). They both share the same substance as expressed by “flesh” (*bāśār*) and “bone” (*'ešem*) and demonstrated through the linguistic pun of *'iš* (“man”) and *'iššâ* (“woman”)

⁶¹ It is also possible to understand that the plural pronominal suffix on the direct object marker (*'ōtām* [them]) in 27c is influenced grammatically by its antecedent, *zākār ûn^eqēbâ* “male and female.”

⁶² In vv. 26-27, singular and plural verb forms as well as singular and plural pronominal suffixes are used for *Elohim* “God.”

(v. 23). This then provides the basis for the unifying bond—a one-flesh relationship—that exists between man and woman (v. 24). Thus, only man and woman are the compatible pair who can share understanding, intimacy, and joy—in their communion with each other, in their worship of God, and in reproducing human beings who bear God’s image. This is why God commands in His blessings that the two “be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it” (1:28). This command charges the man and the woman with the stewardship responsibilities of procreation and control. It also underscores the ontological equality of man and woman; by virtue of their being created in the image of God, Adam, assisted by Eve, is entrusted with the authority to rule over the animal creation. The equality of man and woman is affirmed in Gen 5:1-2, which reflects 1:26-27: both man and woman are created in God’s image (v. 1) and named *’ādām* (v. 2).

Frank Holbrook rightly states that “inasmuch as the woman was created in ‘the image of God’, of the same substance as man, to be his counterpart, it may be concluded that the Creation account clearly indicates the divine intention that woman was to be viewed on an equality with the man.”⁶³ In sum, we can conclude that man and woman are ontologically equal. She is not inferior to man but rather enjoying full equality. She occupies a noble and dignified status both inside and outside of her family circle. The idea of woman devaluation is totally against the Word of God.

3. Role Differentiation

In the preceding section we observed that man and woman share ontological equality. However, there is evidence pointing to role differentiation between man and woman both *before*

⁶³ Holbrook, 88.

and *after* the Fall. As we argue below, ontological equality does not mean that God intended no role/functional distinction between man and woman.⁶⁴

3.1. Before the Fall (Gen 1-2)

In Gen 1-2, role differentiation is both obvious and implied. This differentiation is indicated in several ways: by their differentiation in terms of gender, by the order and mode of their creation, and by describing the primacy of the man's responsibility.

Gender Differentiation

The man is *zākār* “male” and the woman is *n^eqēbâ* “female” (1:27; cf. 2:23). Although nothing more is said apart from the male-female distinction in 1:27, this appears to be the hub of role differentiation.⁶⁵ God created male and female because He had gender-specific and complementary roles for each to play. The differences in sexuality would not only serve for procreation (v. 28) but also fellowship (2:18). Thus, certain unique responsibilities must have accompanied the male-female genders not only of humans but also of the animal creation. In their exercise of the procreation mandate, for example, the man's role would be different from the woman's (v. 28). Further, we find that even before the Fall it was the man's primary responsibility to “tend and keep” the garden (2:15, NKJV).⁶⁶ If the role of the man, as reaffirmed after the Fall, was tilling the ground (3:17-19), then the role of the woman, as made clear after the Fall (3:15-16), was primarily childbearing. In sum, the male-female distinction connotes role

⁶⁴ See also Holbrook, 86-108; Kenneth A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, New American Commentary, vol. 1A (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 219-222; Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More Than One Hundred Disputed Questions* (Sister, OR: Multnomah, 2004), 25-45.

⁶⁵ Cf. Matthews, 173.

⁶⁶ Davidson, “Headship,” 261, seems to agree that the command in v. 15 was given to the man alone.

differentiation in the man-woman relationship, but such relationship is one of complementarity, mutuality, and interdependence.

Order and Mode of Creation

The second element of role differentiation between man and woman is indicated by the order of creation and certain linguistic items in Gen 2. As we follow the text, we recognize that a priority of place is given to the man throughout the chapter. In this chapter, the term *'ādām* consistently refers to the man; it is not a generic reference to human being. The sequence of creation is clear in chapter 2. The man is created *before* the woman.⁶⁷ He is created out of the ground and then placed in the garden “to tend and keep it” (2:7, 15 NKJV). The divine regulation regarding what to eat and what not to eat in the garden is also given to the man before the creation of the woman (vv. 16-17).⁶⁸ It has been argued that there is a literary device, an *inclusio*, in Gen 2 by which the creation of man first and the creation of woman last “correspond to each other in importance.”⁶⁹ Davidson supports this conclusion by referring mainly to Muilenburg’s article on rhetorical criticism. Muilenburg’s concern, however, is how to “define the limits or scope of the literary unit,” and does not specifically cite Gen 2 as an example.⁷⁰ What he does

⁶⁷ The mere fact that man is created earlier does not in itself make him head over the woman; otherwise we might as well conclude that the animals have a headship role over man since they were created still earlier. However, we note that the creation of the man and the woman in Gen 2 presents a situation that means more than just sequential ordering. Further, it should be added that the connection between the creation of man and woman is quite different from that of the animals and humans. Humans and animals do not have the same value or status. Humans are created in the image of God; animals are not. See also Matthews, 221.

⁶⁸ As noted above, the term *'ādām* in Gen 2 consistently refers to the man. Further, singular/plural verbs and pronouns are used with singular/plural nouns consistently in the chapter, so that the use of masculine singular verbs and pronouns in vv. 16-17 in addressing *hā'ādām* should be understood to refer to the man.

⁶⁹ Davidson, “Genesis 1-2,” 14.

⁷⁰ James Muilenburg, “Form Criticism and Beyond,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (1969): 9, who notes, “A second clue for determining the scope of a pericope is to discern the relation of beginning and end, where the opening words are repeated or paraphrased at the close, what is known as ring composition, or, to employ the term already used by Ed. König many years ago and frequently employed by Dahood in his commentary on the Psalter, the *inclusio*. There are scores of illustrations of this phenomenon in all parts of the OT, beginning with the opening literary unit of the Book of Genesis.”

refer to in Genesis is “the opening literary unit,” probably Gen 1:1-2:3/4 which forms an *inclusio* by using the words “heavens” and “earth” at the beginning (1:1) and at the end (2:3/4). An *inclusio* structure—where, in his words, “the opening words are repeated or paraphrased at the close”⁷¹—is yet to be demonstrated in Gen 2 and therefore cannot be used to show that the man-woman creation sequence is meant *only* to show equality of importance.

Nonetheless, it is to be noted that in Gen 2, the creation order is not simply “man *first* and woman *last*” but rather—if we need to use such terms at all—“man *first*, and because of him, woman *next*.” To argue that a *first-last* sequence in creation serves only to emphasize the equality of man and woman fails to answer several questions that would arise from Gen 2. For example, would the man and the woman see themselves unequal if they were created at the same time? If not, then why would they be created sequentially? If God had simply intended to convey the idea of equality of importance between man and woman, would He not have created them simultaneously so that no one could have reason to say to the other, “I, after all, was created before You”? And why would He not create woman before man? Or why would He not create woman solely from the dust rather than *from* the man? More is meant by the man-woman creation sequence. The creation of man and the creation of woman are not isolated and unrelated acts; important consequences follow from the prior creation of the man that define the relationship between him and the woman.⁷²

First, not only is the man created before the woman, he is also the immediate reason for the creation of the woman. In other words, woman’s creation is premised upon man’s prior

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² The interval between the creation of man and the creation of woman in Gen 2 is filled with chronologically meaningful events that need not be attributed merely to the inspired author’s interest in arranging a literary *inclusio*. We may as well question the historicity of the narrative if the arrangement of the text is attributed simply to the author interest in creating a literary *inclusio*.

creation/existence, not the other way round. The dramatic divine reflection on the singlehood of the man (i.e., “it is not good that the man should be alone,” 2:17) is not an afterthought but a deliberate emphasis on man’s need of companionship in the garden. The man himself must have noticed while the animals were being brought to him (possibly in male-female pairs!) that he could find no companion among them. Despite being surrounded by these colorful creatures, he is still alone (vv.18-20). And because “it is not good that the man should be alone,” God intends to create *’ēzer k^ēneḡdô* “a helper comparable to him” (NKJV). The impression is that the woman is created in the interest of the man. In order to create *’ēzer k^ēneḡdô*, God takes one rib from the man and builds it into a woman (vv. 21-22). And so the woman is created not just as another person but as one who can be inseparably connected to the man; she is, as it were, part of the man (v. 23). Such is the basis for the love and companionship that the couple would enjoy from each other as they seek to accomplish the divine mandate for humanity (1:26-28). In sum, while the creation sequence “man *first*, and because of him, woman *next*” upholds the essential equality of man and woman, it also underscores relative difference between the same.⁷³ It is this relative difference that supports male headship in Gen 2.

Second, the woman is defined as man’s “helper” (*’ēzer*). The word *’ēzer* basically means “help,” divine or human (Exod 18:4; Deut 33:26, 29; Ps 20:3; 33:20; 89:20; 115:9-11; 121:1-2; 124:8; 146:5; Isa 30:5; Dan 11:34; Hos 13:9) and, by extension, “helper” (Deut 33:7; Ps 70:6; Ezek 12:14). The idea of “helper” proper is conveyed by the participle of the cognate verb, *’ōzēr* (e.g., 2 Kin 14:26; Job 29:12; 30:13; Ps 30:11; 54:6). In Gen 2, the meaning of *’ēzer* is controlled by the phrase *’ēzer k^ēneḡdô*. This phrase is a combination of four lexical items: the noun *’ēzer* “help” plus preposition *k^ē* “like/as” plus preposition *neḡed* “opposite/before” plus pronominal

⁷³C. John Collins, *Genesis 1-4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P. & R., 2005), 107.

suffix *ô* “him.” In this phrase *’ēzer* refers to an individual while *k^eneḡdô* indicates that a human of the opposite gender is intended. It is clear in vv. 18-20 that none of the animals whom the man names qualifies as *’ēzer k^eneḡdô* for him. But neither can a divine being serve as man’s *’ēzer k^eneḡdô*. Only a being who is equal in essence with the man and who is of the opposite gender can be described *’ēzer k^eneḡdô*. Thus the phrase can literally be translated “a help like opposite him” (i.e., a counterpart of the opposite gender). The female human whom God creates (2:22) is equal in essence to her male counterpart. Since its referent is a female human as opposed to another male human, *’ēzer k^eneḡdô* in itself spells functional differentiation. In this respect, the equality that *’ēzer k^eneḡdô* conveys is *ontological* equality. It does not indicate functional equality in the sense of responsibility. To the contrary, as Gordon Wenham has suggested, *’ēzer k^eneḡdô* may “express the notion of complementarity rather than identity,” for if identity were intended the phrase *kāmōhū* “like him” would be more appropriate than *k^eneḡdô* “like opposite him.”⁷⁴ While *k^e* “like” plus *neḡed* “opposite” plus the pronominal suffix can express relative difference,⁷⁵ *k^e* “like” plus the pronominal suffix in *kāmōhū* “like him” can express identity (e.g., Exod 9:24; 30:32; Deut 4:32; 1 Sam 10:24; 2 Chron 35:18; Jer 30:7; Ezek 5:9). The word *’ēzer* “help” does not in itself convey any notion of superiority or subordination; the context is the only guide to interpreting it.⁷⁶ The context of Gen 2:18-20 shows that companionship is the immediate purpose for the creation of woman. As such, her creation—as *’ēzer k^eneḡdô*—is predicated on

⁷⁴ Wenham, 68, then concludes that “the help looked for is not just assistance in his daily work or in the procreation of children, though these aspects may be included, but the mutual support companionship provides.”

⁷⁵ The syntagm *k^e* plus *neḡed* occurs only in Gen 2:18, 20. Cf. the use of the phrases *l^eneḡed* (e.g., Josh 5:13; Ps 39:20; Dan 8:13; 10:13, 16) and *minneḡed* (e.g., Gen 21:16; 2 Kin 2:7, 15).

⁷⁶ David J. A. Clines, *What Does Eve Do To Help? And Other Readerly Questions to the Old Testament*, JSOT Sup. Series, vol. 94 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 14, observes that “being a helper is not a Hebrew way of being an equal. Helping is the same the world over. Phyllis Tribble was right when she affirmed that it is a ‘relational’ term that carried no implications about the respective statuses of the helper and the helpee. She was wrong, I think, when she argued that, because God is often said to be a ‘helper’, the term itself has acquired connotations of superiority. Whether the helper is a superior or not will depend entirely on other factors, extrinsic to the relationship constituted by the act of helping.”

the man's aloneness (*l^ebaddô*). But the same context also makes clear that the man is the point of reference; it is he who stands in need of companionship.⁷⁷ Whether in Gen 2 or elsewhere, the one who gives help and the one who is helped cannot have the same level of responsibility.⁷⁸ Craig L. Blomberg notes that “what makes an *'ēzer* a ‘helper’ in each context is that he or she comes to the aid of someone else who bears the primary responsibility for the activity in question. It may be significant that the man is never said to be an *'ēzer* of his wife.”⁷⁹ By defining the woman as *'ēzer k^eneḡdô* the impression is given that she will play a role within the overall responsibility given to the man. In fact, the narrator makes clear that the divine intent is to create woman for man (Gen 2:18). In the clause *'e^eśeh-lô 'ēzer k^eneḡdô* (“I will make for him a helper of his”) conveying the divine intent, the expression *lô* is not literally translated by the major English versions. The preposition plus pronominal suffix *lô* means “for him” and clearly indicates that the woman is created for the man's sake and in his interest.⁸⁰ In view of her being created “for” the man and in view of the primacy of responsibility accorded the man in Gen 2 (as we shall soon see), the woman would naturally find in him a head or leader. Consequently, the woman is neither a superior “helper” nor an inferior “helper,” but one who is created to stand

⁷⁷ The use of *l^ebaddô*—which expresses “separation, alone, oneself”—contributes to understanding *'ēzer k^eneḡdô*. Man does not share the same nature with the animals, so none of these could be *'ēzer k^eneḡdô*. Despite these animals the man is still “alone” or “by himself.” This means that the woman was to be created primarily to give companionship to the man as one who shares in his nature. And *k^eneḡdô* would require that the *'ēzer* was to be of the opposite gender. The phrase *l^ebaddô* in itself does not mean that the man is incomplete; it always denotes separateness, aloneness, or being by oneself. The juxtaposition of *l^ebaddô* and *'ēzer k^eneḡdô* in Gen 2 may imply that the man's *'ēzer k^eneḡdô* would play a supportive role. Waltke, 88, remarks, “The word *help* suggests that the man has governmental priority, but both sexes are mutually dependent on each other. The man is created first, with woman to help the man, not vice versa (see also 1 Tim 2:13); however, this does not mean ontological superiority or inferiority.”

⁷⁸ See also Clines, 11.

⁷⁹ Craig L. Blomberg, “Women in Ministry: A Complementarian Perspective,” in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, rev. ed., ed. Stanley N. Gundry and James R. Beck (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 129-130.

⁸⁰ The preposition *l^e* has several functions including a relationship of possession. See Waltke and O'Connor, 205-211.

side-by-side with a loving man in relation to whom she has been created.⁸¹ This gives man the natural role of a leader among these two rulers.⁸² Ellen White, while maintaining the ontological equality of man and woman, also alludes to man's leadership in the sense of his protection of the woman.⁸³

Third, the woman is created “out of man” (*mē'īš*). One of man's ribs is used to “build” (*bānāh*) the woman, a delicate procedure that gives the impression that the man is the source of the woman. Rather than mark male superiority or female inferiority, the use of the rib shows that man and woman share a common substance and are created for a unifying relationship—an inseparable unity and fellowship. Yet we must recognize that it is the Lord who unites them, not the rib per se (2:22; Matt 19:6). Could there not have been another way to ensure a unifying relationship between man and woman apart from the use of the man's rib to create woman? And why did it have to be man's *rib*? The rib symbolism may have additional significance, even if this is only implied in the text. Among others, the imagery suggests that since the creation of the woman is based upon the man's aloneness, and is subsequently created from his side, the Lord intended for her to stay by the side of the man, who would bear most of the responsibility for life in the garden. In this particular case, we see justification in the man's role as head/leader because, as far as the text goes, it is he who occasions the creation of the woman. It is he who

⁸¹Cf. Wenham, 69.

⁸² Raymond C. Ortlund Jr., “Male-Female Equality and Male Headship: Genesis 1-3,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 95-112, has argued that the most natural implication of God's decision to bring the man onto the scene ahead of the woman is that he is called to bear the responsibility of headship. Consequently, he concludes that “*in the partnership of two spiritually equal human beings, man and woman, the man bears the primary responsibility to lead the partnership in a God-glorifying direction*” (95, emphasis original).

⁸³ PP 46, 48, 53-59; 6T 236; CT 33.

bears the burdens of the human family; it is his responsibility to provide for and protect the family.⁸⁴ Difference in responsibility does not imply superiority.

So not only is the man created before the woman, but she, as his helper, is created *for* him and *from* him. Raymond C. Ortlund Jr. remarks,

God did not make Adam and Eve from the ground at the same time and for one another without distinction. Neither did God make the woman first, and then the man *from* the woman *for* the woman. He could have created them in either of these ways so easily, but He didn't. Why? Because, presumably, that would have obscured the very nature of manhood and womanhood that He intended to make clear.⁸⁵

As noted earlier the Hebrew text clearly shows in 2:18 that the woman is created (*'āśā*) “for” (*lō*) or in the interest of the man. The man recognizes through his proclamation in v. 23 that the woman was “taken out of man” (*mē'īš luq^o ḥâ*).⁸⁶ At the least the procedure of the creation of woman demonstrates that he and she are akin to each other, since they share the same substance. It would be out of context to suggest that the woman is inferior to the man because she was created last or was created “out of man.” But clearly the text places emphasis upon the man. Among other things it is to be noted that after creating the woman, God “brought her to the man” (*y^ebi'ehā 'el-hā'ādām*), thereby putting her in his care (v. 22). However the text is read, it is difficult to deny that the man is central to the creation of the woman. If *he* is created first, and if *she* is created *for* him and *from* him, then the platform is already set for a role differentiation

⁸⁴ The sense of Gen 2 is that the man is given responsibility to lead, provide for and protect the woman. The man's leadership prior to the Fall might consist in serving the needs of the woman and ensuring obedience to the Lord's commands. Ellen White writes, “Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, *to be loved and protected by him*” (PP 46, emphasis supplied).

⁸⁵ Ortlund Jr., 102.

⁸⁶ It is reported also that God used man's rib (*ṣēlā*) to build woman (2:22), and the man recognizes this in his speech in v. 23, where he proclaims *'eṣemmē 'āṣāmay ūḥāsār mibbešārî* which literally translates “bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh.”

between the two partners,⁸⁷ their ontological equality notwithstanding.⁸⁸ If equality between the two may be deduced from what is *implicit*, then surely role differentiation between the two must be seen from what is *explicit*. The one *for* whom and *from* whom another is brought into existence would assume more responsibility in a relationship between the two.⁸⁹ If so, we would expect the man to be given primary responsibility in his relationship with the woman. And, in fact, so the text affirms: by creating man first and entrusting him with His commands, God solidifies man's role as leader in the garden before creating the woman.⁹⁰ Thus, the man would assume a leadership role, which before the Fall would include providing for the woman's needs and protecting her from the snares of the devil.⁹¹ Accordingly, we find a sense in Gen 2 of the woman being second among equals as demonstrated by (1) the basis of her creation (v. 18); (2) the mode of her creation (vv. 21-22); (3) her being "brought" to the man to be loved, cherished and protected; and (4) the man's declaration of appreciation for the gift of the woman from God in which he defines her in relation to himself (v. 23).

Primacy of the Man's Responsibility

The third element of role differentiation is the primacy of the man's responsibility in Gen 2. This is closely related to the sequence of creation. We state again that the focus of Gen 2 throughout is on the man. Participant reference is itself indication of the focus of Gen 2; the

⁸⁷ Matthews, 221, argues that the fact of woman's derivation from man indicates not only that the two are "inherently the same," but also that "they are distinctive in their person and interpersonal relationship."

⁸⁸ *Contra* Linda A. Belleville, "Women in Ministry: An Egalitarian Perspective," in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, rev. ed., ed. Stanley N. Gundry and James R. Beck (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 30, who claims that "created first" suggests nothing.

⁸⁹ Cf. 1 Cor 11:8-9.

⁹⁰ In fact, God seems to relate to the man and the woman as a son and a daughter. See further arguments for male headship in Matthews, 173, 219-222.

⁹¹ Ellen White confirms that the man had the responsibility of protecting the woman, despite their equality: "*Under God, Adam was to stand at the head of the earthly family, to maintain the principles of the heavenly family. This would have brought peace and happiness. . . . When Adam sinned, man broke away from the heaven-ordained center. A demon became the central power in the world. Where God's throne should have been, Satan placed his throne*" (CT 33, emphasis supplied).

“man” is specifically referred to about eighteen times, while the “woman” is referred to only four times. An outline of the chapter reveals this focus on the man:

Man’s creation anticipated—no man yet to till the ground (vv. 5-6)

Man is created from the ground (v. 7)

Man needs a home—garden, food, and water made for man (vv. 8-14)

Man placed in the garden to tend & keep it; man is given the divine law (vv. 15-17)

Man’s aloneness and need for companion (vv. 18-20)

Woman is created—for man, from man, and brought to man (vv. 21-22)

Man’s need fulfilled—man cherishes woman as a part of himself (vv. 23-24)

While the woman is created after the man, as the narrative makes clear, the divine design requires that this be so. *Together* man and woman are the crowning work of creation (Gen 1). But if God intended to “build” woman using the rib of man, then it was only necessary that he be created first. Apart from his being created first, several elements in the chapter give the impression that the man assumed overall responsibility for life in the garden. First, he is the primary bearer of the title *’ādām* in Gen 2. This term occurs sixteen times in the chapter, and consistently refers to the man. The word *’iš* for man is used only twice, in vv. 23-24, when the woman is defined in relation to her being created “out of the man” (*mē’iš*, v. 23). Thus, in Gen 2 the term *’ādām* does not include the woman. In fact, the woman alone never bears the title *’ādām*; it *includes* her only when named together with the man (1:26; 5:2). Even when a distinction is made between the man and the yet-to-be-created woman, the man is referred to as *’ādām* “man” but the woman by *’iššā* “woman” (v. 22).⁹² Implicitly in Gen 2, therefore, we see that just as the man is the primary bearer of the title *’ādām*, so is he to be the primary bearer of responsibility for the human family.

⁹² Verse 25 speaks of the man (*’ādām*) and the woman (*’iššā*). Similarly, in Gen 3 the term *’ādām* occurs eight times; apart from v. 22 where it may include the woman, it clearly refers to the man in all the other seven occurrences (vv. 8-9, 12, 17, 20-21, 24). On the other hand, the woman is consistently referred to as *’iššā* in the chapter (vv. 8, 12-17, 20, 21).

Second, the man is the recipient of God's laws, including the regulation on "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (2:16-17). The implication here is that it was his responsibility, as the primary recipient of the law, to relay the divine instruction to the woman.⁹³ That God gives to the man instructions that are pertinent for life in the garden before creating the woman is an indication of a responsibility bestowed upon him as head of the family to share these instructions with the woman and to ensure that these instructions are followed.⁹⁴ From this point on, the man would serve as the instructor within the human family regarding the way of the Lord, a fact amply demonstrated by the purpose for which God called Abraham (Gen 18:19).⁹⁵ Thus in Gen 2, God speaks to the man before woman is created (v. 15) and after she is created the man, not the woman, does the speaking (v. 23). It is appropriate to conclude that by speaking to the man in v. 15 God entrusts His commands to him as head of the human family.⁹⁶ Similarly, the man's speech in v. 23 reflects his leadership role in the man-woman relationship.

⁹³ Gen 2 clearly shows that the primary charge over the garden was given to the man. Ellen White affirms that the command in Gen 2:1-17 was "placed in his [Adam's] hands" (RH 2/24/74 par. 10; cf. RH 6/4/01 par. 4; ST 10/29/85 par. 13; ST 12/15/87 par. 2). While the command was initially given to Adam, angels subsequently reminded both Adam and Eve of God's instructions (cf. 1SP 33; PP 53; 10MR 327 par. 1). Ellen White also states that "the Sabbath was committed to Adam, the father and representative of the whole human family" (PP 48). This is in keeping with the observation that the man was in charge in the garden.

⁹⁴ "God spoke to Adam about the tree of knowledge of good and evil before the creation of Eve (2:15-17 cf. 18). God did more than speak; He commanded the man (2:16). Had He intended one day to grant to Eve a similar headship role, He could have saved us all much trouble; He could first have created the man and the woman, then commanded them together. Instead, the man was made first, charged with responsibility, and she was created afterward so that the man must impart to her the warning. What better way to prime Adam for his role as protector than to give him the responsibility to warn and protect?" Larry Kirkpatrick, "Genesis Two and Ordered Headship," online: <http://ordinationtruth.com/featured/genesis-2-ordered-headship/>.

⁹⁵ Abraham and his wife Sarah were recipients of the divine promises. But we note that Abraham was given the primary responsibility of teaching his descendants the way of the Lord. Yet it was Sarah, like Eve before her (3:15-16), who was to bear the promised child (17:19-21).

⁹⁶ It is suggested that God speaks to the man as the one-time "head" and "representative" of humanity rather than as head of the woman (Davidson, "Women Pastors," 4). While Ellen White's statements are used to support this argument (6T 236; PP 48), the contexts of her statements give the impression that at creation God also intended the man to be head/leader of the man-woman relationship. She states clearly, "The relationship existing in the pure family of God in heaven was to exist in the family of God on earth. *Under God, Adam was to stand at the head of the earthly family, to maintain the principles of the heavenly family*" (6T 236, emphasis supplied; CT 33). Right here we can see that Adam plays a different role: he is the head of human family, not Eve and him. The God of heaven is a God of order. Describing the heavenly order in a context that is clearly before sin, Ellen White refers to the Father as "Sovereign of the universe" and to Christ as "an associate—a co-worker" with the Father at creation,

Third, the man is the one directly charged with the responsibility of tending and keeping the garden (2:15),⁹⁷ a task which indirectly underscores his role as the responsible party for the activity of the garden. Gen 3:17 reiterates the fact that the command was given personally to the man. In the context of Gen 1-5, the verb *ʾābad* “tend” is used of cultivating the soil (Gen 2:15; 3:23; 4:2) while *šāmar* is used of watching or guarding in the sense of protection (Gen 3:34). The man’s task may have included not only ensuring obedience to the Lord’s command, but also protecting the garden from intrusion (cf. Gen 3:24).

Fourth, as has been stated earlier, *ʾēzer k^eneḡdô* “helper like opposite him” denotes both ontological equality and role difference and the Hebrew construction is clear that the woman was created “for him” (*lô*). As *ʾēzer k^eneḡdô*, the woman would play a role under the leadership of the man in the man-woman relationship. Fifth, only the man is given the responsibility to name the animals (vv. 18-20), thereby echoing his role as prime ruler over the animal creation (1:28).⁹⁸ John Piper and Wayne Grudem have noted “just as God meant for the shared responsibility of bearing children to involve very different roles . . . so also He may mean for the shared

while maintaining that the Father and the Son are “one in nature, in character, in purpose” (PP 34). There is also order among the angels, with Lucifer being the “prince of angels” (PP 35). Thus even before rebellion in heaven God was “Sovereign,” Christ was His “associate,” Lucifer was “next to Christ,” and other angels came next (PP 34-36). In fact, “God Himself established the order of heaven” (PP 35). God also established order on earth by making the man “head” of the human family. Ellen White adds that “Adam was appointed by God to be monarch of the world, under the supervision of the Creator” (BEcho, August 28, 1899). Adam was the “vicegerent of the Creator” (DA 129). As such, he would “maintain the principles of the heavenly family” on earth. While it is true that Adam lost his place as “monarch” of the world to Satan (Con 16), it is undeniably clear that there is headship in Gen 2. If Adam was head over all of mankind, he was also head over Eve (see also ST April 29, 1875). It should also be recalled that Ellen White sees the first family as the model for subsequent families: “The home of our first parents was to be a pattern for other homes as their children should go forth to occupy the earth” (PP 49). This means that even before the Fall, Adam’s headship in his relationship with Eve would serve as model of male headship in subsequent families.

⁹⁷ See footnote 93.

⁹⁸ Thomas R. Schreiner, “Women in Ministry: Another Complementarian Perspective,” in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, rev. ed., ed. Stanley N. Gundry and James R. Beck (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 295, notes that in naming the animals, “the narrator signals that Adam was beginning to fulfill God’s mandate to exercise dominion over the world and God’s garden.”

responsibility of dominion to involve different roles.”⁹⁹ Sixth, since man’s aloneness—hence his need for companionship—provides the immediate reason for the creation of woman, it is natural that the man would assume a leadership role in his relationship with the woman (2:18-24). As suggested above, it is not without significance that she is formed from “one” (‘*eḥād*’) of man’s ribs (‘*ṣēlā*’) and “brought” (‘*bō*’) to him (vv. 22). By creating her from his rib the Lord probably intended that the man receives, provides for, protects and guides the woman as a part of himself.¹⁰⁰ This could explain why, after creating the woman, the Lord “brought her to the man”—the Lord, as it were, placed the woman in the care of the man both as her husband and as her leader in the garden and in life. The man’s speech in v. 23 equally gives the impression that he takes responsibility for the woman.

Seventh, the man designates his counterpart, ‘*iššâ*’ “woman” (v. 23).¹⁰¹ His naming of the woman is an indication of his responsibility as leader. It has been argued that in 2:23 the man does not actually name the woman, since the word ‘*šēm*’ “name” is not used, nor is the word “woman” a proper noun.¹⁰² It is also suggested that “man had no active part in the creation of woman” so as to claim authority over her.¹⁰³ Against the last argument, we note that the man had nothing to do with the creation of *anything*, yet he is given authority to name the animals and to rule over them (1:26, 28; 2:19-20). And against the first argument, it must be noted that it is not

⁹⁹ John Piper and Wayne Grudem, “Charity, Clarity, and Hope: The Controversy and the Cause of Christ,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 408.

¹⁰⁰ Davidson, “Headship,” 269, sees the husband’s “servant leadership of protection, care, and love” after the Fall but does not find Adam’s leadership of protection and care before the Fall (Gen 2)! But if, as Ellen White writes, the woman was “*to be loved and protected by*” (PP 46) the man—as “a part of himself” and “his second self”—then love, care, and protection would constitute male headship before the Fall. Male headship before the Fall would be a responsibility-bearing service of man without subjection on the part of woman. Since “God’s character was reflected in the character of Adam” (AH 26), his leadership would be one of love and service. In sum, Ellen White confirms that the man was responsible for protecting the woman. It appears that the protection was not only physical but also spiritual, thereby signifying man’s spiritual leadership.

¹⁰¹ In designating her ‘*iššâ*’, the man considers the woman as part of him (3:23).

¹⁰² Davidson, “Genesis 1-2,” 18.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

mandatory that name-giving constructions in Hebrew contain the word *šēm* “name.” Just a few verses earlier, we read that God “called” (*qārā*’) the darkness (night), the sky (heaven), the waters (seas), and so on (Gen 1). The same verb is even used three times in connection with the man’s naming of the animals (2:19-20) and then in connection with the man’s naming of the woman in Gen 2:23! There are other examples in the Hebrew Bible where names are given without the express use of *šēm*. For example, in Gen 35:18 where Jacob gives the name “Benjamin,” that particular clause lacks *šēm*. Again, Phinehas’ wife named her son “Ichabod” without making use of *šēm* (1 Sam 4:21). Yet in both Gen 35:18 and 1 Sam 4:21 the word *qārā*’ “called” is used. We do not know how the man named the animals to be able to judge whether he made use of the word *šēm*, so we need not be dogmatic that because *šēm* is not used in v. 23 name-giving has not occurred. George W. Ramsey argues that v. 23 is an example of name giving: “It is an error to argue that Genesis 2:23 is not an instance of name-giving. . . . The use of the noun *šēm* is not absolutely essential to the naming formula. *Qārā*’ plus *lāmed* with an object indicates naming just as well as *qārā*’ plus *šēm*.”¹⁰⁴

A further objection is that in Gen 2:23, the Lord, rather than the man, gives the designation *’iššā* (woman). This argument cannot be sustained for several reasons. While passive verb forms are used—“she was taken” (*luq^ohâ*) and “it shall be called” (*yiqqārē*’)—there is no evidence here for use of a divine passive. The expressions indicate how at creation God *took* the woman out of the man (i.e., *luq^ohâ*) and how she *shall* be addressed by others (i.e., *yiqqārē*’).¹⁰⁵ Moreover, v. 23 is a quotation reporting the speech of the man. A literal translation of the verse in outline form showing its poetic structure is as follows:

¹⁰⁴George W. Ramsey, “Is Name-Giving an Act of Domination in Genesis 2:23 and Elsewhere?” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 50 (1988): 29. See also Wenham, 70.

¹⁰⁵Cf. Gen 17:5.

And the man said:

A: This one at last *is* bone from bones and flesh from flesh

B: To this one it shall be called woman

A¹: For this one was taken from man.

We see in v. 23 that it is the man who is appreciating and naming. He is the speaker, not the Lord (i.e., “And the man said...”). The phrases “bone from my bones” and “flesh from my flesh” can only make sense if spoken by the man in relation to the woman. There is also no indication that v. 23 embeds another quotation so as to argue that a part of the verse is spoken by the Lord. The use of the passive verb forms is to be explained by the poetic thrust of the man’s speech. Finally, in the structure of the verse given above, line **B**—in which the woman is named—is placed in between two synonymous lines, **A** and **A¹**. Verse 23 is clearly cohesive and the repetition of the demonstrative *zô ’t* “this” in each of the three clauses requires that all the words in the verse be attributed to the man.¹⁰⁶

It is to be noticed that the woman (*’iššâ*) is defined in relation to the man (*’îš*)¹⁰⁷ and within the specific context of name-giving (vv. 18-20). Thus, even though the man particularly names the woman “Eve” in 3:20, the context of 2:18-20 requires that 2:23 also be considered as naming of the new female human “woman.” “The repetition of the verb *qārā’* (2:19-20, 23) links the naming of the woman with the naming of the animals, so that the reader naturally recognizes the parallel between the two accounts.”¹⁰⁸ The terms *’îš* (man) and *’iššâ* (woman) signify equality and difference, namely ontological equality and role differentiation.¹⁰⁹ The man names his counterpart *’iššâ* “woman” because she was “taken out of man.” The noun “woman” is not a proper noun, yet it is also not a description as is the adjective “female.” For David J. A. Clines,

¹⁰⁶ Ellen White identifies the words “She shall be called” with Adam (BEcho 8/10/28/99 par. 2; ST 8/30/99 par. 2).

¹⁰⁷ Wenham, 70, remarks, “Though they are equal in nature, that man names woman (cf. 3:20) indicates that she is expected to be subordinate to him, an important presupposition of the ensuing narrative (3:17).”

¹⁰⁸ Schreiner, 296.

¹⁰⁹ See also Matthews, 221.

“‘Woman’ here can only be a name, and it makes no odds that ‘woman’ is a common noun, not a proper name, as Tribble objects.”¹¹⁰ Since in 2:23 the man is defining the woman in relation to himself, the designation *’iššâ* “woman” provides a perfect linguistic word-pair for *’iš* “man.” “Woman,” then, is a name that inseparably connects the female human to her male counterpart, “man.” As has already been stated, the Lord’s bringing the woman to the man after creating her would signify his leadership role within the human family (v. 22).¹¹¹ Such would be a servant, self-sacrificing leadership role as the appreciative response of the man reveals (v. 23). This also explains why it is the man who would take the initiative to *leave his* father and mother and *cleave to his* wife (v. 24). While their becoming “one flesh” suggests equality, unity, and mutuality, the initiative of the man testifies to his role as leader in the man-woman relationship. In other words, the man has primary leadership of the home as it is he who takes the initiative and thus takes responsibility for their staying together and for her protection.

Taken together, the foregoing arguments show that while man and woman are equal ontologically and together exercise dominion over the earth and the animal creation, the two do not have the same level of responsibility in the garden. The focus of Gen 2 throughout has been upon the man, an emphasis that shows the primacy of his responsibility and defines his role as leader. The woman stands by the side of her loving leader as helper/support.¹¹² Conversely, the presentation of the woman in Gen 2 as next among equals serves to confirm the man’s

¹¹⁰ Clines, 26.

¹¹¹ Ortlund Jr., 103, states that God “allowed Adam to define the woman, in keeping with Adam’s headship. Adam’s sovereign act not only arose out of his own sense of headship, it also made his headship clear to Eve.”

¹¹² Egalitarians teach male-female equality in an unqualified sense on two grounds: (1) both bear God’s image; (2) both are given the mandate to procreate and to rule. Yet both grounds actually only indicate ontological equality in the context of human creation. A son who co-reigns with his father is equal in essence to the father (i.e., both bear God’s image), but on the throne the father takes more responsibility than the son; the father is head of the kingdom. Thus, co-regency does not mean equality of responsibility. The fact that man and woman are given authority to rule over the earth does not in itself require the two to have the same level of responsibility as to make it impossible for one to serve as head or leader. Even though man and woman share the responsibility of procreating, they do not play identical, exchangeable roles.

head/leader role.¹¹³ This role of the man as head/leader in the human family is part of the divine design at creation.¹¹⁴ The table below summarizes the characteristics of the relationship between the man and the woman in Gen 1-2 and highlights both the essential equality and the relative difference between man and women.

Man	Woman
<i>Equality</i>	
Image of God	Image of God
Given dominion over creation	Given dominion over creation
Called "Man"	Called "Man" (only together with Adam)
<i>Difference</i>	
Created from the ground	Created <i>from</i> the man
Created before the woman	Created <i>after</i> the man
Created alone	Created because of man's aloneness (created <i>for</i> the man)
Names the animals and the woman	Receives name from the man
Receives the law from God (and angels)	Receives the law from the man (and angels)
Receives the woman from God	Brought to the man by God
Takes the woman as wife	Is taken as wife by the man
Loves and appreciates	Is loved and appreciated
Does the speaking	Makes no speech
Leaves his home and cleaves to his wife	

3.2. During and After the Fall (Gen 3)

In Gen 3, there is also clear role differentiation between man and woman. The text indicates this through its description of their respective spheres of operation and of the primacy of man's responsibility.

¹¹³ Holbrook, 88, remarks, "Priority of creation may indicate a certain headship of man in the relationship between the two sexes even before the entrance of sin (cf. 1 Cor 11:3). There is also a certain relationship of dependence set forth as Eve is entrusted to Adam. However, neither the headship nor the dependence aspects of the relationship should be construed to indicate inferiority on the part of the woman. Difference of function does not necessarily indicate inferiority of being as some might infer. Neither is superior nor inferior to the other, for both are made in the image of God, and each has a given role to fulfill in the Creator's purpose." See also Waltke, 94, who observes that "male headship is assumed in the ideal, pre-Fall situation (2:7-25)." So also Matthews, 173.

¹¹⁴ John Piper and Wayne Grudem, "An Overview of Central Concerns: Questions and Answers," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 61-62, note that the idea of male leadership that permeates biblical culture is "probably not a mere cultural phenomenon . . . but reflects God's original design, even though corrupted by sin."

Spheres of Operation

The first and clearest indicator of continued role distinction has to do with the respective spheres of the man and woman’s operation. Generally speaking, the judgments upon the woman and the man convey a new set of conditions for human life—the introduction of pain, hardship, and frustration—that did not prevail before the Fall (vv. 16-19).¹¹⁵ Yet the divine pronouncements in vv. 14-19 reflect the roles of man and woman that are already implied in chapters 1-2. For example, the woman, who would still have given birth before the Fall (1:26-28) would now do so in great labor-pain (3:16).¹¹⁶ Similarly, the man, who had also been charged with the responsibility to tend and keep the garden (2:15), would now till the land full of thorns and thistles as a means of livelihood (3:17). The primary roles of man and woman are thus defined. The table below highlights these roles as well as the nature of the serpent-(wo)man and woman-man relationships before and after the Fall.

	Before Fall	After Fall
1	Man: tilling (<i>’ābād</i>) and keeping (<i>šāmar</i>) of the garden without pain (Gen 2:15)	Man: tilling (<i>’ābād</i>) of the ground with toil (<i>’ešeb</i>) (Gen 3:17)
2	Woman/man: childbirth (<i>pārā, rābā</i>) without pain (Gen 1:28)	Woman: childbirth (<i>yālad, bānīm, hērôn</i>) with toil (<i>’ešeb</i>) (Gen 3:16)
3	Humans: friendly rulership (<i>rādā</i>) over serpent (cf. Gen 1:26, 28)	Humans [woman’s seed]: unfriendly rulership over serpent including bruising (<i>šûp</i>) its head (Gen 3:15)
4	Man: harmonious, servant headship without <i>subjection</i> of woman (Gen 2:18-24)	Man: rulership (<i>māšal</i>) with <i>subjection</i> of woman (Gen 3:16)

¹¹⁵ Wenham, 81, observes that “the sentences on man and woman take the form of disruption of their earlier appointed roles.”

¹¹⁶ The Hebrew *’ešeb/’iṣṣābôn* may mean “labor” or “toil” in the context of 3:16-19 (cf. 5:29). The woman will experience *’ešeb/’iṣṣābôn* in conception/childbirth (v. 16) and the man will also experience *’iṣṣābôn* in the field (v. 17). Yet in the context of childbirth, *’ešeb* would denote “labor-pain” as the force of *harbāh ’arbbēh* “I will greatly multiply” seems to imply (cf. 1 Chr 4:9-10).S

Some argue that the true contrasts move from complete absence of conditions before the Fall to their presence after the Fall, using the death element (from no death to inevitability of death) as an evidence. This argument is not persuasive because not only did death not exist yet before the Fall but neither did childbearing. Study of Scripture and the writings of Ellen White help us to understand that the *possibility* of death was a reality before the Fall. Adam and Eve's immortality (no possibility of death) was still conditional: "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (2:17). Wrote Ellen White: "They were to enjoy communion with God and with holy angels; but before they could be rendered eternally secure, their loyalty must be tested.... God placed man under law, as an indispensable condition of his very existence" (PP 48-49). Death and childbearing both were potentially existent before the Fall. It can be observed that the primary roles of man and woman as outlined in Gen 3 are already present in Gen 1-2—the man tended the garden before the Fall and the woman would still have given birth even without the Fall. Since the roles of man and woman in Gen 3 reflect the same roles before the Fall, male headship, as part of man's role, must have existed before the Fall. The indicators of man's headship before the Fall have already been outlined in the section on Gen 2. The primacy of responsibility entrusted to the man in Gen 2 underscores his leadership role.

The lack of a specific word to convey male headship or female submission in Gen 2 (as *māšal* does in Gen 3) may reflect the fact that headship and submission before the Fall were spontaneous and effortless—to be understood rather than required. So, just as the Lord did not explicitly require Sabbath-keeping in Gen 2—though this is understood—so He did not explicitly command headship/submission in the man-woman relationship, yet this is understood and, in fact, conveyed through the primacy of responsibility given to the man as opposed to the woman.

The human rule over the animals including the serpent was part of the divine design (Gen 1:26, 28; 2:18-20). As we shall see, the divine proclamation over the woman-man relationship (3:16) parallels that of the serpent-woman relationship (v. 15), so that just as the divine judgment in v. 15 does not institute (wo)man's rule over the serpent but only introduces pain in their relationship (Gen 1) so does that judgment in v. 16 only introduce subjection on the part of the woman in the already-established male headship relationship (Gen 2). The judgment upon the woman is largely restricted to the home and childbearing. First, notice that the promised "seed" which shall bruise the head of the serpent is identified with the woman rather than with the man (Gen 3:15). Second, her judgment is saturated with images of conception, childbirth, and her relation to the man (v. 16).¹¹⁷ It is interesting to note that in 1:28, procreation is closely connected to the exercise of dominion over the animal creation. Even though now she is destined to bear children in extreme labor-pain, the woman nevertheless contributes immensely towards the subjugation of the earth (v. 28).¹¹⁸ Thus, the man-woman relationship is one of complementarity, mutuality, and interdependence in the fulfillment of the divine mandate.

While the judgment upon the woman is confined to the home, the judgment upon the man covers the entire productive land. For his sake, the ground is cursed—thorns and thistles will make breadwinning a difficult task.¹¹⁹ The contour of the divine judgments of 3:14-19 shows that man's sphere of operation is wider territorially (i.e., the land) than that of the woman (i.e., home).¹²⁰ If the roles of woman and man in chap. 3 reflect their roles in chap. 2, then we can

¹¹⁷ The key terms include "seed," "sons," "conception," "labor-pain," and "giving birth" (vv. 15-16).

¹¹⁸ Cf. Matthews, 173; Schreiner, 293.

¹¹⁹ The key terms in the man's judgment include "till," "ground," "produce," "field," "herb," "eat," "bread," "toil," "sweat," "thorns/thistles" (vv. 17-19).

¹²⁰ It must be noted that the wider territorial scope of the man does not make his responsibility more important than the woman's. If we were to judge based on quality, the woman's role as mother of the "living" including the promised Seed would probably be more important. However, the functions were different and all contribute to the divine purposes of ideal family and covenant relationships.

assume that both before and after the Fall the man bore greater responsibility within the human family.¹²¹ These roles of man and woman are carried out in 3:20-5:32. The woman is the “mother of all living” (3:20). As such she conceives and bears children (4:1-2, 25). The man also fulfills his role as breadwinner, tilling the now stubborn ground in search for food to take care of the family (3:23; 4:2, 12).¹²²

Primacy of Man’s Responsibility

The second indicator of a continued role differentiation after the Fall is, once again, the primacy of man’s responsibility. We start with the inversion of roles in Gen 3:1-6 where the primacy of man’s responsibility is implicit. The Lord had made man and woman rulers over the earth and the animals (1:26-28). But in 3:1-6 the woman neglects her authority as a ruler over the animals to submit to the serpent’s authority. By so doing she disobeys the Lord’s command. As suggested already, the man’s responsibility as head/leader would have included ensuring obedience to the Lord’s command. It would appear that the serpent tempted the woman because she betrayed some weakness on her part in obeying the command.¹²³ Apparently her separation from the man made the temptation easier.¹²⁴ In any case, her disobedience disrupted the order and unity within the human family, first, by her taking a unilateral decision to eat the fruit and then, as it were, inducing the man also to partake of the fruit (3:12). Kenneth A. Matthews has noted that the participant structure in Gen 2-3 depicts an original “role relationship of leader and

¹²¹ Cf. Wenham, 82, notes that “the sentence on the man is the longest and fullest, since he bore the greater responsibility in following his wife’s advice instead of heeding God’s instructions personally given to him.”

¹²² Man would till the ground from which he was taken (2:5, 7), and to which he ultimately will return at death (3:22-23). The woman, who was not taken out of the ground, is not charged with tilling the ground (cf. 2:15; 3:17-19, 23). It is interesting to notice that death is associated with the man: (1) he is warned about death (2:15); (2) he is destined to die and thus return to the ground from which he was taken (3:19).

¹²³ Otherwise one wonders why the serpent decided to tempt the woman rather than the man.

¹²⁴ E.g., “The *angels had cautioned Eve to beware of separating herself from her husband* while occupied in their daily labor in the garden; *with him she would be in less danger from temptation than if she were alone . . . she soon found herself gazing with mingled curiosity and admiration upon the forbidden tree*” (PP 53).

follower” (i.e., God, man, woman, serpent) but that this structure is reversed in the Fall (i.e., serpent, woman, man, God).¹²⁵ In this context, the woman could be seen as exercising authority over the man, thereby usurping his role as head (cf. vv. 6, 12). The woman, created to stand by the side of the man, invited trouble by leaving his side, and in fact made the man stand by her side. In Gen 2 the woman is referred to as “his woman,” but in Gen 3 he is called “her man.” Further, the otherwise neutral phrase “to her man [husband] with her” (3:6) suggests that the woman assumed authority at the point of rebellion. In v. 12 the man’s answer, “the woman whom you gave [to be] with me,” points to the fact that it was the woman who was supposed to be “with” the man, not the other way round.

While in Gen 2 the man’s activity and initiative is the focus, in Gen 3 the woman takes the initiative. The serpent relates to her as if she were the leader and she accepts such responsibility: “Satan’s subtlety is that he knew the created order God had ordained for the good of the family, and he deliberately defied it by ignoring the man and taking up his dealings with the woman. Satan put her in the position of spokesman, leader, and defender.”¹²⁶ Satan’s purpose was probably to overthrow the man through the woman. Ellen White thus comments: “Satan exulted in his success. He had tempted the woman to distrust God’s love, to doubt His wisdom, and to transgress His law, *and through her he had caused the overthrow of Adam*” (PP 57, emphasis supplied).¹²⁷ To be sure, both the man and the woman failed to exercise their authority;¹²⁸ if the woman failed to exercise her authority over the serpent, the man also failed to

¹²⁵ Matthews, 220.

¹²⁶ Piper and Grudem, “An Overview,” 73.

¹²⁷ Similarly, Piper and Grudem, “An Overview,” 73, note: “We think that Satan’s main target was not Eve’s peculiar gullibility (if she had one). But rather Adam’s headship as the one ordained by God to be responsible for the life of the garden.”

¹²⁸ Cf. Wenham, 75.

exercise his headship role by yielding to the woman against the Lord's command.¹²⁹ And the Lord, in pronouncing the sentence, would emphasize the man's surrender of his headship role to the woman: "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife" (v. 17). Whether from the standpoint of the serpent or the woman, sin entered the human family through usurpation of authority. The issues of authority and control will become clearer in the divine pronouncements that follow (3:14-19). If the serpent usurped the woman's authority as a ruler of the animals including the serpent, then God would restore the woman's authority by enabling her "seed" to bruise the serpent's head (v. 15). Similarly, if the woman usurped the man's authority as head of the human family, then God would restore his authority by making him ruler over the woman (v. 16).

The primacy of man's responsibility is highlighted in several other ways in Gen 3. Verses 9-11 give the impression that the man bore greater responsibility in the garden.¹³⁰ As the *first* among equals the Lord first seeks out the man to require accountability from him. God first questions the man at length and then only briefly questions the woman (vv. 9-11). This is because he is primarily answerable for the activities of the family.¹³¹ The question "Where are you?" is understood by the man as an invitation to give an account for the rebellion (cf. v. 10). Interestingly, while God directs three questions to the man, He directs only one to the woman, and none to the serpent. Adam is first to be blamed for the rebellion in the garden, and so the

¹²⁹ Ortlund Jr., 107, puts it this way: "Eve usurped Adam's headship and led the way into sin. . . . Adam, for his part, abandoned his post as head. Eve was deceived; Adam forsook his responsibility. Both were wrong and together they pulled the human race down into sin and death."

¹³⁰ The man was to "tend" the garden and "keep" it. The Hebrew *šāmar* "keep" often means "guard," hence "take charge." As God personally gave the man the instructions on the forbidden fruit (2:15), so would He hold him primarily responsible for the disobedience of the command (3:9-11).

¹³¹ Interestingly, it may be noted that man's decision to eat the fruit is shown in the narrative to be the decisive act, not the woman's. Thus, it is only after the man ate the fruit did the consequences become clear (3:7).

Lord directs three probing questions to him.¹³² These questions and their responses underscore his leadership role even before the Fall (vv. 9-12). Such appears to be the most natural explanation of God’s calling the man to account first: “He [Adam] was the one commanded and warned with reference to obedience and the results that would impinge upon disobedient humans. When they do disobey, Eve is *first* in transgression—but *Adam* is held responsible. And so, God again addresses Adam—not Eve. “Have you [Adam] eaten from the tree of which I commanded you [singular] not to eat?”¹³³ Further, verse 17 confirms earlier observation that the law forbidding the fruit was given specifically to the man as head of the family (2:15; so also v. 11). This explains why the Lord takes serious issue with him and blames him for having “heeded the voice” of the woman (3:17).¹³⁴

The second, and more concrete, expression of the primacy of man’s responsibility after the Fall comes in 3:16 where the Lord explicitly places the woman under the rulership of the man. Following the Lord’s pronouncement, man’s headship role before the Fall would now become institutionalized. Headship before the Fall would be selfless in character and in a happy, harmonious relationship. But if before sin the relationship of the man and woman was perfect and harmonious, the intrusion of sin and, with it, pain and suffering, would disrupt the perfect harmony of the relationship. Before the Fall the woman would spontaneously and effortlessly agree with and support the man in his leadership role, but after the Fall sin would distort this

¹³² Blomberg, 131, similarly observes: “It is interesting that the serpent approaches only the woman to deceive her (vv. 1-5), and yet God confronts the man first to call him to account for his rebellion (vv. 9-12).” So also John Piper, “A Vision of Biblical Complementarity: Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 37: “Eve had sinned first, but God does not seek her out first. Adam must give the first account to God for the moral life of the family in the garden of Eden. This does not mean that the woman has no responsibility. . . . It simply means that man bears a unique and primary one.”

¹³³ Kirkpatrick observes: “Adam was formed first. He was the one made responsible for the warning about the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the garden.”

¹³⁴ Wenham, 76, states that man’s “eating is the last and decisive act of disobedience.” And so man is required first to give account for the rebellion.

harmony. The words of Gen 3:16 indicate that loving leadership and protection could now be turned into domination of the woman.¹³⁵ But through the plan of redemption, the man's headship role can again be exercised with Christ's headship in view (Eph 5): "Christian redemption does not redefine creation; it restores creation, so that wives learn godly submission and husbands learn godly headship."¹³⁶

It is often argued that the judgments in 3:14-19 are descriptive rather than prescriptive. While this is true, the Edenic ideal has not changed and, through God's grace and the redemption in Christ, harmony can be restored in a believing couple's relationship. Nevertheless, reminders of sin remain: the serpent still goes on its belly and the woman still experiences labor-pain during childbirth. As Davidson observes, the sentence in v. 16 is "irrevocable" and "normative" and "not merely a culturally conditioned description."¹³⁷

But what does Gen 3:16 mean? The key words in this verse are *l'sûqâ* "desire" and *māšal* "rule." The word *l'sûqâ* appears only three times in the Hebrew Bible (3:16; 4:7; Song 7:10). In Gen 3:16, *l'sûqâ* is often understood as "sexual desire."¹³⁸ This interpretation is influenced largely by the usage of the term in Song 7:10, where it occurs in a man-woman relationship context. Within the context of Gen 3, advocates find support for this interpretation by arguing that since v. 16 is replete with conception and birth imagery, *l'sûqâ* must refer to woman's sexual desire. Nonetheless, the exact relationship between the woman's "sexual desire" and the

¹³⁵ Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis* (Jerusalem, 1961), 1:165. Thus, Derek Kidner, *Genesis* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1967), 71, states, "'To love and to cherish' becomes 'to desire and to dominate'."

¹³⁶ Ortlund, 109.

¹³⁷ Davidson, "Genesis 3," 127; idem, "Headship," 267, where he adds, "Just as none of the other judgments were removed or reversed at the Cross, but stay in force until the consummation of salvation history, so this judgment remains in force until the removal of sinful world conditions at the end of time."

¹³⁸ E.g., Davidson, "Genesis 3," 129-130; Belleville, 33.

man's "rule" (*māšal*) is not always clear.¹³⁹ Although such an interpretation is possible, another is more probable, namely that *t^ešûqâ* denotes woman's desire for control or mastery over the man. Both structural and linguistic elements undergird this interpretation. First, while v. 16 contains birth imagery, the clause which contains *t^ešûqâ* does not follow from the labor-pain pronouncement; rather, that clause functions as divine judgment upon the *relationship* between the woman and the man and thus parallels structurally and thematically the judgment upon the *relationship* between the serpent and the woman in v. 15. The following structure of vv. 14-19 serves to illustrate this:

- A Serpent: harsh conditions, change in food, and death (v. 14)
- B Serpent vs. Woman: strife between serpent and woman's seed for mastery (v. 15)
- C Woman: harsh conditions: labor-pain in childbirth (v. 16a-c)¹⁴⁰
- B¹ Woman vs. Man: strife between woman and man for mastery (v. 16d-e)
- A¹ Man: harsh conditions, struggle for food, and death (vv. 17-19)

From this structure, we see that the divine judgment upon the woman-man relationship in **B**¹ ("And against your husband [is] your desire; but he shall rule over you," v. 16) parallels the judgment upon the serpent-woman relationship in **B** ("He [woman's seed] shall bruise your head; and you shall bruise his heel," v. 15). Both sentences describe relationships characterized by strife and desire for mastery. The idea of strife is explicit in v. 15 as the Lord Himself implants enmity between the woman and the serpent and between the descendants of both.¹⁴¹ In v. 16 strife in the woman-man relationship is implied by the fact that the man's "rule" (*māšal*) is a reversal of woman's "desire" (*t^ešûqâ*), just as in v. 15 the struggle between the serpent and the woman's "seed" brings about a situational reversal. Moreover, just as v. 15 introduces pain and

¹³⁹ E.g., Davidson's interpretation of *t^ešûqâ* as sexual desire and *māšal* as non-tyrannical rule ("Genesis 3," 130) does not fit in well, since v. 16 naturally requires that man's rule stand in contrast with woman's desire.

¹⁴⁰ Among other things, the structure above shows that the woman stands at the center of the divine judgment because it was through her that sin entered the human family. At the same time, the focus of the divine judgment upon the woman's childbirth gives hope to humanity, for it is through her "seed" that the serpent will be destroyed.

¹⁴¹ See Afolarin O. Ojewole, "The Seed in Genesis 3:15: An Exegetical and Intertextual Study" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Andrews University, 2002), 155-165, 183-190.

conflict into the serpent-woman relationship, so does v. 16 introduce pain and conflict into the woman-man relationship. In this context, the Hebrew particle *'el* in v. 16d is best translated “against” rather than “for/towards.”¹⁴² Similarly, in v. 16e the conjunction (*w^{el}*) plus the personal pronoun (*hū'*) is used adversatively, and should be rendered “but he” instead of “and he.” The adjacent context of Gen 4:7, where both terms are used in a similar fashion, provides a better analogy for the interpretation of these terms in 3:16 than does Song 7:10. The close proximity between 3:16 and 4:7 is reason enough to carefully compare the two passages. As in 3:16, 4:7 presents a tension between *t^{el}šûqâ* and *māšal* with striking structural similarity:

3:16 And against (*'el*) your man [is] your desire (*t^{el}šûqâ*); but he must rule (*māšal*) over you

4:7 And against (*'el*) you [is] its desire (*t^{el}šûqâ*); but you must rule (*māšal*) over it

In 4:7 sin’s “desire” (*t^{el}šûqâ*) and Cain’s “rule” (*māšal*) occur in a context where sin seeks to overpower Cain, but Cain is encouraged to rule over it. The woman’s “desire” (*t^{el}šûqâ*) and man’s “rule” (*māšal*) in 3:16 occur in a similar context where the woman’s desire is to have mastery over the man, a path which she had taken by having the man eat of the fruit, with devastating results. As Jacques Doukhan has pointed out, “consistent linguistic and syntactical parallels invite for a reading of Gen 3:16 in the light of Gen 4:7, and should, therefore, guide us in our interpretation of the text.”¹⁴³

¹⁴² In view of the similar context of strife in 4:7, the particle *'el* is best rendered “against.” *BDB* s.v. “*'el*” suggests that “where the motion or direction implied appears from the context to be of a hostile character,” *'el* conveys the sense “against.” Although many scholars interpret Gen 3:16 based on Song 7:10, we notice that in Song 7:10 the context of strife in relationship is absent. Further, in Song 7 the man’s positive “desire” is “for/upon” (Heb. *'al*) not “against” (*'el*) the woman.

¹⁴³ Jacques B. Doukhan, “From Subordination of the Woman to Salvation by the Woman: A Contextual and Inter-textual Exegesis of Genesis 3:16” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Adventist Society of Religious Studies, Chicago, Ill. 17 November 2012), 3.

In light of the above discussion, we should understand woman's desire in 3:16 to denote desire for mastery/control over man.¹⁴⁴ Thus the appetitive desire (indicated by *ta^awâ* and *hâmad* in 3:6) with which the woman coveted the fruit would now turn into a different kind of desire (*t^ešûqâ*) directed against the man. How does this interpretation fit in the context of Gen 3? It was suggested earlier that the woman exercised authority over the man by influencing him to partake of the fruit, explicitly indicated in v. 17 where the Lord indicts him for having "heeded the voice" of the woman. The divine pronouncement upon the man is immediately predicated upon this yielding of his leadership to the woman's authority (v. 17a).¹⁴⁵ He who was given the divine command and placed in charge of the garden was expected to have exercised ultimate control (2:15; 3:17). But, despite this surrender of his headship responsibility during the Fall, the divine plan is for man's headship to continue. If the woman had, through the serpent's invitation, usurped authority or primary responsibility from the man, then 3:16 serves to re-establish the headship role of the man over the woman; woman's desire for mastery is reversed by the authority bestowed upon man to "rule." As Matthews points out, "This usurpation of the creation ideal is, however, properly rearranged in the judgment oracles: now the serpent is to subject to the 'seed' of the woman, the woman to subject to the man, and all subject once again under the Lord."¹⁴⁶

Ellen White also makes clear the struggle that ensued after the Fall in the relationship of Eve to Adam, the necessity of this divine judgment to restore harmony between them, and also, unfortunately, the difference sin made in how they would now have to relate to each other:

¹⁴⁴So also Waltke, 94, who concludes, "The chiasmic structure of the phrase pairs the terms 'desire' and 'rule over', suggesting that her desire will be to dominate. This interpretation of an ambiguous passage is validated by the same pairing in the unambiguous context of 4:7." See also Matthews, 251; Collins, 160; Susan T. Foh, "What Is the Woman's Desire?" *Westminster Theological Journal* 37 (1975): 376-383.

¹⁴⁵ In other words, the causal (*kî*) clause that precedes the judgment (v. 17) serves to highlight the man's yielding to the woman as the immediate basis for the judgment.

¹⁴⁶ Matthews, 220.

Eve was told of the *sorrow* and *pain* that must *henceforth* be her portion. And the Lord said, “Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.” *In the creation* God had made her the *equal* of Adam. Had they remained obedient to God—in harmony with His great law of love—they would ever have been in harmony with each other; but *sin had brought discord*, and now their union could be maintained and harmony preserved only by submission on the part of the one or the other. Eve had been the first in transgression; and she had fallen into temptation by separating from her companion, contrary to the divine direction. It was by her solicitation that Adam sinned, and she was now *placed in subjection* to her husband. (PP 58, emphasis supplied)

Before the Fall, perfect harmony had existed in their relationship. But Eve’s voluntary and effortless recognition of Adam’s unselfish leadership was transformed by the injection of sin into the world. It brought “sorrow and pain” to Eve and “discord” into her relationship to Adam. Sin influenced Eve not only to *usurp* Adam’s leadership role, but in that new sphere to *lead* him into sin. God’s intervention was now required not only to restore the leadership role to man but also to ensure submission of the woman, whose tendency would now be to rule. Therefore, “she was now placed in subjection” by God to Adam.

Before the entrance of sin, there was no need for the woman’s subjection to be imposed. But now it was the only way for the divinely-instituted creation order to be maintained—affected as it was by sin and subject to abuse by man, as Ellen White goes on to say in the sentences that immediately follow:

Had the principles enjoined in the law of God been cherished by the fallen race, this sentence, though growing out of the results of sin, *would have proved a blessing to them*; but man’s abuse of *the supremacy thus given him* has too often rendered the lot of woman very bitter and made her life a burden. (PP 58-59, emphasis supplied)

Notice that there is no longer full equality in the man-woman relation as had existed before the Fall. Man was now given “the supremacy” over the woman in order to counteract the sway sin would otherwise have had in the woman-man relation. Whether or not this new, sin-modified relation of submission/subjection on the part of the woman to the man should prove a blessing in

their relation one to another would depend entirely on their *individual* relation to God and to His law. Unfortunately, as the statement affirms and subsequent history shows, rather than exercising godly leadership in harmony with the divine government and law, man has used this supremacy for selfish ends, resulting in a forced submission by the woman that has no resemblance to God's post-Fall plan.

This statement of Ellen White has sometimes been misconstrued to suggest that male leadership was instituted only after the Fall. But as with all of her writings, reading this paragraph in light of exegetical study as well as the larger Biblical context, enables us to understand its meaning. As our exegesis of Gen 1-3 has demonstrated, male leadership existed before the Fall. This reading is confirmed by Paul when he uses Gen 2 rather than Gen 3 to ground his teaching on headship, both in the home (Eph 5) and in the church (1 Cor 11 and 1 Tim 2-3). The primacy of male leadership and role differentiation with full ontological equality before the Fall is further grounded by Paul in the relation among the divine persons and role differentiation of the Triune God. Interestingly, Ellen White quotes Eph 5 in her explanation of the man-woman relation, which has huge implications for our understanding of that particular passage:

Like every other one of God's good gifts entrusted to the keeping of humanity, marriage has been perverted by sin; but it is the purpose of the gospel to restore its purity and beauty. In both the Old and the New Testament the marriage relation is employed to represent the tender and sacred union that exists between Christ and His people, the redeemed ones whom He has purchased at the cost of Calvary. "Fear not," He says; "thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you." Isaiah 54:4, 5; Jeremiah 3:14. In the "Song of Songs" we hear the bride's voice saying, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His." And He who is to her "the chiefest among ten thousand," speaks to His chosen one, "Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee." Song of Solomon 2:16; 5:10; 4:7.

In later times Paul the apostle, writing to the Ephesian Christians, declares that the Lord has constituted the husband the head of the wife, to be her

protector, the house-band, binding the members of the family together, even as Christ is the head of the church and the Saviour of the mystical body. Therefore he says, “As the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives.” Ephesians 5:24-28.

The grace of Christ, and that alone, can make this institution what God designed it should be--an agent for the blessing and uplifting of humanity. And thus the families of earth, in their unity and peace and love, may represent the family of heaven.

Now, as in Christ's day, the condition of society presents a sad comment upon heaven's ideal of this sacred relation. (MB 64-65)

Note that the subjection which came after the Fall was to maintain not only the harmony but also the protection, which is part of the spiritual leadership instituted before the Fall.

Two important clues help in determining whether the role differentiation/primacy of responsibility was established before or after the Fall: (a) Paul quotes Genesis 2 (before the Fall) in Eph 5 not Gen 3; and (b) The use by Ellen White of the word “protector” echoes another statement describing the role of Adam before the Fall (PP 46). What before had been willing and effortless has now been imposed and “would have proved a blessing” to them as long as it was maintained.¹⁴⁷

The verb *māšal* in Gen 3:16 does not in itself convey the negative associations of the word “dominate.”¹⁴⁸ Its noun form is used twice in Gen 1:16 to denote the “ruling” of the sun and the moon over day and night respectively. Human “rule” over the earth and the animal creation is conveyed by *rādāh* “rule, govern” instead of *māšal*. The man is not to rule over the woman as he would rule over the animals. In the context of Gen 3, *māšal* conveys man’s

¹⁴⁷ PP 58; cf. 3T 484. Ellen White’s description of headship both before and after the Fall has already been noted above.

¹⁴⁸ The word *māšal* has several nuances within the semantic range of “rule” —for example, to “rule” over siblings (Gen 37:8), slaves (Exod 21:8), nations (Deut 15:6), to “take charge” over someone’s possessions (Gen 24:2; Ps 105:21), to control (Gen 4:7; Ps 19:14), or to exercise self-control (Prov 16:32).

headship and implies woman's subordination.¹⁴⁹ While v. 16 is directed at a particular man and woman, the same desire by the woman to dominate is seen more generally in the way some women relate to male-based authority (cf. 1 Tim 2:11-15).¹⁵⁰ This means that woman's desire and man's rule need not be restricted solely to a marriage context. Moreover, we have seen a close parallelism between the serpent-woman relationship (v. 15) and the woman-man relationship (v. 16). This parallelism allows for the observation that just as the divine pronouncement upon the serpent-woman relationship holds general, universal significance for humanity, so does male headship in the man-woman relationship find general, universal expression.¹⁵¹ And just as the bruising of the serpent's head by the woman's "seed" serves God's purpose for humanity,¹⁵² so does woman's subjection to man serve the divine purpose. The one is to rule and the other is to submit, not because he is superior or she inferior ontologically, but because the Lord has ordained it. If man's authority is established by God, then woman's response is to honor, submit, and respect that divinely-instituted authority.¹⁵³ This conclusion is not in contradiction with these passages of Ellen White which apply primarily to husband and wife but there is no prohibition to give it larger expression as it is understood from the biblical

¹⁴⁹ Holbrook, 89, remarks: "In this Judgment woman is placed under the care, protection, and government of the man. A certain right of independent action has been forfeited by Eve's sin. Her status is now one of dependence; man is charged with her care. While, in a sense, this is a judgment, it would appear also to be a 'confirmation and perpetuation of that authority which had been assigned to man at the creation,' but which has now been made imperative in order to maintain a degree of harmony and stability between the sexes in the sin situation."

¹⁵⁰ In the context of Adam and Eve family and society are inseparable. It was a woman, not a wife, who was taken from the man and only later the two became husband and wife (Gen 2:18-23; cf. 1 Cor 11:7-9). Although the family is the immediate context, Adam and Eve simultaneously represent realities also beyond the family structure. For this reason, the divine judgments upon woman and man should not be understood as applicable only to married couples. Male headship, while finding immediate expression in the home, is not limited to that sphere.

¹⁵¹ If the conditions here are to be limited only to married couples or the family, then not only must the salvific hope expressed in v. 15 be understood as a family issue but also the cursing of the ground and the frustrations that accompany it (vv. 17-19) must apply only to married men.

¹⁵² See the discussion on the "seed" of the woman in Ojewole, 183-220.

¹⁵³ Ellen White remarks, "The Lord has constituted the *husband the head* of the wife to be her protector; he is the *house-band of the family*, binding the members together, *even as Christ is the head of the church* and the Savior of the mystical body. Let every husband who claims to love God carefully study the requirements of God in his position. *Christ's authority is exercised in wisdom, in all kindness and gentleness; so let the husband exercise his power and imitate the great Head of the church*" (AH 215, emphasis supplied).

text. Unfortunately, this struggle between man and woman is not limited to the home setting. History tells us the abuse by institutions and nations against women in general.

Moreover, as we have shown from Gen 2, male headship existed before the Fall. The New Testament confirms that male headship does not originate only after the Fall. Paul in Eph 5 uses the headship relationship that Christ has with His church to illustrate the husband-wife relationship even quoting Gen 2:24 to explain it. Nor is this pre-Fall headship of man to the woman limited to the marriage relationship (1 Cor 11:2-16; 14:34-35; 1 Tim 2:11-15). While man and woman were created equal, God designed that the man be the head/leader in the relationship of the two equals. Male headship within the human family mirrors the divine pattern: the Father is the head of Christ in the relationship of equals among divine persons of the triune God. The Creator is a God of order. At the end of creation, He appoints humans as rulers over the earth. But in the man-woman relationship, He makes the man head/leader. In the Godhead there are three persons who rule over the universe. But while the persons of the Godhead are equal ontologically, they have functional or role differences. For example, the Father is head within the Trinity, the Son is not. Ellen White refers to the Father as “Sovereign of the universe” and to Christ as “an associate—a co-worker” with the Father at creation while maintaining that the Father and the Son are “one in nature, in character, in purpose” (PP 34). Beatrice Neall tries to capture the relationship within the Godhead: “The Bible clearly indicates that there is differentiation of role in the Godhead. . . . In the divine ordering of creation, salvation, and revelation, the Father appears to be the administrator, and the Son and the Spirit the executives in carrying out the divine mandates.”¹⁵⁴ Yet this does not mean that the Father is

¹⁵⁴ Beatrice Neall, “Relationships in the Godhead: A Model for Human Relationships,” in *Women and the Church: The Feminine Perspective*, ed. Lourdes E. Morales-Gudmundsson (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1995), 26.

superior or that the Son and the Holy Spirit are inferior. Since the human being, as male and female, is created in the image of God (Gen 1:26; 5:1, 2) the relationship within the Godhead should constitute the ideal for the man-woman relationship. Consequently, just as the persons of the Godhead are co-equal in essence but with role differences, so the persons of the human family are equal in essence but have role differences, with the man being the head. Edwin Reynolds' statement is precise:

The headship of Christ and the headship of God the Father form the pattern for the headship of husband-wife (in the home) and man-woman (in the church). Since the context of 1 Cor 11 is the church (vv. 4,5,16), not the home, the primary significance in this passage would seem to encompass gender relationships in the church. . . . One objection has been that the principle of submission is a negative concept, a consequence of sin. This verse invalidates that objection, since Christ is shown to be in submission to the headship of God and every man is in submission to the headship of Christ, and these are not negative relationships. There is no essential conflict between ontological equality and submission, for God and Christ are ontologically equal, yet Christ submits to His Father. The submission is functional, providing for different role relationships; it does not express any ontological inequality. In fact, it has been pointed out that the fullest form of submission is between equals, as in the case between Christ and His Father. And this submission to headship authority is not a consequence of sin, for it existed already in heaven before sin. When Michael, the eternal Word, agreed before the foundation of the earth to take the role of the Son of God and come to this planet to die for mankind (Eph 1:3-5; Heb 10:5-10), He was already in submission to His Father's role as authority figure in the divine Trinity. And, according to 1 Cor 15:24-28, in the new creation, "when everything is subject to Christ, then the Son Himself will also be subject to the one who subjected everything to Him, so that God may be all in all" (v. 28 CSB). The text further points out that "when it says, 'everything is put under Him,' it is obvious that He who puts everything under Him is the exception" (v. 27 CSB). Even in the new creation, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, will be in voluntary submission to His Father, "so that God may be all in all" (v. 28).¹⁵⁵

The relationship among the persons of the Godhead implies that headship in the human realm does not need to be a post-Fall institution. Gen 3:16 does not institute male leadership, but it does reaffirm it: when in Gen 3:22-23 the man is driven out of the garden, it is understood that where the man leads, the woman follows. The man will continue to be the head of the human

¹⁵⁵ Edwin Reynolds, "Biblical Hermeneutics and Headship in 1 Corinthians," a paper to be presented at the Theology of Ordination Study Committee Meeting (July 22-24, 2013, Maryland, USA), 21-22.

family. It is he who is given primary responsibility for the life of family and society (Gen 2). The table below compares man and woman in Gen 3 and indicates the implication of this comparison for male headship.

Man	Woman	Implication for Male Headship
Not tempted by the serpent	Tempted by the serpent	The serpent could get to the man through the woman
Judged first after the Fall	Judged next	Man takes primary responsibility for disobedience of the law
Is judged for listening to the woman	Judged directly	Man ought to have maintained his headship role under God's rule
Judgment affects the whole land (i.e., land is cursed)	Judgment is restricted to the home (i.e., childbirth)	Man's responsibility includes providing for and protecting the family
Made ruler over woman	Desire will be against the man's rule	Man to exercise conscious headship and the woman is to submit to the man's authority

New Testament Use of Gen 2 in the Context of Male Headship

The New Testament, particularly Paul, affirms the existence of headship before the Fall as well as afterward. Adam is the one identified as responsible for plunging the human race into sin. Also, Paul uses Gen 2 to show that man was created as the head of woman and that such headship is not restricted to the family. Since other papers will be written on the New Testament passages, only a few comments are made here.

Adam's Bearing Responsibility

The New Testament holds the man, Adam, primarily responsible for the Fall and “pictures Adam, not Eve, as the representative head of fallen humanity (Rom 5:17-19; 1 Cor 15:21-22).”¹⁵⁶ The fact that Scripture traces the impact of sin on the human race to Adam rather than to Eve is an indication that from the beginning of their creation the former must have assumed greater responsibility.

¹⁵⁶ Piper and Grudem, “Charity,” 409. See also Blomberg, 129.

Male Headship in the Home and in the Church

Pauline passages dealing with male headship both in the family and in the church underscore the New Testament understanding of male headship as a part of the creation order. Contrary to scholars who find male headship only after the Fall, Paul does not appeal to the divine judgment in Gen 3 as the basis for male headship but to Gen 2, which explains man's primary responsibility to lead. As Bryan Ball notes, "This male/female relationship of Genesis is used in the New Testament (Ephesians 5) as an example of Christ's relationship to the church, a relationship that can have little meaning if the original from which it was drawn has no significance in the first place."¹⁵⁷ The key passages are cited in part as follows:

But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman *is* man, and the head of Christ *is* God... For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man (1 Cor 11:3, 7-9, NKJV)

Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but *they are* to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church (1 Cor 14:34-35, NKJV)¹⁵⁸

And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression (1 Tim 2:12-14, NKJV)

Controversy surrounds the meanings of these passages. Yet the scholarly debate over these texts does not rule out the fact that Gen 2 underlies Paul's arguments for male headship and authoritative leadership in the church.¹⁵⁹ In 1 Cor 11, we find clearly that man's headship is

¹⁵⁷ Bryan Ball, "The Ordination of Women: A Plea for Caution," *Spectrum* 17/2 (1985): 45.

¹⁵⁸ To these may be added Eph 5:22-23; Col 1:18; 1 Pet 3:1-7 where both Paul and Peter teach wives' submission to their husbands.

¹⁵⁹ For a detailed discussion and support for male headship based on creation order in these passages, refer to Hasel, "Hermeneutical Issues," 1-53; Blomberg, 153-178; Schreiner, 298-320; D. A. Carson, "'Silent in the Churches': On the Role of Women in 1 Cor 14:33b-36," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 140-153; Douglas Moo,

based on Gen 2 instead of Gen 3.¹⁶⁰ The phrase *gynē ex andros* “woman out of man” recalls *mē`iš luq`hâ-zô`t* “from man this was taken” (Gen 2:23). Similarly, *ektisthē . . . gynē dia ton andra* “created . . . woman for the man” recalls *`e`śeh-lô `ēzer k`neḡdô* “I will make for him a helper like opposite him” (Gen 2:18). The use of Gen 2 in 1 Cor 11 affirms our observation that Gen 2 teaches male headship.¹⁶¹ Moreover, Paul in 1 Cor 11 specifically presents male headship in the family and in the church as reflecting headship in the divine-human and divine (i.e., Godhead) relations.

In 1 Cor 14, the ground for wives’ submission to their husbands is “the law” (*nomos*, v. 34). Although the scriptural referent of *nomos* is not made clear by Paul in this passage, its parallel with 1 Cor 11 as well as with 1 Tim 2 suggest that Paul is likely referring to Gen 1-2.¹⁶² In any case, Paul is clear that male headship in the family provides the model for male headship in the church. His statement that “the husband is head of the wife” (Eph 5:23) is probably based on Gen 2. In Eph 5:23-24, Paul pictures male headship as a reflection of Christ’s headship over the church. Similarly, he uses Gen 2:24 in Eph 5:31 in a way that applies both to the union of Christ with the church and to the union of the husband with his wife. As W. J. Larkin Jr.

“What Does It Mean Not to Teach or Have Authority Over Men? 1 Timothy 2:11-15,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 179-193.

¹⁶⁰Hasel, “Hermeneutical Issues,” 10, notes, “While the ‘head covering’ may be related to the cultural custom of its time, the teaching on women praying and prophesying in church is in no way limited to Corinth, as Paul’s theological argument based on Gen 1-2 indicates. The appeal to the creation account as a theological foundation for his argument of the proper role of women in church is cause for recognizing that there is normative, transcultural teaching in 1 Cor 10:2-16 [*sic*] which remains valid for today.”

¹⁶¹ Paul would argue in vv. 11-12 that man also comes from woman and so that there is mutual interdependence. However, while woman’s derivation from man relates to creation (vv. 7-9), man’s derivation from woman relates to procreation (vv. 11-12).

¹⁶²So also Carson, 152; Reaoch, 66.

observes, “the instruction for conduct in marriage in Ephesians 5:22-33 becomes unquestionably binding when seen as a reflection of Christ’s relation to the church.”¹⁶³

In 1 Tim 2, Paul uses both the creation sequence in Gen 2 and the deception of Eve in Gen 3 to establish the primacy of male leadership in the church.¹⁶⁴ Here, the statement “for Adam was formed first and then Eve” (*Adam gar prōtos eplasthē eita Heua*) recalls the creation of man in Gen 2:7 and the creation of woman in Gen 2:22. However, the reference to “woman being deceived” (*gynē exapatētheisa*) recalls Gen 3:13. Paul, by explicitly referring to Gen 2-3 in 1 Tim 2, points out clearly that God established male leadership at creation (Gen 2) and reaffirmed it even after the Fall (Gen 3). His usage of Gen 2 as grounds for male headship at home and in the church suggests both that there is male headship in Gen 2 and that male headship is not restricted to the marriage context. 1 Tim 2 is not a household code but refers to church life.¹⁶⁵ As in 1 Cor 11, there is a generic use of *anēr* and *gynē* in 1 Tim 2 in connection with an argument from the creation order affirming male headship in the church. Following a careful study of the passage, Hasel concludes that

¹⁶³ W. J. Larkin Jr., *Culture and Biblical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 109. See also Reaach, 68.

¹⁶⁴ Neither in 1 Cor 11 nor in 1 Tim 2, must the references to “man” and “woman” be limited to “husband” and “wife.” While *anēr* and *gynē* often refer to husband and wife (e.g. 1 Tim 3:2), they can equally refer to “man” and “woman” (3:11; Acts 5:14; 8:3). The terms in themselves are not a decisive indicator that the marriage or husband-wife relationship is in view, for example, in 1 Tim 2:11-15. In vv. 8-9 Paul addresses men and women generally as members of the church, not as husbands and wives (as in Eph 5:22-33; Col 3:18-19). If the husband-wife relationship were in view, then the instruction in vv. 9-10 about woman’s dress and adornment would have to be limited to wives only. Similarly, when Paul says in 1 Cor 11:8 that *gynē* was taken from *anēr*, he does not mean “wife” was taken out of “husband” but rather “woman” was taken out of “man.”

¹⁶⁵ 1 Tim 2 is not a household code that instructs wives on how to relate to their husbands. In a household code (e.g., Eph 5:21-6:9; Col 3:18-4:1), the use of pronouns to indicate “one’s own” (*idios* or *heautou*, Eph 5:22, 28-29) indicate that the words *anēr* and *gynē* refer to “husband” and “wife” rather than “man” and “woman” in a generic sense. The use of the article may also have a similar function in Col 3:18-4:1 to specify *anēr* and *gynē* as “husband” and “wife” (cf. 1 Pet 2:18-3:7). 1 Tim 2 does not have any such indicators common in household codes such as the use of pronouns or reference to masters, servants, or children. This suggests that the terms *anēr* and *gynē* should be translated as “man” and “woman” rather than “husband” and “wife.” Moreover, 1 Tim 2 deals more with worship life as opposed to home life (cf. 3:13-14).

a limited and/or culturally-conditioned interpretation of 1 Tim 2:8-15 is strained. The appeal to the creation order and to the Fall in vss. 14-15 seems to place a universal emphasis on this instruction. Furthermore, if the function of women in authoritative teaching settings in the church is to be of a limited nature as applicable only to Ephesus or in some other setting, then the prior instruction on adornment in vss. 9-10 is to be limited to those settings as well. This would be equally true of the instruction of prayer by men in vs. 8. The larger context of 1 Tim 2:8-15 with the instruction on elders (1 Tim 3:1-7) and deacons (1 Tim 3:8-13) puts the passage on men and women in 1 Tim 2:8-15 that precedes it in a setting of universal application for the church.¹⁶⁶

Some scholars see parallels in the New Testament between male headship and slavery, and on this basis argue for the abolition of male headship in the church.¹⁶⁷ Yet male headship and slavery are not so neatly comparable. The biblical model of male headship and female submission has nothing in common with the master-slave relation. Moreover, while male headship is based on the creation order, slavery is not. Being in Christ “restores the ontological pre-Fall equality without doing away with the functional role differentiations of the creation order.”¹⁶⁸ Benjamin Reaach’s statement is to the point:

A comparison of the slavery passages with the women’s passages reveals critical differences between the two. Most notable are the repeated references to creation found in 1 Tim 2:13, 1 Corinthians 11:8-9, Ephesians 5:31, and most likely 1 Corinthians 14:34 in its reference to “the Law.” Also significant are the Christological and theological analogies of Ephesians 5:22-33 and 1 Corinthians 11:3. . . . Indeed, there is an intentional parallel between God’s relationship with his Son, Christ’s relationship with his church, and a husband’s relationship.¹⁶⁹

We find in the New Testament, therefore, an affirmation of male headship as a creation order grounded in Genesis. Male headship is not a result of the Fall; it is part of the creation design for humanity. Jesus Himself appealed to creation (Gen 2) to restore order and harmony in

¹⁶⁶ Hasel, “Hermeneutical Issues,” 40. Moo, 193, similarly comments: “The activities involved in 1 Timothy 2:12 are, by definition, transcultural in the sense that they are permanent ministries of the Christian church, and the prohibitions of 1 Timothy are grounded in theology.”

¹⁶⁷ See the parallels in Davidson, “Women Pastors,” 3.

¹⁶⁸ Hasel, “Hermeneutical Issues,” 18.

¹⁶⁹ Reaach, 156-157.

the family (Matt 19). Surely Paul is not mistaken in his consistent use of Gen 2 to establish headship in the family and in the church, and, as we have seen, this interpretation is faithful to the exegetical meaning of the verses he cites in their original context. Paul's appeal to creation order (Gen 2) as authoritative grounds for male headship in the family and in the church stands in sharp contrast to the now-common supposition that God did not intend any headship at creation in the man-woman relationship. Evangelical egalitarianism not only undermines male headship in the family and in the church, it also undermines the Sabbath as is clear in the works of such scholars as William J. Webb and Willard Swartley.¹⁷⁰ As Hasel incisively points out, "If Adventists were to limit the authority of the Bible in matters of women speaking authoritatively, then we could limit the authority of the Bible as it regards the Sabbath as well. Or conversely, the lasting validity of the Sabbath is undermined with a limited authority of the Bible in the case of the women."¹⁷¹

Primacy of Adam's Responsibility in the Writings of Ellen G. White

According to the exegetical analysis of the OT and NT set forth here, there was primacy of male responsibility before the Fall. Ellen G. White agrees with this understanding: "Adam and Eve were rich indeed. They possessed Eden. *Adam was lord in his beautiful domain*" (FE 38).¹⁷² God made Adam the rightful sovereign over all the works of His hands: "*Adam was crowned king in Eden. To him was given dominion over every living thing that God had created. The Lord blessed Adam and Eve with intelligence such as He had not given to any other creature. He made Adam the rightful sovereign over all the works of His hands. Man, made in the divine image, could contemplate and appreciate the glorious works of God in nature*" (IBC

¹⁷⁰ Willard Swartley, *Slaves, Sabbath, War, and Women* (Scottsdale, PN: Herald, 1983).

¹⁷¹ Hasel, "Hermeneutical Issues," 47.

¹⁷² All emphasis in statements of Ellen G. White in this section have been supplied unless otherwise noted.

1082). Note also this comment: “The relationship existing in the pure family of God in heaven was to exist in the family of God on earth. Under God, *Adam was to stand at the head of the earthly family*, to maintain the principles of the heavenly family. This would have brought peace and happiness” (6T 236). And again: “Having conquered Adam, *the monarch of the world*, he [Satan] had gained the race as his subjects, and he should now possess Eden, and make that his head-quarters. And he would there establish his throne, and be monarch of the world” (RH, February 24, 1874, par. 19).

Adam is also called the *vicegerent* of the Creator: “Satan's dominion was that wrested from Adam, but Adam was the vicegerent of the Creator. His was not an independent rule. The earth is God's, and He has committed all things to His Son. Adam was to reign subject to Christ. When Adam betrayed his sovereignty into Satan's hands, Christ still remained the rightful King” (DA 129). Adam was also the *father and representative* of the whole human family: “In Eden, God set up the memorial of His work of creation, in placing His blessing upon the seventh day. The Sabbath was committed to Adam, the father and representative of the whole human family” (PP 48). God made Adam *ruler* over the earth: “When God made man He made him ruler over the earth and all living creatures” (PP 59).

The above passages stipulate that Adam was the one assigned by God to be the leader on earth. Adam, not Adam and Eve, was the head and representative of earthly family. As Genesis indicates, Eve provided support for the “ruler” and “king” of the earth. The primacy of male responsibility before the Fall is made clear in the writings of Ellen White.

Furthermore, according to these writings, the man was accorded primary responsibility as leader in the garden and in the human family while the woman was created “to stand by his side as an equal, *to be loved and protected by him*” (PP 46). Some may argue that this statement

implies only the man's physical strength rather than headship. But why should this be necessary in a perfect world? The one danger evident from the text is a *spiritual* one. Furthermore, it should be noted that Eve's succumbing to temptation proves that she needed it: "The angels had cautioned Eve to beware *of separating herself from her husband* while occupied in their daily labor in the garden; *with him* she would be in less danger from temptation than if she were alone. But absorbed in her pleasing task, *she unconsciously wandered from his side*" (PP 53). Adam "*mourned that he had permitted Eve to wander from his side. . . . She was a part of himself, and he could not endure the thought of separation. . . . He resolved to share her fate; if she must die, he would die with her*" (PP 56). It is this protecting responsibility of man that underscores his leadership in the man-woman relationship. After the Fall, their relationship was changed by sin. "Adam reproached his companion for her folly *in leaving his side* and permitting herself to be deceived by the serpent" (PP 57). In fact, Satan was able to cause "the overthrow of Adam" only through Eve (*ibid.*).

Adam was also given an instructional role as spiritual leader: "Under God, Adam was to stand *at the head* of the earthly family, *to maintain the principles of the heavenly family*" (CT 33). He was able to fulfill this role because God Himself had instructed Adam: "the Sabbath was committed to Adam, the father and representative of the whole human family" (PP 48).

The Fall was not the reason for Adam's primacy of responsibility. Ellen White is in harmony with the apostle Paul's teaching that God ordained the husband to be the head of his wife: "to be protector, the house-band, binding the members of the family together, even as Christ is the head of the church and the Saviour of the mystical body" (MB 64-65). Therefore, primacy of male responsibility in the human family is part of God's creation order and continues after the Fall of humankind.

The basic argument of the proponents of women's ordination is that there was no such primacy of male responsibility and submission at creation but only after the Fall. As Richard Davidson argues:

Before the Fall there was full equality with no headship-submission in the relationship between Adam and Eve (Gen 2:24). But after the Fall, according to (Gen. 3:16), the husband was given a servant headship role to preserve the harmony of the home, while at the same the model of equal partnership was still set forth as the ideal. This post-Fall prescription of the husband headship and wife submission was limited to the husband-wife relationship...[and was] never broadened to the covenant community in such a way as to prohibit women from taking positions of leadership, including headship positions over men.¹⁷³

In other words, before the Fall there were no functional role distinctions between the man and the woman except perhaps for the obvious functional role of childbearing. After quoting Gen. 1:27 the same author states that “this basic passage gives no hint of a divine creation order. Here man and woman are fully equal, with no subordination of one to another.”¹⁷⁴ Irrespective of these assertions, there is far more than a “hint” of male headship. As we have seen, the principle of male headship is found throughout Gen 1-3 and the same principle is found in 1 Tim 2-3 among other passages. Furthermore, according to the writings of Ellen G. White, male primacy of responsibility is according to the creation order. Ellen White does not agree with the premise of some scholars that support male-female equality while ignoring role distinctions in Gen 1-3. Although Adam and Eve were created as equal, God ordained that the man should assume the primacy of responsibility within the human family.

After the Fall, changes occurred within the human family on earth. Pain and sorrow now enter the picture, which, in the case of Eve's relationship to Adam, means that her “desire” will be *against* her husband. There would now be a struggle, rather than loving submission, so that

¹⁷³ Davidson, “Headship,” 284.

¹⁷⁴ Richard Davidson, “The Bible Supports the Ordination/Commissioning of Women as Pastors and Local Church Elders,” *Spectrum* (Apr 9, 2010); online: <http://spectrummagazine.org/node/2305>.

Eve would want to exercise authority over Adam. This struggle is already evident in Eve's beginning to think in a different way, which leads her into sin as the initial verses of Gen 3 already show, contrary to Davidson's claim that Eve is shown to be "intelligent, perceptive, informed, and articulate." That claim is contrary also to what Ellen White says about Eve's thinking:

She thought herself secure, even if she did not remain close by the side of her husband. She had wisdom and strength to know if evil came, and to meet it. This the angels had cautioned her not to do. Eve found herself gazing with mingled curiosity and admiration upon the fruit of the forbidden tree. She saw it was very lovely, and was reasoning with herself why God had so decidedly prohibited their eating or touching it. (1SP 35).

Clearly, Eve's thought processes here are already beginning to lead her astray, unlike the positive tone Davidson seeks to give to her thought process. Even clearer, in some ways, is another statement: "She [Eve] first erred in wandering from her husband, next, in lingering around the forbidden tree, and next in listening to the voice of the tempter, and even daring to doubt what God had said" (SG 20).

The harmony existing between Adam and Eve in Eden should be described more in terms of Adam's leadership and protection of Eve and less in terms of her submission because it does not adequately capture the relation they enjoyed in a sinless state. While this may be difficult to imagine in our sinful condition, something similar is described in terms of the angel's relation to God's law before sin entered heaven through the rebellion of Lucifer:

The angels of heaven attain unto no higher knowledge than to know the will of God, and to do His will is the highest service that can engage their powers. But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought-of. In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. . . . Love for God makes their service a joy. So in every soul wherein Christ, the hope of glory, dwells, His words are re-echoed, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. (MB 109).

Before the Fall, Eve likewise submitted to Adam as an equal, standing by his side not below him, and found delight in doing so. It is our sinful condition and past experience that makes it difficult for us to understand “submission” in any other way than in a negative sense.

Support has been sought from Ellen White’s statement in 3T 484 to argue that male headship is not a creation order: “When God created Eve, He designed that she should possess *neither inferiority nor superiority to the man, but that in all things she should be his equal*” (3T 484). The fact of woman being the “equal” of man appears several other places in her writings, so that this passage needs to be read together with other references to man-woman equality, especially in *Patriarchs and Prophets*. Ellen White teaches that man and woman were created equal. But does the phrase “in all things” (3T 484) intend to teach man-woman equality at creation so as to exclude role differences? She definitely does not teach that man and woman had identical roles at creation. The man-woman equality in her writings should be understood in terms of ontological equality. In a context where Ellen White is discussing the “subjection” of woman in the divine curse, equality “in all things” may simply reinforce that even though there was an ontological equality and role differentiation in the man-woman relationship there was no subjection before the Fall. She says that woman was created from man’s rib “to stand by his side as an equal” (PP 46). Again, “in the creation God had made her the equal of Adam” but after the Fall she was “placed in subjection” (PP 58). Describing the circumstance of woman’s creation, Ellen White states that among all the creatures (1) “there was *not one equal to man*” and that (2) “there was *none of the same nature* to love and to be loved” (PP 46). The parallelism between these statements strongly suggests that the term “equal” is used to mean “same nature.” If so, equality in all of these statements relates to ontology without undoing role differences.

This man-woman equality is comparable to the equality of the persons of the Godhead, in whose image humans are created. Even though the persons of the Godhead are equal in all things, there is indication of role differentiation and headship. Ellen White comments that the woman “was perfectly happy in her Eden home by *her husband’s side*; but, like restless modern Eves, she was flattered that there was a higher sphere than that which God had assigned her. But *in attempting to climb higher than her original position, she fell far below it*” (3T 483). The reference to woman being by “her husband’s side” and the fact of her falling “far below” her “original position” imply that God intended some order in the man-woman relationship in the garden. This is confirmed by a further comment: “A neglect on the part of woman to follow *God’s plan in her creation, an effort to reach important positions for which He has not qualified her to fill, leaves vacant the position that she could fill to acceptance*” (3T 484). It is interesting to note that Ellen White cites Eph 5 in connection with life before the Fall (PP 46). Eph 5 clearly teaches mutual love and submission as well as male headship; therefore, its use by Ellen White in her comments on Gen 2 suggests male headship, spiritual responsibility and accountability in the man-woman relationship before the Fall. These and other statements depict male headship before the Fall. Moreover, her statements relating to the Fall suggest that man is head over woman both at home and in the church. While she refers to Eve’s being “subjected” to “her husband,” she also makes references to the “supremacy” given to “man” over “woman” (3T 483). In the latter instance, there is no reason to maintain that “man” and “woman” refer only to married couples. In short, there is total harmony between the OT, NT, and the writings of E.G. White that God gave the primacy of responsibility to Adam alone and that this happened before the Fall.

Conclusion and Some Implications

Gen 1-2 depicts the ontological equality of the sexes; both man and woman bear the image of God, and so are fully equal in essence. The passage also teaches that gender distinction (man/male and woman/female) and creation order come with role differentiation. Man and woman are not identical in terms of their respective roles. And so ontological equality does not require role identity; equality in personhood does not rule out functional differences between man and woman either in the family or in the covenant community. The thematic thrust of Gen 2 places an extraordinary emphasis on the man which betrays the primacy of his responsibility in the garden and in his relationship with the woman. He is the *primus inter pares* (first among equals) as well as chief servant in the Lord's "vineyard" in Eden. It is this primacy of man's responsibility that defines his role as head/leader and her role as the only "helper like opposite him" made purposely "for him." Far from being advantageous privilege, male headship connotes stewardship and responsibility (Gen 2), requiring accountability at the Creator's behest (Gen 3). In Eden, headship is leadership, but leadership is service—be it tending and guarding the garden, providing for and protecting the woman (Gen 2), or bearing the blame for the Fall (Gen 3; cf. Rom 5)!

A balanced reading of Gen 1-3 coupled with the New Testament usage of Gen 2 in the context of man-woman relationships (esp., 1 Cor 11:2-16; 14:34-35; 1 Tim 2:11-15) makes clear that male headship constituted part of the original divine design at creation (Gen 2). Headship did not originate after the Fall; it was reaffirmed—howbeit in a new context—after the Fall (Gen 3). If male headship was instituted at creation and reaffirmed after the Fall, and if the New Testament affirms male headship at creation and uses it as grounds for male headship both in the home and in the church, we have no hermeneutical and exegetical basis not to believe that such

headship is a divinely-ordered paradigm that is transcultural, and, therefore, relevant also for the twenty-first century church—especially since headship is patterned after the relationship within the Godhead. Following his evaluation of the arguments for and against the ordination of women, George W. Reid observes:

In interpreting the relevant texts the theologian must decide whether a synthesized theological construct saying that God sees men and women in identical light shall supersede Biblical passages that appear to support ordered, separate functions planned from the beginning. Are there genuine tensions in Scripture that require a dialectic approach or can unity be found in the most basic premises? Historically, Adventists have defended the unity of truth when rightly understood. Ellen White supported this approach. But exegesis has failed to lead to consensus, even among Adventist scholars, for the reason that the genuine decisions too often are made outside the Scriptures.¹⁷⁵

While Gen 2 has been subjected to differing interpretations as regards the issue of headship, a careful exegesis of the text, without neglecting certain thematic and linguistic features, favors the view that male headship is taught there and confirmed in the New Testament's interpretation of Genesis 1-3.

Consequently, we conclude that the view of male headship in Gen 2 most faithfully represents the totality of the scriptural witness—it is not to be interpreted simply as a product of pagan human culture,¹⁷⁶ but reflects the divine order established at creation for humankind and reaffirmed after the Fall. In Scripture, man's role as head/leader is demonstrated not only in protecting his family and providing for its needs, but also in the political/military and cultic spheres of society. So we find, for example, that it is men who are to go to war and be

¹⁷⁵ George W. Reid, "The Ordination of Women: A Review of the Principal Arguments For and Against the Ordination of Women to the Gospel Ministry," Biblical Research Institute (January 1985), 28.

¹⁷⁶ See, for example, the genealogical lists that focus primarily on fathers and sons (Gen 4-5, etc.). God also calls Noah, not his wife (Gen 6). He calls Abraham, not Sarah (Gen 12), though she is the only "helper" who shall bear the promised seed (Gen 17). Certainly we would not want to say that God is being influenced by human culture in His call of, say, Noah and Abraham.

responsible for protecting women and children.¹⁷⁷ We also find in Scripture that it is men who serve as priests, whether for the family (e.g., Gen 8:20; 12:7; Job 1:5) or for society at large (e.g., Num 3:6-15). The cultic dimension of male headship/leadership is important for the discussion on women's ordination.

It is an unfortunate reality that male headship has been abused both in society and in Scripture. In man's hands, a divinely-ordered headship has often been turned into male superiority and domination. Yet the fact that the headship role has been abused does not mean it is a pagan, human institution. Unfortunately, feminist reactions to male headship are now leading to the opposite extreme, sometimes attempting to obliterate any notions of maleness and femaleness altogether. As argued in this study, man and woman share ontological equality, which, however, does not negate maleness and femaleness.

As we have seen, the male headship role is both implicit and explicit in Gen 2-3 and, therefore, part of the divine design at creation. The headship role does not make man superior, ontologically, as is demonstrated by the relationship between the Father and the Son within the Godhead. Role difference is not a yardstick for determining ontological quality. So, when God gave cultic leadership to the tribe of Levi we are not to interpret this to mean that the Levites were superior to all the other tribes. But it must also be noted that those who rebelled against the divinely-ordered leadership were severely punished: "I give your priesthood *to you* as a gift for service, *but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death*" (Num 18:7).¹⁷⁸ The rebellion of Korah and his company is a case in point (Num 16-17). The fact that Korah, the apparent leader of the rebellion, was himself a Levite did not mean that he could assume the priestly duties of

¹⁷⁷ E.g., Deut 20:7-8; 24:5; Josh 1:14; Judg 4:8-10; Neh 4:13-14; Jer 50:37. Deborah (Judg 4:4-24) is the exception that proves the rule.

¹⁷⁸ Emphasis supplied. Cf. Num 1:51; 3:10, 38; 16:40; 18:4; 2 Chron 26:16-20.

Aaron and his sons in the tabernacle (16:1-2). Moses' question, "Are you seeking the priesthood also?" (v. 10) betrays Korah's dissatisfaction with his role as Levite; his rising up against the divinely-ordered cultic headship ended in disaster. The destruction of Korah and company (vv. 30-33) would serve as a lesson for future generations (vv. 39-40).

Implications for the Adventist Church

Inasmuch as the early chapters of the book of Genesis relate to issues pertinent for our present discussion of ordination—equality, role differentiation, and headship/submission—and inasmuch as the New Testament cites Gen 2 as grounds for male leadership in the home and in the church, these early chapters are, to use the words of Davidson, "foundational to determining whether or not woman should be ordained as elders and pastors in the church."¹⁷⁹

In this study we have indicated that male headship was instituted at creation (Gen 2) and reaffirmed after the Fall (Gen 3). The Old Testament, New Testament, and the Spirit of Prophecy, all affirm that headship is a creation order. Some proponents of women's ordination deny or explain away headship in Gen 2. Others, like William Webb, are forced to admit "hints" of headship in the text. Yet the New Testament uses Gen 2 as the authoritative basis for headship, removing it from the realm of culture-bound practices. In Scripture, male headship operates both in the family and in the church. It is a biblical ideal based on the creation order. Salvation in Christ does not undo this creation order, it restores it. Headship is divinely ordered—a "Thus saith the Lord" which is normative, transcultural and binding for all times.

God created man and woman as equals *and* with role differentiation. In the church, men are to lead. The offices vested with spiritual headship/leadership authority in the New Testament

¹⁷⁹ Davidson, "Headship," 259.

seem to be those of apostles and elders/overseers, which are assigned to men, implying that such offices of authority are not to be assumed by women.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church must continue to stand firm on the principle of *sola scriptura*. Any decision that would disregard this foundational principle must not be encouraged. The unity of the church is not grounded in changing policies but in the unchanging and infallible word of God. A decision to ordain women as pastors can be made only outside the bounds of Scripture. And to reinterpret the creation order taught in Scripture so that women can be ordained to the gospel ministry is to dismantle the very fabric that undergirds our teachings and that unites us as a church. If we consider male headship to be cultural, though taught on the basis of Gen 2, do we not thereby also limit scriptural authority with regard to the Sabbath, which is also taught on the basis of Gen 2? Such is the path many evangelicals take. But can we as Adventists afford to follow them? Gerhard Hasel would disagree:

The implication is obvious. The Sabbath which is linked to creation in the Bible (Gen 2:1-3; Exod 20:8-11; Mark 2:27-28) has, they say, been changed, so we can change the teaching on women, which is also linked to creation. Adventists, of course, hold on to the creation ordinance of the Sabbath, as does Scripture; should we not then likewise hold on to the creation order on women? But if we should limit or give up the latter, would we not make a profound statement about the Sabbath? The lasting validity of the Sabbath is undermined by limiting the authority of the Bible in order to support the ordination of women.¹⁸⁰

We believe that our unity and survival as God's remnant church lies only in upholding and remaining obedient to the authority of Scripture. In the words of Ellen White,

We cannot purchase peace and unity by sacrificing the truth. The conflict may be long and painful, but at any cost we must hold fast to the word of God. "The Bible, and the Bible only," must be our watchword (HS 197.2).

The Bible sets before us a model church. They [believers] are to be in unity with each other, and with God (3 SM 18.3, emphasis supplied).

¹⁸⁰ Hasel, "Biblical Authority," 20-21.