Restoration of the Image of God: Headship and Submission

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I. Introduction

The impetus for the ordination of women as elders/ministers in the Seventh-day Adventist church has its origin deep within the feminist movement which in America picked up steam with the leadership of Betty Friedan (*The Feminine Mystique*) and Gloria Steinem in the 1960s-1970s. The push for women’s ordination entered into Evangelical Christianity with full force in 1973 with the formation of the Evangelical Women's Caucus (EWC). Key books were published. Primary examples include Letha Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty, *All We’re Meant to Be* (1974); Paul Jewitt, *Man as Male and Female* (1975); Virginia R. Mollenkott, *Women, Men, and the Bible* (1977); Virginia R. Mollenkott and Letha Scanzoni, *Is the Homosexual My Neighbor?* (1978).

Galatians 3:28 became “a canon within a canon” and became a rallying point for evangelical Feminists. In contrast to evangelical feminists, mainstream feminist theologians clearly identified the principle of headship and submission as being built into the Genesis 2 record, not Genesis 3.¹ But mainstream feminist theology firmly rejected the high view of Scripture which evangelicals claim to hold. On the other hand, evangelicals are still trying to reconcile feminism with the Bible through the reinterpretation of troublesome texts.

Adventist advocates for ordination of women (egalitarians) also have adopted a special hermeneutic for troublesome and uncomfortable portions Scripture dealing with women in ministry. They have identified this special hermeneutic as a “principle-based, contextual, linguistic and historical-cultural” reading strategy² which is at the heart of their biblical approach for certain texts.³ Mainstream feminist theologians long ago understood that such

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¹ Mainstream feminist Rosemary Ruether states “Even in the original, unfallen creation, women would have been subordinate and under the domination of man.” *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*, Beacon Press (1983), 94. See also “… [M]ale-female hierarchy was not just a product of sin, it was a part of the natural order created by God” (Ibid., 97).


³ Adventist egalitarians have adopted a flexible hermeneutic called a “principled-based, contextual, linguistic, historical-critical” strategy for certain uncomfortable texts. For Adventist feminist, the text determines which hermeneutic to employ—a plain reading of Scripture or the “principled-based” method. This flexible hermeneutic appears to be distant related to a form of literary criticism and variant of a hermeneutic called “deconstruction”
reinterpretable approaches would be fruitless. They therefore abandoned the principle of
normative authority for all 66 books of Scripture.4

The present paper employs the historical-grammatical method of interpreting Scripture,
which relies on “the plain meaning of Scripture,” accepting the Bible “just as it reads.”5 This
approach is endorsed by the “Methods of Bible Study” Document (MBSD),6 which has been
taken as the fundamental exposition of Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) hermeneutical method to
be followed in the study of the theology of ordination. The role of the Writings of Ellen G. White
in interpreting Scripture has been previously documented.7

The biblical principle of headship and submission is woven like a golden unifying thread
through the pages of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. This biblical principle is the
foundation for male headship in the home and in the church, and is the basis for the
appointment (ordination) of men as local elders or the conference-employed elders/ministers8
with governing and teaching authority in the church. With the exception of the roles of
elder/minister and local elder, women may be appointed to other ministry roles in the church.

fathered by German philosopher, Martin Heidegger, and fully developed by Jacques Derrida in his classic 1967
work, Of Grammatology. Deconstruction espouses multiple meanings to a text or passage with no true meaning
possible, recontextualization of the text, and rejection of all authority and hierarchy. Literary criticism of
Deconstruction gives the reader the authority over the text. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deconstruction (11-25-2013), See also http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Heidegger#Derrida_and_deconstruction accessed 11-25-2013. See the Conclusion of this paper for a more complete discussion of Deconstruction.
5 Ellen G. White wrote: “Let the Bible explain its own statements. Accept it just as it reads, without twisting the
words to suit human ideas.” Loma Linda Messages, 55. “All who exalt their own opinions above divine revelation,
all who would change the plain meaning of Scripture to suit their own convenience, or for the sake of conforming
to the world, are taking upon themselves a fearful responsibility.” GC 268. “When those who profess to believe
present truth come to their senses, when they accept the Word of the living God just as it reads and do not try to
wrest the Scriptures, then they will build their house upon the eternal Rock, even Christ Jesus.” 21 MR 346.
6 “Methods of Bible Study” Document [MBSD], a statement voted by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Executive Committee at the Annual Council in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 12 October 1986, available from http://www.adventist.org/fileadmin/adventist.org/files/articles/official-statements/Statements-2010-english.pdf pages 241ff, accessed 12-1-2013. The preamble to the MBSD makes very clear that the use of the historical-critical method of Bible study, which “de-emphasizes the divine element in the Bible as an inspired book (including its resultant unity)” and “minimizes the need for faith in God and obedience to His commandments,” is to be rejected.
8 Elder/minister are synonymous and interchangeable terms for the conference-employed leadership role in the
local church, district, or conference entities.
This paper will document the headship/submission principle in Genesis 1-3 with twenty-six points of identification. This will be followed by an examination of the headship/submission principle in 1 Corinthians 11 and 14 and 1 Timothy 2-3, in which the apostle Paul uses the priority of Adam’s creation as a rationale for the principle. We will then examine the concept of authority and order in creation followed by a documentation of the principle of headship and submission within the Trinity. We will conclude with a summary of popular objections to the principle of headship and submission.

II. Creation Headship in Genesis 1-3

The fundamental assumption of those advocating the ordination of women in the role of elder/minister is that the principle of headship and submission was not divinely ordained at creation and was non-existent until after the Fall. The chapter entitled, “Headship, Submission, Equality in Scripture” in Women in Ministry⁹ clearly states the premise. “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 Genesis 3:16, the husband was given a servant-headship role to preserve the harmony of the home, while at the same time the model of equal partnership was still set forth as the ideal. This post-Fall prescription of 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.”¹⁰

In other words, before the Fall—so the theory goes—there were no functional role distinctions between the man and the woman except perhaps for the obvious functional role of childbearing. After quoting Genesis 1:27 the author states that “[T]his basic passage gives no hint of a divine creation order. Here man and woman are fully equal, with no subordination of one to another.”¹¹ Irrespective of these assertions, the “hint” of male headship is, in fact, found in Genesis 1:26-27. This “hint” will be amplified as we examine the principle of male headship in Genesis 1-3 in parallel with an exposition of the same principle found in 1

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¹⁰ Ibid., 284, italics original.
¹¹ Richard Davidson, “The Bible Supports the Ordination/Commissioning of Women as Pastors and Local Church Elders” (Spectrum, 10 Apr 2010).
Corinthians 11, and also within the entire context of 1 Timothy 2-3. It also will be seen that
Genesis 3 is, in fact, a commentary on the reversal of the divine creation order of Genesis 2.

A point-by-point critique of the thesis on headship and submission in Women in Ministry
has been previously documented.\(^\text{12}\) The same article in Women in Ministry contends that “no
inspired writer—not Moses, Jesus, Paul, or Ellen White—teaches the creation headship of man
over woman.” We will enumerate twenty-six identifying points of creation headship that can be
found in Genesis 1-3. But first, does Ellen White endorse and harmonize with the principle of
creation headship? The answer: Adam was to stand at the head of the earthly family;\(^\text{13}\) Adam
was the monarch of the world;\(^\text{14}\) Adam was the vicegerent of the Creator;\(^\text{15}\) The Sabbath was
committed to Adam, the father and representative of the whole human family;\(^\text{16}\) Adam was
crowned king in Eden; He made Adam the rightful sovereign over all the works of His hands;\(^\text{17}\)
He made him ruler over the earth;\(^\text{18}\) Adam was lord in his beautiful domain.\(^\text{19}\)

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\(^{13}\) “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.” RH, January 16, 1913 par. 4; 6T 236.1

\(^{14}\) “Having conquered Adam, the monarch of the world, he 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 was appointed by God to be monarch of the world, under the
supervision of the Creator. BEcho Aug. 28, 1899 (cf. ST Apr. 29, 1875).

\(^{15}\) “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.

\(^{16}\) “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.

\(^{17}\) “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.” Redemption; or the Temptation of Christ, p. 7; 1BC 1082.2

\(^{18}\) “When God made man He made him ruler over the earth and all living creatures.” PP 59.

\(^{19}\) “Adam and Eve were rich indeed. They possessed Eden. Adam was lord in his beautiful domain.” FE 38.
It may be noted that Ellen White states that "Adam and his companion were to bear rule over the earth" (PP 50). But this does not contradict the thrust of all her other statements concerning the relationship of Adam to his helper. It does not say, “Adam and his companion were to bear co-rule over the earth," since it is not detailing the relationship of Adam to his companion—but their relationship to the earth. Adam’s “companion” was his “helper” (see PP 46). At his creation Adam was made "ruler over the earth and all living creatures. So long as Adam remained loyal to Heaven, all nature was in subjection to him." (PP 59). With Eve as Adam's "helper" (companion), they both were to "tend and keep" the Garden. But primary responsibility was given to Adam. Eve was to bear rule over the earth with him. Eve may well have functioned as "queen" of the Garden home—being second in authority to Adam, but this does not mean she was a "co-ruler" in the sense of being appointed co-monarch, co-sovereign, vice-gerent, etc.

A co-monarchy is not specified. Co-equal leadership roles and titles for Adam and Eve are completely missing from the inspired writings. Adam and Eve are not identified as co-sovereigns, co-equal vicegerents, co-rulers, or king and queen with equal roles, nor was Eve identified as the representative of the whole human family. It is true that Eve was ontologically equal (equality of being or nature) with Adam; she was “to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him.” However, Adam’s role of protector further substantiates the principle of creation headship. Thus, the principle of male leadership in the Adamic family of God is unmistakably clear from Ellen G. White’s writings.

### A. Twenty-six Points of Identification

Male and female role differentiation is both obvious and implied in Genesis 1-3 in several ways: by their differentiation in terms of gender, by the order and mode of their creation, and by describing the primacy of man’s responsibility. Not only is there a “hint” of a creation order given in Genesis 1:27 which will be established in the conclusion of Section II on Genesis, but there is also a repeated amplification of the principle of creation headship in

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20 Ontology/ontological refers to the nature of being. All future references to “ontological” will be designated by “being” (that is, ontological equality will be designated equality of being).

21 Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, 46.

Genesis 1-3 in terms of the man’s responsibility and accountability. The twenty-six identifying points of creation headship in Genesis 2-3 are summarized below.

Point 1: Adam was created first. “God formed (plassō, LXX\(^{23}\)) man of dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being” (Gen 2:7). If the priority of the creation of Adam was not important in the creation of male and female, why were they not created simultaneously from the dust of the ground to prevent any possible suggestion of role differences?\(^{24}\) The prior creation of the man helps define the relationship between Adam and the woman. The historical account in Genesis 2 is a sustained interaction between God and Adam, prior to the creation of Eve, where God gives Adam guidance and instruction concerning life in the Garden of Eden. The apostle Paul uses the priority of creation, that “Adam was formed (plassō)\(^{25}\) first, then Eve” (1 Tim 2:13) as one of the principal justifications for the headship of man in the church and that a woman was not to teach or have authority over a man. Evangelical feminists claim that Paul was refuting radical feminists in first-century Ephesus who were presumably advocating priority of the creation of Eve over Adam.\(^{26}\) In fact there is no historical evidence that a feminist culture existed in first-century Ephesus,\(^{27}\) and this proposition, derived from methodology associated with literary criticism and limited biblical authority, has been rejected by scholars embracing plenary inspiration and the historical-grammatical hermeneutic of Scripture which allows the Bible to interpret itself.\(^{28}\)

The importance of the priority of creation and role differentiation has been resisted by suggesting that Genesis 2 incorporates a literary device, an inclusio derived from rhetorical criticism,\(^{29}\) in which the creation of man at the beginning and the creation of woman at the end of the historical account correspond to each other in importance.\(^{30}\) The inclusio device may well

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23 LXX, The Septuagint is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament.
24 Ratsara & Bediako, 17.
25 Paul is careful to use the identical Greek equivalent from the Septuagint for the Hebrew in Genesis 2:7.
26 Davidson, quoted in Spectrum, 10 Apr 2010; see: http://spectrummagazine.org/node/2305.
29 Ratsara & Bediako, 16 and references cited therein concerning rhetorical criticism and the inclusio argument.
30 Davidson, Women in Ministry, 261.
convey the idea of equal value of the man and the woman, but it does not eliminate the
element of functional differentiation. If equality without role differentiation between man
and woman were of paramount importance, God could have created both man and woman
simultaneously from the dust of the earth and avoided the need of a subtle literary device to
demonstrate equality.

It has been argued that although Adam was the “head of the human family” (6T 236)
and “the father and representative of the whole human family” (PP 48), this headship was
based not on the priority of creation but on the principle of corporate solidarity. It is thus
claimed that Eve should be considered an equal partner with Adam where they both are
representative heads of the entire human race —Father (and Mother) of the human race. But
the Bible explicitly teaches that Adam is the representative of the human race. Adam’s actions
(not the actions of Adam and Eve) affected the whole human race. “As in Adam [not in Eve] all
die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive” (1 Cor 15:22). Sin and death entered the world
through one person, not two (Rom 5:12). The fallen race is not redeemed by the last Adam and
Eve or the Second Adam and Second Eve; it is redeemed by the Last Adam (the Second Adam).

“The first man Adam became a living being’; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. . . . The
first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. . . . Just as we
have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven” (1
Cor 15:45-49). The human race was derived from the representative man, Adam.

The idea that Adam and Eve functioned as co-equal heads of the human race is also
contradicted by the fact that “Adam was the monarch of the world” and God “made Adam

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31 Ratsara & Bediako, 16-17. Ratsara and Bediako have demonstrated the shortcomings and shallowness of the
inclusio argument and conclude their analysis with the following summary. “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’s interest in creating a
literary inclusio” (cited in note 72).
Theology of Ordination Study Committee, Baltimore, MD, July 22-24, 2013, 7. Davidson asserts the possibility
based on solidarity that “Eve also was given a representative role in solidarity with the entire human race, as the
‘Mother of all living.’”
33 All Scripture references are taken from the NKJV version of the Bible unless otherwise noted.
34 White, Confrontation, 16.
the **rightful sovereign** over all the works of His hands.”\(^{35}\) The terms, **sovereign** and **monarch**, in this context exclude Eve and demand absolute singularity—Adam was the sole and singular monarch and sovereign of the world under God. By definition, a monarch is a sole ruler, one who rules alone. Prior to the Fall, the human family consisted only of Adam and Eve. Thus, Adam’s functioning as “monarch of the world” and “head of the human family,” in point of fact, makes him head of the woman.

Furthermore, “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.\(^{36}\) Finally, when the redeemed are welcomed to the City of God, Christ does not greet Adam and Eve as Father and Mother of the race; He greets Adam as the father of the race. “As the ransomed ones are welcomed to the City of God, there rings out upon the air an exultant cry of adoration. The two Adams are about to meet. The Son of God is standing with outstretched arms to receive the father of our race.”\(^{37}\)

**Point 2: Adam given authority and responsibility.** “Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to tend and keep it” (Gen 2:15). Prior to the creation of the woman, God provided a garden home for Adam; He placed Adam in his garden home; God provided a source of food for Adam (Gen 2:8-9). God then assigned Adam with primary responsibility and leadership to manage and care for (“tend and keep”) the Garden. Adam is in charge of the Garden. With the later creation of Eve, Adam was given a helper with whom to share the responsibility to tend and keep the Garden. But all major scriptural directives concerning care of the Garden and its prohibitions were communicated to Adam directly by God prior to the creation of Eve, thereby conveying creation headship responsibility to Adam.

**Point 3: God speaks to Adam first and gives him leadership accountability.** “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree in the Garden you may freely eat; 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’” (Gen 2:16-17). Prior to the creation of the woman, God instructs Adam what

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\(^{35}\) Ibid., 11.
\(^{36}\) Ratsara & Bediako, 26 (cited in note 96).
to eat. Then God commands Adam, prior to the creation of Eve, with the warning not to eat of the forbidden tree. Adam was given leadership responsibility to transmit this warning as it became necessary. Eve received this same warning indirectly from God through Adam and angels. With cunning intentions, the serpent spoke to Eve first (Gen 3:1), enticing her to take responsibility for leading the family into sin, and inverting the order that was established at creation. Because Adam listened to the voice of his wife rather than the face-to-face communication from God, Adam was held accountable and responsible for the Fall of the human race (Gen 3:17; Rom 5:12).

Upon the creation of Adam, God could have immediately created the woman from Adam’s rib, if He had not intended to instill within Adam a sense of servant-leadership (headship) prior to her appearance. This appears to be a contributing reason for man’s priority of address, thereby conveying authority and responsibility to Adam. With no supporting evidence other than inclusio arguments, egalitarians claim that first-hand instruction from God regarding the forbidden tree conveyed no headship status to Adam. But denying the scriptural evidence for creation headship, supported by God’s direct command to Adam regarding the forbidden tree, does nothing to support the functional role of equality of men and women in the home and the church, and illustrates the weakness of the evangelical egalitarian position.

**Point 4: Adam is given a helper.** And God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make (lit. “for”) him a helper comparable to him” (Gen 2:18). Since no animal was suitable as Adam’s companion, Eve was created to be man’s ‘ēzer k*neḡdō (“helper like opposite him”). Specifically, she was to be his equal (k*neḡdō) with the same human nature of the opposite gender. She was also to be his helper (‘ēzer), implying male headship. Thus, ‘ēzer k*neḡdō itself spells equality and functional differentiation. It should be noted that man is never said to be an ‘ēzer of his wife. By defining the woman as ‘ēzer k*neḡdō, the idea is

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38 Ratsara & Bediako, 15-16.
40 Davidson, *Women in Ministry*, p. 261. Davidson sweeps this evidence aside with no supporting evidence, other than the unconvincing inclusio argument, by simply claiming that “the divine impartation of such knowledge to Adam before Eve was created does not thereby reveal the headship of Adam over his partner.” For the “inclusio” argument, see Davidson, “Should Women Be Ordained as Pastors? Old Testament Considerations,” 8.
41 Ratsara & Bediako, 18.
conveyed that she will play a role within the overall responsibility given to the man. A “helper” is one who assists the person having primary responsibility for the task at hand. The suggestion that “never does the word refer to a subordinate helper” is refuted by the example where God would scatter all the troops, Zedekiah’s help (‘ēzer), from him (Eze 12:14), if he tried escape from the siege of the invading Babylonian forces. As evangelical feminists and some Adventist egalitarians have pointed out, “Elsewhere in Scripture, it is most often God Himself who is called ‘ēzer (‘helper’) (Exod 18:4; Deut 33:7, 26; Ps 33:20; 70:5; 115:9, 10, 11).” But the role of helper can be carried out by someone in greater authority—for example, a father helping his son with homework. Although the father takes on a subordinate role, the son still has the primary responsibility for the task. Such was the case when God helped Moses, David, and Jehoshaphat in conquering their enemies.

Likewise, such is the case when God helps needy redeemed sinners. God assumes a subordinate role, but the sinner is held responsible for responding to God’s grace. In the Garden Adam was given a helper equal to and comparable and opposite to himself. The Hebrew text can be translated literally as, “I will make for him [Hebrew, lô] a helper corresponding to him.” Thus the apostle Paul correctly conveys the “helper” role of Eve in 1 Corinthians 11 when he justifies the headship of Adam with the rationale, “nor was man created for the woman, but the woman for the man” (v. 9).

Point 5: Adam names the animals. “Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name” (Gen 2:19). The animals are “brought” to the one in authority. Only the man is given the responsibility to name the animals (vv. 18-20), thereby echoing his role to have dominion over the world and to be prime ruler over the animal creation (1:28). It is universally recognized that the person doing the “naming” of created things is always the person who has authority over those things. Adam had sole and authoritative responsibility for naming the animals prior to the creation of Eve.

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42 Ibid., 20.
44 Davidson, Spectrum, 10 Apr 2010.
The woman, having no participation in the naming process, simply accepted the names authorized by Adam, giving further evidence of his creation headship.

Point 6: The woman is derived from man. “Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man” (Gen 2:22). The apostle Paul refers to Genesis 2:22 in 1 Corinthians 11:3-16, where he presents justification for the headship of man in the home and the church. He first asserts the headship of man in 1 Corinthians 11:3—“The head of every man is Christ, the head of the woman [wife] is man [husband], and the head of Christ is God.” He then establishes its rationale in 1 Corinthians 11:8—“For man is not from the woman, but the woman from man.” Paul substantiates the headship/submission principle by referring to the historical and biblical evidence that the woman derived her existence from the man. The priority of the creation of Adam from whom Eve derived her existence supports the creation headship of Adam.

It seems clear that “God wanted to convey two theological truths (not just one) in the formation of the woman from the rib of Adam: Since the woman was taken out of the man, 1) she is fully and equally human since she has come from his bones and his flesh, and 2) her very human nature is constituted, not in parallel fashion to his where both would have been formed from the same earth, but as derived from his own nature, so showing a God-chosen dependence upon him for her origination.”

Adam’s protective role as head of the woman in relation to her origin (from man) is conveyed in the following statement. “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.” Some Adventist egalitarians assert that Ellen White’s reference to protection has no connection with headship responsibility, only physical strength. It must be noted, however, that in the perfect environment of the Garden the physical strength of Adam was not required to protect Eve; Adam was to be her “protector” from the deception of the fallen angel. Only after the Fall did

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47 White, Patriarchs and Prophets, 46.
physical strength and protection become a necessity. Just as the stronger of two allies protects
the weaker, or a father the child, the husband is to protect the wife. In a post-Fall setting,
White states that “The Lord has constituted the husband as head of the wife to be her
protector.”49 According to White, the man’s function as head and protector of the wife applies
to both the pre-Fall and post-Fall condition. Adam was responsible for the protection and
welfare of the woman, who was derived from the man, signifying the servant-leadership
(headship) of the man.

**Point 7: God presents the woman to Adam.** “[A]nd He [God] brought her to the man”
(Gen 2:23). This apparently unremarkable statement is embedded with deep significance. The
woman is “brought” to one in authority. God does not present the man to the woman; He
presents the woman, as a gift, to the man in his previously established role as monarch of the
world. Of all the gifts given to Adam by God, Eve was “that one gift which in his eyes outvalued
every other.”50 One who receives a gift has responsibility to cherish and protect it. So now
Adam has responsibility to care for the woman, and to protect and cherish her. The whole
scene is infused with Adamic headship as the woman recognizes the priority of Adam’s creation
and she listens to Adam explain her origin.

**Point 8: Adam speaks first upon creation of the woman.** “And Adam said: ‘This is now
bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out
of Man’” (Gen 2:23). These words imply the equality and close affection of love that was to
exist in the union of the man and the woman. But these words also convey a unique message.
The woman begins to gain an understanding of herself. Assuming his headship responsibility,
Adam initiates communication with the newly created Eve and informs her of her origin,
explaining the source (from him: “taken out of Man”) of her existence. These words spoken by
Adam communicate his leadership responsibility to Eve. The apostle Paul alludes to this text as
well as 2:22 (Point 6) in confirming the headship principle as found in 1 Corinthians 11:8 (“the
woman [is] from man”).

**Point 9: Adam names the woman.** “She shall be called [qārā’] Woman, because she was
taken out of Man” (Gen 2:23). God brings the woman to Adam, and the first words she hears

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50 White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 56.
from Adam conclude with: “she shall be called Woman because she was taken out of man.” The assertion that the foregoing quotation contains a pair of divine passives is unpersuasive. Adam informs her that she is part of him (“she is bone of my bone”) and was derived from him (“she was taken out of man”). These first words the woman hears from Adam, including naming her, instills within her the unmistakable sense of Adam’s leadership responsibility, and she finds her own identity in relation to the man as his equal and helper by man’s definition. Adam names his partner in order to distinguish the gender difference between himself (man: ‘ish) and his partner (woman: ‘ishshah). As with Adam’s naming of the animals, the person doing the “naming” of created things is always the person who has authority over those things.

To claim that the assigning of the name “woman” in 2:23 is only a generic identification contradicts the pattern of naming activities found throughout the first two chapters of Genesis where same verb (qārā’, “to call”) is used in contexts of naming. For example, God calls (qārā’) the light Day; calls (qārā’) the expanse Heaven; calls (qārā’) the dry land Earth. Thus when Adam says, “She shall be called woman,” the term Woman is surely taken as a name in 2:23, which coincides with the naming of mankind (Adam) in Genesis 5. “He created them male and female and [God] blessed them and called (qārā’) their name Adam (‘adam; mankind)” (v.2). When God names male and female, “man” (“Adam”), in Genesis 5, a male priority is indicated along with full male-female equality. The responsibility given to Adam in naming indicates the leadership function and authority God gave to him, which Eve did not have over her husband.

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51 It has been asserted that Gen 2:23 contains a pair of “divine passives” indicating the designation of “woman” comes from God, not man (see Davidson, “Should Women Be Ordained as Pastors? Old Testament Considerations,” 11). But this creative proposition to deconstruct the text is tainted with eisegesis. More correctly stated, Gen 2:23 contains a pair of “Adamic passives.” It simply ignores the plain reading of Scripture: “Adam said . . . ‘She shall be called Woman.’” The responsibility given to Adam in naming indicates the leadership function and authority God gave to him, which Eve did not have over her husband.


53 Davidson, Women in Ministry, 263.

54 Wayne Grudem, Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth (Wheaton, IL, 2012), 31 (note 14).

55 It is noted here that Adam does not give the personal name “Eve” to his wife until Genesis 3:20 (“the man called [Hebrew qārā’] his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all living”). This is because in the creation story in Genesis 2 Adam is giving a broad category name to his wife, indicating the name that would be given to womanhood generally, and he is not giving specific personal names designating the character of the individual.
Point 10: Man to take the initiative in marriage. “Therefore a man shall leave his father
and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Gen 2:24). The man,
not the woman, exercises a leadership role and initiates the marital relationship, thereby
assuming responsibility for the welfare of his spouse. This command of Scripture for the man to
initiate marriage reaffirms the creation headship of the man in the home and in the church, for
the Garden of Eden constituted both the home and church for Adam and Eve.

Irrefutable confirmation of pre-Fall male headship is derived from the ideal pre-Fall
marriage: “. . . the two shall become one flesh.” The apostle Paul asserts that this mystery
(“two shall be one flesh”) “concerns Christ and His church” (Eph 5:32). But he has already
affirmed that “the husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church. . . [and]
just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be subject to their own husbands in
everything” (vv. 23-24). The ideal marriage in Eden, where the man and the woman were one
flesh, was to be based upon the mystery of “oneness” between Christ and His church (the two
are to be one flesh). Since Christ is head of the church, as the husband is head of the wife, it is
apparent that Adam, in Eden, was ordained by God to be head of the woman/wife. Paul uses
Genesis 2 to ground and establish his teaching on headship both in the home (Eph 5) and in the
church (1 Cor 11 and 1 Tim 2-3).

The record of creation in Genesis 2 delineates at least ten definitive actions on the part
of God or Adam, all of which illustrate the non-hierarchical servant-leadership responsibility
that God intended for Adam with respect to his wife.

In Genesis 3, the servant-leadership of man in the Garden home was now divinely
mandated for our parents in their post-Fall condition. Just as the Garden home was to be a little
church, now the Christian home in a post-Fall world was to be a little church where a man was
appointed leadership responsibility. The church was to be an extension of the home. “The
home of every Christian should be a little church, a representation of the heavenly home, from
which others may learn what a family can become in this world through obedience to God's
person. This is analogous to Adam’s naming the animals with broad category names rather than personal names.
(See Grudem, Biblical Foundations of Manhood and Womanhood, 28.)
word."\(^{56}\) Genesis 3 continues as a commentary on the reversal of the divine creation order of
Genesis 2.

**Point 11: The woman leaves Adam’s protective sphere, initiating role reversal.** The
serpent said to the woman, “Has God said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the Garden’?”
(Gen 3:1). Eve wanders from her husband’s protective care and becomes deceived by the
serpent. Eve asserts independence from her husband and begins to assume a leadership-
headship role. “[S]he had fallen into temptation by separating from her companion, contrary to
the divine direction. . . . Eve had been perfectly happy by her husband’s side in her Eden home;
but, like restless modern Eves, she was flattered with the hope of entering a higher sphere than
that which God had assigned her. In attempting to rise above her original position, she fell far
below it. A similar result will be reached by all who are unwilling to take up cheerfully their life
duties in accordance with God’s plan.”\(^{57}\) The immediate context of this statement indicates
that the “higher sphere” which Eve hoped to enter was “to rise above her original position” “by
her husband’s side.” The passage concludes with the warning that today the same process is
being repeated by modern Eves. Eve’s hope to be like God was not the “higher sphere” which
she sought to enter, nor is that the higher sphere that modern Eves hope to enter.\(^{58}\) The
context suggests that modern Eves hope to enter a higher sphere by attempting to rise above
their original positions, by their husband’s side, in a manner congruent with the actions of the
first Eve. In addition to the evidence of Eve’s seeking a “higher sphere” instead of remaining in
“her original position” “by her husband’s side,” the text of Genesis 3 reveals at least fourteen
other indications of Adam’s leadership role.\(^{59}\)

**Point 12: Serpent and woman initiate dialogue, continuing role reversal.** “Has God
indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree . . . ?’ And the woman said to the serpent, ‘We may
eat the fruit of the trees of the Garden’” (Gen 3:1-2). The serpent speaks to the woman as if

\(^{56}\) White, *Bible Echo*, February 16, 1903, par. 1.

\(^{57}\) White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 58-59, emphasis added.

\(^{58}\) Davidson contends that the higher sphere to which Eve hoped to enter was to be like God. This assertion violates the context of the passage. See Davidson, “Should Women Be Ordained as Pastors? Old Testament Considerations,” 24.

\(^{59}\) Contra Davidson who contends that there is no “indication of male leadership over the woman, and female submission to the man in the account of the Temptation and Fall” in Genesis 3:1-7. Ibid., 23.
she were the head, reversing the headship principle. Rather than first seeking her husband’s
counsel upon encountering this mysterious phenomenon, Eve asserts her independence, and in
contradiction to the warning concerning the forbidden tree responds to the serpent’s question.
Further advancing her leadership aspirations, and seeking a higher sphere, Eve initiates
communication and responds to the serpent’s temptation.

Point 13: The woman initiates transgression, continuing role reversal. “And when the
woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree
desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate” (Gen 3:6a). Embracing her perceived
leadership potential and disregarding the warning of angels regarding the forbidden tree, and
seeking to enter a higher sphere, Eve was deceived and fell into transgression. The apostle Paul
alludes to Eve’s attempted role reversal and seeking of a higher sphere in 1 Timothy 2:14,
where he justifies the headship of man in the home and in the church by stating that “Adam
was not deceived, but the woman being deceived fell into transgression” (v. 14). “As the first
reason for male headship, Paul pointed to the creation order in which God created human
beings: ‘For Adam was formed first, then Eve’ (1 Tim 2:12). The second argument points to the
order of transgression: ‘Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into
transgression’ (1 Tim 2:14).” The reason for male headship: Adam was created first, and Eve
sinned first. Ingo Sorke, perceptively identifying the reversal of roles, states that “by conceding
to Satan, Eve substituted Adam’s authority [headship] with Satan’s, introducing sin and death
to the world (an ‘unutterable woe’).” She began to assume headship over Adam and made
Satan her head. The serpent misled Eve, and she now proceeds to usurp Adam’s headship
authority.

Since Eve sinned first, we might expect that the New Testament would tell us that we
inherit a sinful nature and die because of Eve’s sin, or that we are counted guilty because of
Eve’s sin. But this is not the case. In fact, it is just the opposite. We read in the New Testament,

60 Wahlen and Reynolds, “NAD Theology of Ordination Study Committee Report (Minority Report),” 204.
61 White, Patriarchs and Prophets, 53.
62 P. Gerard Damsteegt, “Headship, Gender, and Ordination in the Writings of Ellen G. White,” Theology of
Ordination Study Committee, July, 2013, 29.
64 Ibid., p. 26. Wherein Sorke (note 98) also cites Thomas Schreiner, who concludes that Eve’s transgression “is
indicative of what happens when male leadership is abrogated.”
“For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor 15:22). The New Testament does not say, “As in Eve all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.” It is unmistakable, then, that Adam had a leadership role in representing the entire human race, a leadership role that Eve did not have.\footnote{Wayne Grudem, \textit{Biblical Foundations for Manhood and Womanhood} (Wheaton, IL, 2002), 25-26.}

\textbf{Point 14: The woman initiates usurpation of Adam’s headship role.} “She also gave to her husband with her” (Gen 3:6b). When she conveys the fruit to Adam, he—in distress and astonishment—realizes the tragedy unfolding as Eve explains her experience at the forbidden tree. He declares to his wife that “by the divine sentence she must die. In answer she urged him to eat, repeating the words of the serpent that they should not surely die.”\footnote{\textit{Patriarchs and Prophets}, 56, emphasis added.} Adam was not deceived (1 Tim 2:14)—he sees that his headship has been reversed, and realizes his headship hangs in the balance. “There was a terrible struggle in his mind. He mourned that he had permitted Eve to wander from his side.”\footnote{Ibid., emphasis added.} “Adam reproached his companion for her folly in leaving his side and permitting herself to be deceived by the serpent.”\footnote{Ibid., 57, emphasis added.} Usurpation of Adam’s headship role is nearly consummated.

Adam did not initiate taking the fruit from Eve. She preemptively urges Adam to relinquish his headship responsibility and simultaneously to disobey God by offering him the exhilarating experience of eating the fruit. The headship of Adam is illustrated in two ways in this scene: 1) Eve attempts to usurp his headship by taking the initiative and urging Adam to disobey; 2) Adam realizes his failure in exercising headship responsibility by permitting Eve to wander from his side. He then contemplates the consequences. The headship of Adam remains in the balance, awaiting his decision.

\textbf{Point 15: The usurpation of Adam’s headship and role reversal is consummated.} “And he ate” (Gen 3:6c). By choosing to take the fruit from Eve and eating the fruit, Adam relinquished his headship role. In effect Adam transferred his headship role to his wife, and the role reversal between Adam and Eve was consummated. Through the woman Satan succeeded in his purpose to overthrow the man, the monarch of the world. Through Adam, Satan...
conquered the human race. “Having conquered Adam, the monarch of the world, he [Satan] had gained the race as his subjects.”

By one man sin entered the world . . .” (Rom 5:12).

What was it that led to the entrance of sin into the world? Ellen White’s writings indicate that it was the reversal of the God-appointed roles for the couple.

Point 16: The unequivocal evidence of role-reversal—nakedness. “Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings” (Gen 3:7). This defining moment, Adam’s transgression and resulting nakedness, marks the official Fall of the human race. It is noteworthy that the woman did not become naked upon eating the fruit. Only after the transgression of Adam, who had headship responsibility for the family, did they both become naked. Generic transgression per se did not cause the resulting nakedness. Nakedness was the result of Adam’s unique transgression of relinquishing his headship role that God had assigned to him. In addition to disobeying a face-to-face command of God, Adam’s willing role reversal, resulting in the visible sign of nakedness, is an additional and parallel reason he is held responsible for the Fall of the human race. This highly underscores the fact that Adam was the head and representative of the human race, and only his sin caused the Fall. The Scriptures are clear in confirming the leadership/headship role of Adam. Sin and death entered the world through the actions of Adam, even though Eve sinned first. “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because all sinned” (Rom 5:12).

It is interesting to note that if Adam had resisted the temptation, God could have supplied a new wife for him, and the race would have remained unfallen. “He did not realize that the same Infinite Power who had from the dust of the earth created him, a living, beautiful

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70 Damsteegt, 20. It was Eve who took on an independent leadership role. She left her husband’s side, not following the warning “to beware of separating herself from her husband” (PP 53). “She had fallen into temptation by separating from her companion, contrary to the divine direction” (PP 58). Having followed Satan’s advice, “she became the agent of Satan in working the ruin of her husband” (PP 56). “It was by her solicitation that Adam sinned” (PP 58). Satan “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). Eve had not been content with her God-given role. “She was flattered with the hope of entering a higher sphere than that which God had assigned her. In attempting to rise above her original position, she fell far below it” (PP 59).
form, and had in love given him a companion, could supply her place.” The possibility of a new wife for Adam shows that Eve’s act alone was insufficient to curse the human race. This is further evidence of the creation headship of Adam.

**Point 17: God calls and seeks and apprehends Adam first, then Eve.** “Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, ‘Where are you?’” (Gen 3:9). Although Eve sinned first, God did not call Eve asking why she ate of the tree of which she had been forbidden not to eat. God had warned Adam about the forbidden tree prior to the creation of Eve, thus conferring headship responsibility upon Adam. Therefore God calls Adam and holds him accountable for not maintaining the integrity of his headship responsibility. The uniqueness of Adam’s headship role can explain not only the nakedness issue but also why God calls and seeks and apprehends Adam prior to Eve.

**Point 18: God interrogates Adam first and indicts Adam for the Fall, bypassing Eve.** “Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat” (3:11)? God indicts Adam by reminding him that He commanded the man, not the woman, regarding the forbidden tree (the Hebrew has the singular “you”). Prior to woman’s creation, God expressly forbade Adam from eating of the tree, thereby giving him headship responsibility. Responding to Eve’s initiative and agreeing to take the fruit from his wife and eating thereof, Adam allowed Eve to usurp his headship role. The reversal of headship roles led to Adam’s disobedience and resulted in the Fall of the human race. Attempts to refute the obvious evidence of headship in view of the priority of God’s interrogation of Adam strain credulity.  

**Point 19: Adam indicts himself.** “The woman You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate” (3:12). First, Adam acknowledges his headship responsibility by virtue of

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71 Davidson denies that the priority of Adam’s interrogation implies pre-Fall leadership over his wife, but acknowledges that it was natural for God to question him first because he was 1) created first, 2) the first to have received the command about the tree, and 3) personally warned of the consequences of disobeying the command. Although denying it, Davidson effectively acknowledges Adam’s leadership role by acknowledging the previous three facts. Davidson simply suggests that the man is not questioned “by God on behalf of his wife, but solely on his own behalf” and then, rather than embracing the obvious implications of the interrogation sequence, he employs a literary chiastic argument to deny the divinely instituted leadership of Adam. But ignoring the clear evidences of headship with such reasoning is unconvincing. He concludes that those opposing the ordination of women as elders/ministers are “reading into the text what does not exist in the chapter.” By that same accusation, Davidson indicts himself by ignoring both the plain testimony of Scripture in Genesis 2-3 as well NT confirmation of headship in the OT text in 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Corinthians 11, 14 (see Davidson, “Should Women Be Ordained as Pastors? Old Testament Considerations,” 24-25).
the fact that God gave him the woman as a gift (“You gave me”) to be loved and protected by him. “God Himself gave Adam a companion . . . as an equal, to be loved and protected by him.”

Again, it is noteworthy that God did not bring Adam to the woman and give him to her. Nor did He bring the two simultaneously to each other. Second, Adam concedes that he yielded to Eve’s assumed leadership role by accepting the fruit (“she gave me”). Third, he relinquished his headship role when he ate (“and I ate”).

**Point 20: God interrogates Eve second even though she sinned first, being deceived.**

“And the LORD God said to the woman, ‘What is this you have done?’ And the woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate’” (Gen 3:13). Having previously indicted Adam for failure in maintaining his headship responsibilities by yielding to his wife, God addresses the woman. The woman, seeking to enter a higher sphere than her position by her husband’s side, was deceived and fell into transgression, but Adam willingly transgressed the face-to-face command of God regarding the forbidden tree, thereby relinquishing his headship role. The apostle Paul confirms the Genesis 3 account of Eve’s deception in 1 Timothy 2:14, where he justifies Adam’s headship role over the woman. “Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived fell into transgression.”

**Point 21: Adam’s role reversal is corrected.** “To the woman He said . . . ‘Your desire shall be for [against] your husband, and he shall rule over you’” (Gen 3:16). Although Adam relinquished his headship responsibility upon the act of eating the fruit, with its consequential nakedness, that same role reversal was corrected by the expressed declaration of God that Adam was to rule over the woman by divine decree. Prior to the Fall there existed a natural

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72 White, Patriarchs and Prophets, 46.

73 Strong evidence has been set forth that t’sūqā (desire) with the preposition ‘el should be translated as “desire against” rather than “desire for” (with a different preposition ‘al) as in Song of Solomon 7:10. Thus the Fall did not bring about headship in marriage. The Fall brought about a distortion of previous roles, not the introduction of new roles. The distortion was that Eve would now rebel against her husband’s authority, and Adam could misuse that authority to rule forcefully and even harshly over Eve. See Ratsara & Bediako, pp. 38-43 and also Grudem, Biblical Foundations of Manhood and Womanhood, 32-35.

74 The Hebrew māšal (to rule) does not convey negative connotations of the word dominate. 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). See Ratsara & Bediako, 42.

75 Ratsara & Bediako (pp. 39-42) present convincing evidence that the woman’s “desire” (t’sūqā) denotes mastery or control over the man. The woman exercised authority over the man and influenced him to disobey. The divine pronouncement is predicated on the man’s having yielded to the leadership of the woman. But God divinely
and harmonious headship/submission relationship of the man and the woman. Now after the
Fall, the woman was placed in subjection to her husband by divine decree. The harmonious
headship/submission relationship of the man and the woman could only be restored through
divine decree and reception of the gospel by both husband and wife.

Evangelical feminists find evidence for the appearance of headship and submission only
after the Fall. Adventists in favor of the ordination of women elders/ministers cite, for
example, the passage in Patriarchs and Prophets where it is stated that “God had made [Eve]
the equal of Adam. . . in harmony with each other.” But after the Fall “their union could be
maintained and harmony preserved only by submission on the part of the one or the other. Eve
had been first in transgression; . . . and she was placed in subjection to her husband.”

However, evidence for Adam’s pre-fall headship responsibility is indicated by at least four facts:
first, Adam “mourned that he had permitted Eve to wander from his side;” second, Satan by-
passed Adam and caused his overthrow through the woman; third, angels had warned Eve
not to separate from her husband, for she would be in less danger from temptation, and
fourth, Eve sought to enter a “higher sphere” by “separating from her companion” instead of
remaining in “her original position” “by her husband’s side.” In the context of the full
statement that “harmony [could be] preserved only by submission” and that Eve was “placed in
subjection to her husband,” the author distinguishes between pre-fall harmony and the
necessary means for preserving harmony in a post-Fall condition. Pre-fall harmony was natural

mandates and restores the headship of the man. The woman’s desire for mastery is reversed by the authority
bestowed on the man to “rule.”

Patriarchs and Prophets, 58-59. “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. Had the principles joined
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.”

Ibid., 56.

Ibid., 57: “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.”

Ibid., 53.

Ibid., 58-59.
with the principle of headship/submission as part of the natural creation order, as documented in the previous points 1-21. But upon Adam’s relinquishing of his headship role to Eve, harmony in a post-Fall condition now could be preserved only by divinely mandated headship/submission (unnatural in the initial, inherent post-fall condition) on the part of the one or the other. Therefore God said, "Thy desire shall be for [against] thy husband, and he shall rule over you."

The servant-leadership of man in the Garden home was now divinely mandated for our parents in their post-Fall condition. Just as the Garden home was to be a little church, now in the post-Fall world, the Christian home was to be a little church where a man was appointed leadership responsibility. Even before the Fall, Adam’s headship in his relationship with Eve would serve as model of male headship in 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.81

The home of every Christian should be a little church, a representation of the heavenly home, from which others may learn what a family can become in this world through obedience to God’s word.82

**Point 22: God holds Adam accountable for relinquishing headship responsibility.** “Then to Adam He said, ‘Because you have heeded the voice of your wife and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, “You shall not eat of it”: Cursed is the ground for your sake’” (Gen 3:17). God holds Adam accountable not for explicit disobedience of His command, but explicitly for listening to the voice of his wife in this matter. God reminds Adam that He commanded the man, not the woman, regarding the forbidden tree. Adam relinquished his headship responsibility by listening to the voice of his wife instead of God, yielding to his emotions, and disregarding the face-to-face command of God prior to Eve’s creation. God’s indictment of Adam for relinquishing his headship position is the primary reason Paul assigns the responsibility of the Fall of the human race to Adam (Rom 5:12, 15, 17). Adam’s headship is confirmed by 1) priority of creation, 2) priority of the Forbidden Tree test, 3) priority of

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81 Ibid., 49.
82 White, *Bible Echo*, February 16, 1903.
nakedness, 4) priority of apprehension, 5) priority of indictment and interrogation, and 6) priority of accountability—heeding the voice of his wife.

**Point 23: Death sentence pronounced on Adam, not Eve.** “. . . till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return” (Gen 3:19). Although the woman sinned first, the death sentence is pronounced on Adam (the pronoun “you” is singular here) for failure to exercise his headship responsibilities with the woman. The relinquishing of Adam’s headship role brought sin into the world and death through sin that affected every human being (Rom 5:12). The headship of Adam over the human race is amplified by Paul, who attributes the entrance of death to Adam’s sin.

**Point 24: Adam reassumes his headship responsibility.** “And Adam called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all living” (Gen 3:20). The assigning of names in Scripture signifies authority over the one named, as noted previously. By naming Eve, Adam reassumes his headship role, now divinely imposed, as God decreed in Genesis 3:16. This declaration also seems to be related to fulfilling of the divine command to “be fruitful and multiply” in Genesis 1. It also serves as an affirmation that life and salvation would come through the woman’s giving birth to the promised Seed (as God promised in 3:15 and as Paul seems to confirm in 1 Tim 2:15).

**Point 25: Adam is driven out of the Garden—the woman follows.** “The LORD God sent him out of the Garden of Eden. . . . He drove out the man, and placed cherubim at the east of the Garden of Eden. . . .” (Gen 3:23-24). Adam’s headship responsibility is reaffirmed, when God drives the man out of the Garden, leaving the woman to follow. When “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 family. It is he who is given primary responsibility for the life of the family and society. (Gen 2).”

83 Thus, Genesis 2-3 forms a perfect *inclusio* with perfect symmetry; Genesis 2 begins with the creation of Adam (placed in the Garden), followed by the woman placed in the Garden, and Genesis 3 ends with the expulsion of the Adam, followed by the woman, from the Garden of Eden.

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83 Ratsara & Bediako, 45.
Point 26: The Image of God. God said, “Let Us make man in our image. . . . 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). It is important to observe that the order in Genesis 1:27 of male and then female prepares for the creation order of the man and then the woman in Genesis 2. Genesis 1:27 is expanded upon in Genesis 2. Both those in favor and those against ordination of women agree on the equality of being of male and female; they agree that the creation of male and female as the image of God indicates the equal value of women with men as being fully human, with equal dignity, worth, and importance. The plurality of the Divinity, expressed in the declaration, “Let Us make man in our image [male and female],” suggests that some unique difference associated with male and female, beyond gender, is imaged in the Godhead, “Us.” Although evangelical feminists and egalitarian Adventist acknowledge that humans are created in God’s image in terms of resemblance, relationship, and representation or function, they deny that this implies any functional role relationships among the members of the Trinity. They assert that the emphasis is on the “fellowship of equals;” and “if there is any submission implied, it is a mutual submission of Equals.” In contrast to this limited view, it is evident that the declaration by one member of the Trinity, “Let Us make man in our image,” suggests that the one speaking is giving permission to the other members to commence the creation of mankind. The one in authority gives the command, “Let Us.” Ellen White confirms conclusion when she states that “They had wrought together in the creation of the earth and every living thing upon it. And now God said to His Son, ‘Let us make man in our image.’” Thus, in addition to equality of being in the Trinity, we also see evidence for authority/submission roles with the Godhead. Consequently, if male and female are made in

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85 Davidson, “Should Women Be Ordained as Pastors? Old Testament Considerations,” 3. Davidson limits the relationship in the Trinity, quoting J. Moskala, only to a “plural of fellowship or community within the Godhead,” suggesting a process of deliberation among the members. He concludes that the text gives “no indication of hierarchy in the Godhead.” The assertion of those such as Davidson regarding mutual submission in the Trinity “is an egalitarian invention created to justify the egalitarian idea of mutual submission in marriage.” See Wayne Grudem, Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth, 429-433 for a discussion on mutual submission in the Trinity.
the image of God, we can be certain they would reflect the authority and submission roles operative within the Godhead.\textsuperscript{87} Confirming evidence for the principle of headship and submission within the Trinity will be presented in Section VI.

\textbf{B. The Mystery of Godliness Embraces Headship and Submission}

The biblical principle of headship and submission has been demonstrated with the initial evidence from Genesis 2-3. But evidence is piled upon evidence with the headship of the 12 Patriarchs, the male headship of the Levitical priesthood, Jesus’ appointment of 12 male Apostles, and the replacement of Judas by a male apostle. The evidence continues in 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 where Paul uses the creation order (Adam first, Eve second) as the rationale for the headship principle and for behavior in the church. Paul then uses the same rationale (creation order) for the headship principle as the basis for the appointment of men as elders who have teaching and governing authority in the church in 1 Timothy 2-3.

Paul gives these instructions to Timothy so the saints might know how to conduct themselves in the household of God, the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim 3:15). What is truth? Jesus came to bear witness to the truth (John 18:37). Jesus came to reveal who God is—to reveal the Father, His character of self-sacrificing love, which was demonstrated with the incarnation (the gift of His Son) and supremely at the cross. With the incarnation we see the principle of headship and submission clearly portrayed. Paul concludes his instruction on conduct in the church in verse 16 with the enigmatic phrase: “Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh...” The “mystery of godliness” captures the biblical principle of headship and submission, and this mystery which is inherent in the Trinity is to be manifested in conduct and order within the church. The \textit{truth} of self-sacrificing love is the mystery of godliness, and this truth is opposed by the \textit{lie} of self-exaltation—the mystery of iniquity. The truth—the mystery of godliness which embraces the principle of headship and submission—is to be manifested within and by the church.

The nature of the Godhead, the image of God, was to be reproduced in the creation of mankind—Adam and Eve. In some unique and fundamental way, the male/female relationship

\begin{footnote}
\textsuperscript{87} For a more extensive discussion on the pattern of authority that gives order to the universe see: Jerry Moon, “Ellen White, Ordination, and Authority,” paper presented to the Theology of Ordination Study Committee, Baltimore, MD, July 22-24, 2013.
\end{footnote}
was a reflection of the image of God. Of all the created beings, only man was created to reflect
the complete image of God. “Human beings were a new and a distinct order. They were made
‘in the image of God.’”88 The complete reflection of the image of God included not just the
outward resemblance and moral character of God but also the headship/submission roles that
have always existed among the three persons of the heavenly trio of the Godhead. Equality of
being and the principle of headship/submission are inherent within the nature of the Trinity,
and this nature of the Trinity, the image of God, was reproduced in the creation of mankind,
male and female. This point is at heart of the controversy: the nature of the Trinity89 is to be
reflected in the nature of mankind (male and female). Thus, the assertion90 is misleading that
the passage in Genesis 1:27 gives “no hint of a divine creation order.” In fact this passage, in
combination with verse 26, shouts creation headship. “Let Us make man in our image . . . male
and female He created them.” The overarching purpose of the gospel is to restore the image of
God in mankind, namely the church, the pillar and ground of truth.

The evidence for creation headship in Genesis 2-3 is voluminous and overwhelming to
the honest student who allows Scripture to interpret itself, using the same hermeneutic that
the Reformers and our Adventist pioneers employed. It should be noted also that changing
cultural influences played no part in the establishment of male headship in Eden, since it was
the perfect culture established by God.

The case for male headship throughout the history of Israel is evident to any student of
the OT and need not be documented here. In the NT the same headship principle was carried
into the ministry of Christ, the Cornerstone of the church. Jesus Christ was incarnated in the
form of a male. He is the Head of the church. The twelve disciples chosen by Jesus were all
men (Mark 3:13-19). To the Rabbinical community Jesus was known as radical, and He surely
could have rocked the boat further by appointing women as apostles. After the ascension of
Christ the disciples gathered together to appoint one of two candidates to replace Judas—but
both were men (Acts 1:12-23). And not surprisingly, the seven deacons chosen in Acts 6 were

88 Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, February 11, 1902.
89 For an extended discussion of the principle of Headship, Submission and Equality in the Trinity, including pros
and cons, see Wayne Grudem, Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth, 45-48; 405-441 and references cited
therein.
90 Davidson, Spectrum, April 10, 2010.
all men. Male headship and leadership is unmistakably evident in the four gospel accounts of
the ministry of Christ. We turn next to the principle of headship and submission in
1 Corinthians 11 and 14 followed by 1 Timothy 2-3 where the apostle Paul affirms the creation
headship principle of Genesis 2-3.

III. Headship and Submission in 1 Corinthians 11 and 14

The earliest place in Paul’s letters where he addresses the subject of headship and
submission and its implications for the church is 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 where he lays the
groundwork rather thoroughly. This passage forms the theological basis for his later instruction
on the same subject. Written approximately twenty years into his ministry, his teaching
remained consistent in this matter until the end of his ministry, as seen in 1 Timothy 2-3 and
Titus 1-2, written perhaps nine years later. Thus, 1 Corinthians 11 was grounded in solid biblical
theology, not merely on the local cultural context in Corinth.

Local vs. Universal Application. The text of 1 Corinthians gives us very little insight into
what was happening in Corinth at that time. Only extra-biblical sources would provide that
information. But Scripture is supposed to be self-interpreting, internally coherent without
recourse to extra-biblical sources. There is no evidence that the text in 1 Corinthians 11 was
culturally conditioned and applied only to a local situation. The text is self-interpreting, and as
such it sets forth universal principles. The instructions in 1 Corinthians 11 are based on biblical
and theological reasons given in 1 Corinthians 11:7-9. Each of the reasons given in vv. 7-16 has a
universal basis, not a local basis. The first ones (vv. 7-9) appeal to the order and purpose of the
creation of man and woman. The appeal to the angels (v. 10) is based on the order of heavenly
beings. The appeal to the nature of things (v. 14) is universal but ultimately appeals back to the

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91 This section is adapted in part from Edwin Reynolds, “Biblical Hermeneutics and Headship in First Corinthians,”
92 “Although many biblical passages had local significance, nonetheless they contain timeless principles applicable
to every age and culture.” “Methods of Bible Study” [MBSD], a statement voted by the General Conference of
Seventh-day Adventists Executive Committee at the Annual Council in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 12 October 1986,
93 For example, there is no allusion in the text to Corinth’s cosmopolitan populace, its commerce, its immorality,
and its Temple of Aphrodite up on the Acrocorinth.
design in creation: “for her hair is given to her for a covering” (v. 15). The last appeal, in case of contention, is to the universal practice of the churches (v. 16).

**Immediate Context of Submission.** Principles found in the immediate literary context of 1 Corinthians 11 include submitting to the will of God and submitting one’s own rights for the good of the community (chapters 8-10). Submitting to all levels of God-ordained authority is then introduced (11:3). As Paul prepares to approach the subject of the Lord’s Supper in 1 Corinthians 11, he urges the Corinthians to “Give no offense . . . to the church of God” by following Paul in pointing to the model of Christ’s submission. This is the most immediate context of the headship passage in 1 Corinthians 11.

**A. Headship Principle in 1 Corinthians 11**

Paul then informs his readers that there is something they must understand. There are categories of nonreciprocal relationships in which some individuals are designated as “head” while others are not in a reciprocal relationship with them. In each pair, only one is the head. The other submits to the head. Even in the Trinity, biblically, the Father is the Head, and Christ submits to His headship. The Father may honor Christ and give Him all power and authority, but 1 Corinthians 15:27 clearly states, “But when it says, ‘all things are put in subjection,’ it is plain that He is excepted who put all things in subjection under Him.” There is no reciprocity in headship relations, even within the Godhead. Mutual submission is outside of the headship relation. Within the headship relation, there is no reciprocity, although Christ's attitude as Head of the church was one of self-sacrificing love, and the same is supposed to be true of the husband's relation to his wife. That is not the same as reciprocity, where the husband would submit to the wife as head or where Christ would submit to the church as head, even where the Father would submit to the Son as Head.

It is possible to be the head in a relationship to one party but not another. In the three nonreciprocal relationships defined in the text, God (the Father) is the only one who is under no one else’s headship, and the woman is the only one who has no explicit headship over another. “The head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God” (NIV). This headship principle in 1 Corinthians 11:3 is the ground for all that follows in the passage.
Metaphorically, *Kephalē* Means Authority Over One in Subordination. The Greek word for head, *kephalē*, both in the NT and the OT (LXX), can mean either a literal anatomical head (on a body) or a metaphorical head (ruler, leader, authority figure). The claimed meaning of *kephalē* as “source” in 1 Corinthians 11 has been shown to be without foundation.\(^94\) Paul uses the body as a metaphor in 1 Corinthians 12 for the relation of Christ to His church (cf. Col 1:18; Eph 5:23). Just as the head directs the body, so Christ directs His church. The head is not the source of the body, but it is the part that sends directions to the bodily parts. Reynolds cites Ranzolin that whether *kephalē* means “ruler” or “source,” “it’s hard to escape the notion that *kephalē* conveys the sense of subordination.”\(^95\) In the NT the meaning of *kephalē* as “head,” (not “source”) is unmistakable as in Ephesians 5:23-24 where the church is subject to its Head, “Christ is head [authority] of the church” and “the church is subject to Christ”; likewise in the same passage “the husband is head [authority] of the wife” and “so let wives be [subject] to their own husbands.” The meaning of *kephalē* as “head” or “authority” (not source) is also evident in Ephesians 1:22 where Christ is “the head (*kephalē* over *huper*) all things.”\(^96\) The authoritative head of the church is confirmed by White. “The great Head of the church superintends His work through the instrumentality of men ordained by God to act as His representatives.”\(^97\)

Those in favor of the ordination of women as elder/minister repeatedly cite, with authoritative emphasis, the culmination of over thirty years of effort by Philip B. Payne in support of this issue.\(^98\) Payne devotes 100 of 500 pages dealing with 1 Cor 11:3-16 and argues that *kephalē* in v. 3 means “source,” giving a number of reasons to support such a translation.

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\(^{94}\) Those in favor of the ordination of women as elders/ministers have argued for interpreting *kephalē* as “source.” This meaning seems possible in Eph 4:15-16 and Col 2:19; however, this simply does not work in 1 Cor 11:3 or Eph 5:23. Rather, it results in both logical and theological problems. James B. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 166, shows then that “there is no way to construct a satisfactory set of parallels” in 1 Cor 11:3. Is man the source of woman (or husband, of wife) or is God the source of Christ in the same sense that Christ is the source of man? The obvious answer is no.

\(^{95}\) Reynolds, 20 (see note 40).


For example, he says the Greek translation of the OT (LXX) only uses the word “head” as leader 6 out of 171 times. In fact the LXX uses the word “head” (kephalē) in the context of authority or ruling at least 16 times. Thus his credibility immediately comes into question. Payne’s discussion of the word “head” does not advance the discussion. Second, there may be a few examples where kephalē means “source,” but Payne actually gives very few examples (which are themselves debatable) to substantiate his thesis. By way of comparison, Grudem has carefully sifted the evidence in three major articles, showing that the meaning “authority over” for kephalē is well attested. Payne alleges that the term cannot mean “authority over” in 1 Corinthians 11:3 since not all acknowledge Christ’s authority. But this misses the point. Christ is the authority over all men even if they do not recognize it. Payne goes on to say that 1 Corinthians 11:3 points to Christ as the source of Adam, but the text says that Christ is the “head of every man.” There is nothing about Adam in particular in this verse. Paul speaks universally here.

Finally, Payne suggests that, in 1 Corinthians 15:28, “God” refers to “the Godhead” rather than to the Father. This is rather strange and fits awkwardly with the idea that Christ submits to God. Is the verse saying that Christ submits to himself insofar as he is God? Such an interpretation seems quite improbable. Payne’s discussion of kephalē is unpersuasive and should be rejected.

In summary, no textual evidence from ancient Greek literature has been produced where a person is called the kephalē of another person or group and that person is not the one in authority over that other person or group. Over fifty examples of kephalē meaning “ruler,

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99 Duet 28:13; 28:44; Jud 10:18; 11:8; 11:9; 11:11; 2 Sam 22:44; 1 Kings 8:1; Ps 18:43; Is 7:8 (x2); Is 7:9 (x2); Is 9:14-16; Jer 31:7; Lam 1:5.


101 Ibid., “Philip Payne on Familiar Ground.” The foregoing discussion has been extracted largely from this review article.
authority over” have been found and compiled, but no examples of “source without
authority.”

**Headship in the Trinity—Basis for Headship of Man.** The passage itself (11:3) suggests a
Christological and theological framework for the headship of man in relation to woman. Thus,
the headship of Christ and the headship of God the Father form the pattern for the headship of
the husband-wife (in the home) and man-woman (in the church). One objection to headship
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 equality of being and submission, for God and
Christ are equal in being or nature, yet Christ submits to His Father. The submission is
functional, providing for different role relationships; it does not express or imply any inequality
of being. And this submission to the headship authority is not a consequence of sin (evidence
will be presented—that functional differentiation in the Trinity existed already in heaven before
sin).

**Application of Headship Principle in the Church.** The application of the headship
principle in the church is connected with the first two elements in 11:3. Christ is the head of
man, and man is the head of the woman. Men must pray with their head uncovered; women
must pray with their head covered (11:4). The context is public worship in the church. Men and
women may pray or prophesy in the church, but only under conditions appropriate to each
gender following the headship principle. The same conditions are not appropriate to each. The
literal head now represents the spiritual head. To cover or not to cover signifies honor or
dishonor depending on whose the head is. In the case of man, his head—representing Christ—
should be uncovered, or He is dishonored. In the case of the woman, her head—representing
the man—should be covered. Whatever form the covering takes, it represented a means of
showing honor or respect for the head or authority. (It is well to note that “authority” is explicit
in the text here, a point that many overlook—Headship, *kephalē,* explicitly represents authority,

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The covering may change, but the principle is eternal, which is honored in heaven (v. 3) and by angels (v. 10).

**Theological Rationale for Man’s Uncovered Head.** Man ought not to cover his head, since man is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of man (v. 7). The basis for this admonition is solely biblical and theological, lacking any reference to the cultural situation in Corinth. The man and the woman were created for distinctly different purposes. Man—as a gendered human being, not as a husband—was created for the glory of God. The woman, although created in the image of God like the man, was created subsequently for the glory of man. Man existed and accomplished tasks for God before he began to experience a need for a helper. Woman was made a helper for the man to supply an inward need of the man, according to the Genesis record (Gen 2:18).

**Headship of Man and Priority of Creation.** Paul now bolsters his rationale for head coverings by appealing to the creation story: “For man was not made from the woman, but the woman from man. Neither was man created for the woman, but woman for the man” (1 Cor 11:8-9). Paul has already declared that man is head of the woman (v. 3). He now gives the biblical/theological reason for the headship of man and consequently the reason why a woman should have a symbol of authority (the covering) on her head—she was created for (the glory of) man, and she was created from man. It is important to note Paul’s instruction that a man *ought not* to cover his head (v. 7) and a woman *ought* to cover head (v. 10) is based on the identical rationale—man is the glory of God and the woman is the glory of man (v. 7); the woman was derived from man and the woman was created for man (vv. 8-9). The headship of man is based on the priority of the creation of the man, and the woman was created for him—to be man’s equal, but opposite (gender), helper. The symbol of the head as authority represents the man who is her spiritual head by virtue of priority and purpose in creation. Man and woman were created for different purposes, the man for God and the woman for man.

**Equality of Being and Functional Differentiation.** Paul’s rationale for male headship is based exclusively on the Genesis 2 creation record. The issue in Genesis 2 is not equality of being, because male and female were both created in the image of God. The issue in Genesis 2 relates to the purpose and function in creation for the two genders. Man had priority in
creation, and his purpose was for the “glory of God.” The woman’s purpose was for “the glory of man.” Paul is quite clear that man’s headship was established already in Genesis 2, prior to the entrance of sin. The biblical text of Genesis 1-2, which has been debated as to the matter of when headship was established—whether before or after the Fall—needs to be interpreted carefully in the light of this NT interpretation of the creation record that makes plain that headship derives from before the Fall, already in Gen 1-2, based on the order and purpose of the genders in creation.

Interdependence of Genders and Nature Speaks of the Created Order. The text (vv. 12-13) does not pertain only to married individuals; it pertains to male-female relationships, especially in the context of the church. For example, in 1 Cor 11: 12 the text would make no sense if it were translated, “For just as the wife [came] from the husband, so also the husband [came/comes] from the wife.” The text does make clear that the gender classes are interdependent (vv. 11-12), but their relationship is properly defined by creation, from which derives the headship principle.

Paul appeals to reason in demonstrating the universal nature of the headship (v. 13). Paul then reaffirms God’s created order with the universal practice that always existed in nature (vv. 14-15) of women having long hair and men having relatively short hair, for God gave the woman long hair for a covering with the creation of the woman in Eden (v. 15). Upon the practical application of the universal headship principle with covering or uncovering the head, all the churches are united (v. 16).

B. 1 Corinthians 14—Women Submissive in the Church as the Law Says

Following a discussion of spiritual gifts and the greatest gift (love) in 1 Corinthians 12-13, Paul describes the misuse and abuse of the gifts where love has been disregarded (1 Cor 14). Proper conduct in the church includes being willing to submit one’s personal desires and interests to the higher goal of maintaining church order for edification of the church. “All things

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103 Reynolds (p. 30, see note 66) states: “This does not imply that woman did not have a direct, unmediated relationship to God, in whose image she was created. But it does suggest that her purpose and role in creation was intentionally different from that of the man, even prior to the entrance of sin. There is nothing about functional difference that implies inferiority of being. There is no injustice in functional differences created by God, for there is no injustice with God (2 Chr 19:7; Zeph 3:5; Rom 9:14). The issue of injustice merely detracts from the real issues that need to be addressed.”
should be done decently and in order” (14:40), “for God is not a God of confusion but of peace” (v. 33a). Apparently some women were interrupting with questions about what was being prophesied and Paul instructed the women: “As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says” (vv. 33b-34). No variance was permitted; it was a universal practice—“as in all the churches of the saints.” The rationale is given: the Law says that women should be in submission. Although many scholars consider Gen 3:16, where the Law (Torah) says the man was to rule over the women, to be the allusion in v. 34, others believe the Law refers to the record of Genesis 1-2, upon which Paul based the argument of 1 Corinthians 11:3-9, which appeals to creation order. Whether it refers to the pre-Fall order or to prescriptive post-Fall submission, Paul seems to understand it as something ordained by God in the earliest part of Scripture, from the very beginning of time. Submission, shown by not speaking out of order, was not limited to women (see 14:29-31). But the role of women is especially appealed to here in harmony with the spirit of the Law, which expects women to manifest a submissive spirit, especially in the presence of men in the context of worship, where, according to chap. 11, men have a spiritual headship. Paul is very decisive on this issue; he is not being arbitrary; it is a commandment of the Lord (v. 37). Those who disagree should not be recognized (v. 38).

Finally, in must be noted, Philip Payne argues along similar lines as Gordon Fee that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is a non-canonical interpolation, and hence carries no apostolic authority, and in fact does not belong in the Bible even though no Greek manuscripts of the NT lack these verses. Payne claims that he recently discovered scribal marks of 14:34, called “distigmai,” in Codex Vaticanus indicating the text (14:34-35) is an interpolation. However, his interpretation of scribal marks has been shown to be factually unstable and easily refutable. Payne essentially employs a form of literary criticism and a variant of a hermeneutic called

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104 See Reynolds, 38.
105 Ibid., 36-37 and citations therein. Reynolds presents evidence for both Gen 3:16 and also Gen 1-2.
107 Payne, 232-246.
“deconstruction,” derived from the writings of Martin Heidegger and Jacques Derrida, wherein
the text is deconstructed to uncertain multiple meanings or the meaning the interpreter
desires.109

C. Implications of 1 Corinthians 11 and 14

There is a clear principle of headship taught in 1 Corinthians 11:3 that was established
by God based on the pattern set within the Trinity by the headship of the Father in relationship
to Christ, which is an eternal headship grounded in differences in function rather than in
essence, which will be documented in Section VI. Paul is abundantly clear that not all
relationships are reciprocal, nor are all are egalitarian. The relationship between Christ and man
is not egalitarian, for example, and while there may be an equality of being between God and
Christ and between man and woman, there are differing functional statuses, with God being
the head of Christ and man being the head of the woman. Headship is a metaphor for
designated authority. The proper response to designated authority is submission, honor, and
respect for that authority. Those who do not honor the authority that God has established do
not honor God (Rom 13:1–2). All authority that derives from God must be respected. Now we
turn to the one passage in the NT that focuses extensively on the spiritual authority of men and
women in the church as it relates to the appointment of officers.

IV. Headship and Submission in 1 Timothy 2-3

More than any other passage dealing with men and women in the church, 1 Timothy
2:11-15 has caused the polarization among those for and against the ordination of women as
elder/minister. “Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. 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.
Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with
self-control.” Based on this passage, historically the Christian church has believed that certain
restrictions are placed on women in the church. However, with the rise of the evangelical
feminist movement in the 1960s and 70s, new interpretations have been imposed on this

109 See above, note 3.
passage. Extended expositions on both ends of the spectrum have been documented by others.\textsuperscript{110}

A. Authority and Priority of Creation

Paul’s argument for the teaching authority of men and the submission of women to that authority in the church is based on the priority of the creation of Adam in Genesis 2 to which he refers in 1 Timothy 2:13—“For Adam was formed (παράστημαι, echoing in Gen 2, LXX) first, then Eve.” Priority of creation/birth is also cited by Ellen White for Abel being subject to Cain.\textsuperscript{111}

Those desiring female leadership in the church must deny the creation headship principle in Genesis 1-3, or their arguments for interchangeable leadership in the church fall apart. Since the creation headship principle has been firmly established in this paper, it is apparent that Paul’s justification, based on the priority of creation as explained in 1 Timothy 2:13, for the teaching authority of men and submission of women in the church is indeed valid. Paul’s second argument for the teaching authority of men and the submission of women is based on Eve’s being deceived.

The serpent deceived Eve by approaching her as if she were the head, reversing the headship principle. Moreover, Eve’s attempt to usurp Adam’s headship role and to enter a higher sphere than that assigned to her led to her deception by the serpent. Adam then knowingly yielded to her attempt to usurp his leadership position. Thus, we have Paul’s second justification for Adam’s headship, “Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression” (v. 14). Gerhard Hasel supports this understanding: “Eve’s deception is the result of her asserting a role independent of and above Adam.”\textsuperscript{112}


\textsuperscript{111} Ellen G. White, \textit{Bible Echo}, Apr 8, 1912. “Abel would not only love his brother, but, as the younger would also be subject to him.”

encouraging women to remain in their dignified role and in their highest and most exalted
sphere of activity, bearing and nurturing children (v. 15). This sphere of activity would
complement their role of being submissive to male spiritual leadership in the church and home
(vv. 11-12).

B. Context: Culture or Scriptural Evidence

It is important to establish the context of 1 Timothy 2-3. Why did Paul give the
instructions in 1 Timothy 2 regarding the teaching authority between men and women and the
appointment of elders and deacons in chapter 3? Paul answers: “I write so that you may know
how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God”
(3:15). The theme of God’s household runs throughout 1 Timothy and is used as the basis for
inferences about Christian behavior. A thorough discussion of the church as the extended
family appears in Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood.113 Evangelical feminists attempt to ignore the plain reading of Scripture and claim that Paul
was refuting radical feminists in first-century Ephesus who were teaching the priority of the
creation of Eve over Adam. For example, in 1 Timothy 2:13-14 Paul is “correcting a false
syncretistic theology in Ephesus which claimed that the woman was created first and man fell
first, and therefore women are superior to men.”116 This view was popularized by Richard and
Catherine Kroeger117 and has been adopted by Adventist feminists.118

114 Ibid.
115 John Stott warns that “the danger of declaring any passage of Scripture to have only local (not universal), and only transient (not perpetual) validity is that it opens the door to a wholesale rejection of apostolic teaching, since virtually the whole of the New Testament was addressed to specific situations.” The Message of 1 Timothy & Titus (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996), 77.
The only biblical evidence for false teachers in Ephesus relates to men not women:

1) Hymenaeus and Alexander in 1 Timothy 1:19-20; 2) Hymenaeus and Philetus in 2 Timothy 1:17-18; and 3) Paul’s warnings to the elders in Ephesus that “from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things” in Acts 20:30.\(^\text{119}\) If the church in Ephesus had been infected with false doctrine brought in by radical feminists in Ephesus, Paul certainly would have addressed the issue in his epistle to “saints in Ephesus” (v. 1).\(^\text{120}\) But the Epistle is silent on the issue. In fact there is no historical evidence that a feminist culture existed in first-century Ephesus\(^\text{121}\) as the Kroegers’ assert (their assertion is merely an assumption\(^\text{122}\)), and their claim of a proto-Gnostic heresy that Eve was created first has no persuasive historical basis.\(^\text{123}\)

Schreiner counters the Kroegers’ argument that Ephesus faced ‘proto-gnostic’ forces with the fact that such proposals “consistently appeal to later sources to establish the contours of the heresy.” Köstenberger and Schreiner refute an Ephesian feminism that Paul is seeking to counter. In their assessment, “Ephesus never adopted an egalitarian democratic ideology that would necessitate feminism, or minimally, the inclusion of women in public offices.” Historians are greeted by a “blaring silence regarding feminism from curious explorers like Strabo and Pliny the Elder in their comments on Ephesus. They give no hint whatsoever that women dominated this city.” In short, “at the time of Paul, the political climate was Roman—not feminist.” Even the existence of an Ephesian feminism remains nebulous as far as Paul’s counsel is concerned; cultural context remains a speculative construct based on which quote is selected, what extra-biblical author is quoted\(^\text{124}\).

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\(^{119}\) Sorke, 13.

\(^{120}\) The words "in Ephesus" of verse 1 are not found in some of the earliest witnesses (P46, Sinaiticus, Vaticanus). However, the critical editions of the NT include the words (albeit in brackets), indicating that they are original.

\(^{121}\) Grudem, Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth, Appendix 6 (Wheaton, IL, 2012), pp. 279-328. For three devastating reviews of the Kroegers’ work, see Wayne Grudem, “Three Reviews of I Suffer Not a Woman by Richard and Catherine Kroeger,” Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth, Appendix 6 (Wheaton, IL, 2012), 646-674 (See p. 654).


\(^{123}\) “The Kroegers’ reconstruction is riddled with methodological errors. They nod in the direction saying that the heresy is ‘proto-gnostic,’ but consistently appeal to later sources to establish the contours of the heresy. The lack of historical rigor . . . is nothing less than astonishing. They have clearly not grasped how one should apply the historical method in discerning the nature of false teaching in the Pauline letters.” Thomas Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9-15: A Dialogue with Scholarship,” Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15, ed. A. J. Köstenberger, T. R. Schreiner, and H. S. Baldwin (Grand Rapids, MI, 1995), pp. 109-110. See also William D. Mounce, Pastoral Epistles (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46; Nashville: Nelson, 2000), see pp. lxix-lxxi; 130-143; 232-243, and citations therein.

\(^{124}\) Extended quote from Sorke, (see pp. 22-23 and citations therein).
William Mounce has assembled an extensive summary of the nature\textsuperscript{125} of the Ephesian heresy and the source\textsuperscript{126} of the Ephesian heresy with emphasis on 1 Timothy 4:1-6 with respect to the source of the heresy.

Finally, it is significant that “the apostle does not command Timothy in the form of a second person imperative prohibition (i.e., ‘you should not permit women’). Paul is not telling Timothy what to do in his particular situation; rather, he communicates what he thinks is universally appropriate for men and women in the church. This shifts the command from a local Ephesian situation (Timothy’s context) to a universally applicable mandate for all churches across time and place.\textsuperscript{127} His counsel to Timothy is the apostle’s understanding of God’s prerogative as subsequently expressed in 1 Timothy 2:13-14.”\textsuperscript{128} “Our task . . . is to interpret texts according to the intention of the author, and thus we must be careful that an interpretation is not rejected merely because it offends our sense of justice.”\textsuperscript{129}

**Men and Women or Husbands and Wives?** The instruction in 1 Timothy 2 applies to men and women in a universal sense and is not limited to husbands and wives as evangelical feminists would contend.\textsuperscript{130} For example, when Paul exhorts that “men pray everywhere” and “in like manner . . . women adorn themselves,” a local Ephesus situation is not intended, and it is unlikely that Paul could mean that only “husbands should pray, lifting holy hands” or that only “wives should adorn themselves in modest apparel” (v. 8-9). Should not single women dress modestly also? Paul does not say “I do not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over her own husband” (as he could have done). He simply says, “I do not permit a woman to

\textsuperscript{125} Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (Word Biblical Commentary) pp. lxix-lxxvi.
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., 232-243.
\textsuperscript{127} Contra Payne, 320, who does not consider this aspect.
\textsuperscript{128} Sorke, 17.
\textsuperscript{129} Thomas Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9-15: A Dialogue with Scholarship,” 114, in Köstenberger, 85-120.
\textsuperscript{130} Davidson, *Women in Ministry*, 278-280. Davidson argues strenuously that the teaching authority issue in 1 Tim 2:11-12 is limited to husband and wives, not to men and women in general in the church. The Greek word *gynē* can be translated either woman or wife, and the Greek word *anēr* can be translated either man or husband. He notes that whenever *anēr* and *gynē* are used together in close proximity, they should be translated husband and wife. But he fails to note that when this is the case, the subject under discussion is marriage, and there are decisive clues that require the meaning related to marriage. For example, “Likewise, wives, be subject to your own [idios] husbands” (1 Peter 3:1). There are also other passages in the NT where the terminology of “men” and “women” uses the plural of the Greek terms *anēr* and *gynē* with the clear connotation of “men and women” (*andres kai gynaikes*) as in Acts 5:14; 8:3, among others.
teach or exercise authority over a man.” Paul’s original readers likely would have understood the directions in 1 Timothy 2 as applying to all men and women in the church.\footnote{Grudem, \textit{Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth}, 297-299.} The entire context of 1 Timothy 1-5 appears to be concerned with conduct in the church as a whole, not with the issue of husbands and wives in marriage.\footnote{See Sorke, 16-18 for evidence of universality (male and husband) in the context of Gen 2.} However, if we allow that the passage is limited to husbands and wives in the church, then married women would be excluded from exercising teaching authority over their husbands in the church. This would also preclude appointment of married women as elders in the church, since teaching is one of the qualifications of elders (1 Tim 3:2) and the elder must also be able to rule his own house well (v. 4), a role reserved for men. The idea of gender distinction in family government is plainly present in several other New Testament passages. (See Col 3:18, Eph 5:22-24, 1 Peter 3:1, 5-6). If we interpret 1 Tim 2:12 that only married women are excluded from teaching men, could a single woman fill that teaching/leadership role? That would compound the problem. To put her in the elder’s position would not only violate 1 Tim 3:2, but it would also forbid her to marry (since any future marriage would disqualify her to teach men), and that would be contrary to nature and Scripture (Gen 2:24; 1 Cor 7:2; 1 Tim 4:3).\footnote{Eugene Prewitt, \texttt{http://advindicate.com/?p=1842}}

C. Elder Qualifications and Male Headship

Immediately following Paul’s instruction that a woman is not to teach or to have authority over a man, he begins his instruction for the qualifications of elders with the somewhat familiar phrase or formula: “This is a faithful saying.”\footnote{For the significance of the “faithful sayings” see Mounce, \textit{Pastoral Epistles} (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46; Nashville: Nelson, 2000), pp. 48-49 and citations therein.} The “saying” itself can come either before or after the introductory formula, depending on the subjective criterion of what appears to be a doctrinal statement based on church tradition.\footnote{Ibid., p. 48.} Paul uses this formula five times (1 Tim 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim 2:11; Titus 3:8). In all five examples, the phrase thematically links, by key words or ideas, what follows the formula with what precedes the formula, “This is a faithful saying.” William Mounce cites Oberlinner who concludes that the formula, “This is a

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\footnote{131 Grudem, \textit{Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth}, 297-299.} \footnote{132 See Sorke, 16-18 for evidence of universality (male and husband) in the context of Gen 2.} \footnote{133 Eugene Prewitt, \texttt{http://advindicate.com/?p=1842}} \footnote{134 For the significance of the “faithful sayings” see Mounce, \textit{Pastoral Epistles} (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46; Nashville: Nelson, 2000), pp. 48-49 and citations therein.} \footnote{135 Ibid., p. 48.}
\end{flushright}
faithful saying,” is the vehicle by which Paul introduces “sayings” as supporting evidence for the argument that he is setting forth either before or after the formula.\textsuperscript{136}

For example, in 1 Timothy 1:15, the theme of \textit{mercy and grace of Christ} precedes and follows the formula, “This is a faithful saying.” In 1 Timothy 4:9, the theme of \textit{exercising to and laboring in godliness} precedes and follows the formula. In 2 Timothy 2:11, ideas of \textit{endurance and salvation} precede and follow the phrase, “This is a faithful saying.” In Titus 3:8, the theme of \textit{justification and its fruit} is expanded and explained prior to the formula, and the theme is reconfirmed following the formula with the concise words, “these things I want to affirm constantly” in 3:8. It is apparent that in 1 Timothy 2:12, the theme of \textit{teaching within the context of the male leadership/headship role”} precedes and follows the formula, “This is a faithful saying” in 3:1. Here, Paul is linking the qualification for elder (man of one wife/able to teach) in 1 Timothy 3 with the substance of 1 Timothy 2, especially 2:12, (not permitting a woman to teach or have authority over a man). This linkage is a key that lends confirmation that to qualify to be an elder, the candidate, at a minimum, must be a man.

In the face of obvious gender distinctions in 1 Timothy 2-3, evangelical feminists claim that the qualifications for elder in 1 Timothy 3 are gender neutral.\textsuperscript{137} Gender neutrality is completely foreign to the context of the passage in 1 Timothy 2-3. The passage exhibits a consistent contrast between the conduct of men and women in the worship setting of the church in chapters 2-3 of 1 Timothy. The male/female distinctions in 1 Timothy 2 parallels the male/female distinction in 1 Timothy 3 where the office of overseer is limited to the male. The development of how we ought to conduct ourselves in the household of God is highly gender specific in 1 Timothy 2-3 where we see a repetitive alternation of genders.\textsuperscript{138}

\begin{verbatim}
1 Tim 2:8 men
1 Tim 2:9-15 women (who in contrast to man can bear children—v. 15)
1 Tim 3:1-10 men (elders and deacons)
1 Tim 3:11 women
1 Tim 3:12-13 men (deacons)
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{137} Teresa Reeve, “Shall the Church Ordain Women as Pastors: Thoughts Toward an Integrated New Testament Perspective,” Theology of Ordination Study Committee, July, 2013, 8-9. In a remarkable effort to deconstruct the plain reading of the text in 1 Tim 3:1-7, Teresa Reeve asserts that all the qualifications for elder are gender neutral.\textsuperscript{138} Sorke, 32.
In addition, when Paul uses the phrase, “This is a faithful saying,” it is apparent he is linking the qualifications for elder in 1 Timothy 3:1-2 (man of one wife, able to teach) with the substance of 1 Timothy 2, especially 2:12, (not permitting a woman to teach or have authority over a man). Moreover, gender neutrality is contrary to the qualification that an overseer/elder must be able to rule one’s own house well, a role reserved for men. The idea of male gender distinction in family government is plainly present in several other New Testament passages, as previously noted. Finally, Ellen White is explicit when discussing the qualifications for elders—they must be men.

In the work of setting things in order in all the churches, and ordaining suitable men to act as officers, the apostles held to the high standards of leadership outlined in the Old Testament Scriptures.  

There is a decided work to be done in our churches. Those chosen as elders of the churches are to be men of experience, who have a knowledge of the truth and are sound in the faith.

The qualifications of an elder are plainly stated by the apostle Paul: “If any be blameless, the husband of one wife” . . . If a man does not show wisdom in the management of the church in his own house, how can he show wisdom in the management of the larger church outside?  

Those who are thus appointed as overseers of the flock should be men of good repute; men who give evidence that they have not only a knowledge of the Scriptures, but an experience in faith, in patience, that in meekness they may instruct those who oppose the truth.

Qualifications and Headship. Just as the camp of Israel was organized with officers and elders to function effectively, in a similar manner Paul instructed both Timothy and Titus to appoint as elders in the church men who met certain qualifications (1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).

First and foremost an elder/overseer (these two terms are used interchangeably in Titus 1:5, 7) must be a man (anēr). This qualification is in harmony with the creation-headship principle. The text does not offer the flexibility of reading this phrase generically, “the spouse of one spouse.”

The 59 occurrences of anēr (“man, husband”) in the writings of Paul consistently refer to male

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140 White, Manuscript Releases, Vol. 5, 449, emphasis added.
141 Ibid., emphasis added.
142 White, Gospel Workers, 413, emphasis added.
generally speaking, such men would be married, demonstrating corresponding faithfulness to their spouse; however, men in a polygamous relationship (even though unlikely in Roman culture) or involved in unscriptural divorces and remarriage would be disqualified. Paul is certainly appealing to the Edenic ideal of the unity of husband and wife as “one flesh.” Therefore, the elder (as well the deacon, 1 Tim 3:12) must be a man of one wife and able to rule his own house well. Here Paul sees the church as an extension of the family, just as he does in 1 Timothy 3:15 (see also 5:1-2).

The elder must exhibit headship responsibilities in the home and the church with the ability to teach, namely, teaching in a headship role, being able to refute false teachers (1 Tim 3:2, 4-5; Titus 1:9). Since women are prohibited from teaching and exercising authority over a man in the church (1 Tim 2:12), this would exclude women from serving as elders in the church. Scripture clearly reveals that women such as Priscilla (Acts 18:26) were permitted to teach under a variety of circumstances. “What then is the true meaning of 1 Timothy 2:12, ‘I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man’? We see in the immediate context (1 Tim 3:2) that a bishop/overseer must be ‘able to teach.’ There is evidently a kind of teaching that women are not to do, but which elders must do. The teaching restricted to men must be the teaching associated with leadership and full ecclesiastical authority.”

“In light of the positive connotation of teaching per se in Timothy’s direct context (1 Tim 4:11; 6:2; 2 Tim 2:2), Paul is prohibiting women from the authoritative teaching ministry of elders in the church, along with exercising eldership authority over men (as evident in the context of 1 Tim 3). Of course, the wider data of the NT includes women praying, prophesying, caring for the church and generally spreading the good news. It would be a monumental misunderstanding to conclude that women are excluded from ministry or public speaking. The issue at stake is therefore not just the ordination of women per se, but the ordination of women to what position in ministry.”

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143 Sorke, 34.
144 Grudem, Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth, 80.
145 Moon, 30.
146 Sorke, 20.
Were women refused the position of elder because of cultural norms? If this were the case, Paul had opportunity to argue this way. But how did he found his argument? He founded it on the order of creation (1 Tim 2:13), the origin of sin (v. 14), the teaching of nature regarding gender (1 Cor 11:3-16), and the model of ancient holy persons (1 Peter 3:1-6). And never once did Paul or Peter found it on the custom of the Jews or of the Romans or the varied peoples among whom they established churches.

D. The Mystery of Godliness

The creation headship principle, documented and confirmed in Genesis 2-3 with the previous twenty-six points of identification, is the basis for Paul’s instruction for the conduct of men and women in the church (1 Tim 2) and the appointment of officers (1 Tim 3). Thus, he concludes, “I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory” (vv. 15-16). The key that unlocks the principle undergirding Paul’s instruction in 1 Timothy 2-3 is found in chapter 3 and verse 16.

Although thousands of pages have been published in articles and books on Paul’s instruction in 1 Timothy 2-3 on the relationship of men and women in the church, relatively few have explained why Paul concludes in 1 Timothy 3:16 with a statement on the mystery of godliness. More often than not, the text is simply ignored when dealing with the roles of men and women in the church by those both for and those against the ordination of women as elders/ministers. William Mounce has assembled a number of explanations from a variety of expositors for the relationship of 3:16 with the instructions chaps. 2-3. 147

But the question persists, Why does Paul conclude his instruction specifically about the roles of men and women in the church with a statement about the mystery of godliness? What bearing does the mystery of godliness have on the conduct of men and women in the church and the appointment of church officers? The answer: The principle of creation headship and

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147 Mounce, Pastoral Epistles (Word Biblical Commentary) 224-232. Mounce suggests several possibilities, one being: The “hymn of 1 Tim 3:16” “looks back to the instruction of chaps. 2-3 by giving the reason those rules must be followed, because the church must support and protect the gospel” which is condensed in 3:16 (see p. 224).
submission we documented in Gen 2-3 underlies Paul’s argumentation in 1 Timothy 2-3, and this principle is a manifestation of the mystery of godliness.

**Pillar and Ground of Truth.** The church is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim 3:15).

The “truth” is to be found in God’s church. And God is the embodiment of truth (Deut 32:4). The “truth” is who God is. And Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).

The truth that is to be found in God’s church and exhibited by the conduct of his people (the church) is the nature and character of God. The truth of who God is may be summarized: “God is love” (1 John 4:8). That same love (the truth) was supremely demonstrated in the gift of God’s Son, Jesus Christ, to the world (the incarnation) and was epitomized at the cross of Calvary where the Son “became obedient [to the Father] to the point of death, even the death of the cross.” The incarnation of the Son and His death on the cross is a visible manifestation of the principle of headship and submission between the Father and the Son. Thus, the principle of headship and submission is inherent in the nature of divine love, the very character and nature of God who changes not. This principle was not a new or temporary expression of divine love springing up at the incarnation, but it has been existent from before the beginning of creation.

**Mystery of Godliness and Headship/Submission.** Paul concludes his instruction in 1 Timothy 2-3 with the powerful declaration of “the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh.” This mystery, His character of self-sacrificing love, is to be manifested in the conduct and roles of men and women in the church, the pillar and ground of truth.

This is the mystery of godliness. That Christ should take human nature, and by a life of humiliation elevate man in the scale of moral worth with God: that He should carry His adopted nature to the throne of God, and there present His children to the Father, to have conferred upon them an honor exceeding that conferred upon the angels—this is the marvel of the heavenly universe, the mystery into which angels desire to look. This is love that melts the sinner’s heart.\(^{148}\)

The incarnation was the initial step in the supreme revelation of who God is—self-sacrificing love. He gave His Son to the world (John 3:16). The Son willingly became totally dependent on the Father—total submission. That same love, manifested in the principle of

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\(^{148}\) White, *Heaven*, 75 (Ms 21, 1900, quoted in SD 22).
headship/submission of the Father and the Son, is to be manifested in the roles of men and women in the church.

A brief summary of the evidence for the principle of authority and submission that gives order to the universe will be examined next. This will be followed by a summary of evidence for headship (authority) and submission inherent in the Trinity.

V. Authority and Order in the Universe

Authority originates with and is delegated from God (Rom 13:1). “The expression of authority occurs through ordered relationships of leadership and willing cooperation (authority and submission). As the centurion said to Jesus, ‘I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me’ (Mt 8:9). Heaven is structured on the basis of relationships of selfless loving authority and voluntary submission.”¹⁴⁹ The order of the whole universe is essentially a fabric of loving relationships, structured by authority and voluntary submission. This is evident not only in the nature of the Godhead, but also in nature of created beings.

A. Authority and Submission among Angels

Angels are sent forth as ministering spirits to minister to those who will inherit salvation (Heb 1:4). They are charged with authority to help human beings (Ps 91:11). Ellen White makes five pertinent observations regarding authority relationships among angels. First, they are organized in ranks of authority, some higher, some lower. Commenting on Revelation 7:1-3, she observed that the “highest angel had authority to command the four angels to keep in check the four winds until this work was performed, and until he should give the summons to let them loose” (TM 444). “The very highest angels in the heavenly courts are appointed to work out the prayers which ascend to God . . .” (4BC 1173.5).

Second, she describes the roles of the commanding angels. After Lucifer’s rebellion, before the creation of the world, “The angels were marshaled in companies with a commanding angel at their head” (1SG 17). The “commanding angels” were sometimes presented to her as taller than the other angels (EW 68, 272). It is interesting to note that “Eve was not quite as tall

¹⁴⁹ Jerry Moon, “Ellen White, Ordination, and Authority,” Theology of Ordination Study Committee, July, 2013, 3. This section on “Authority and Order in the Universe” is adapted primarily from Moon’s paper.
as Adam. Her head reached a little above his shoulders.”  

Third, she saw that each angel was given a specific assignment. “Each angel has his own mission and is at his post, ready to cooperate with you . . .” (Southern Review Oct 24, 1899). Fourth, angelic assignments could not be altered by personal choice. “Each angel has his particular post of duty, which he is not permitted to leave for any other place” (4BC 1173.5). Fifth, she notes that the angels’ motivation for obedience is purely that of love. The angels’ love for God, their love for each other, for their commanding angels, and for the humans they minister to, are the constraints that subdue powerful emotions and keep the angels in willing, joyful, freely chosen submission to the divine authority.

“Meanings of authority and submission are radically different from their meaning in this world. In a sinful world society, authority is often an opportunity to indulge selfishness and disregard for the rights of others—the very opposite of love.” In God’s kingdom “voluntary, loving submission to loving authority often does not look like earthly authority/submission at all. Rather it takes the form of gentle, thoughtful, unselfish leadership and eager cooperation.”

B. Authority and Submission at Creation

Just as there is authority structure among the angels, so there was an authority structure implicit in the original creation of the human race. In the NT we find inspired commentary on Genesis 2. In two places, the apostle Paul makes explicit what is implicit in Genesis 2. In 1 Timothy 2:13 he writes: “For Adam was formed first, then Eve.” In 1 Corinthians 11:8 he writes: “For man is not from the woman, but woman from the man. Nor was man created for the woman, but the woman for man. For this reason the woman ought to have a

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151 “The angels love to bow before God; they love to be near Him.” SC 94.
152 “The same love that animates the angels, the same purity and holiness that reign in heaven, should, as far as possible, be reproduced upon earth.” FLB 65.
153 “On account of disease, or surrounding discouragements, some drift into despair,” but “the thought that Jesus loves them, pure angels love them, and our gracious Heavenly Father loves, pities and wants to save them, should inspire them with faith and confidence in God.” RH, May 4, 1876 par. 66, emphasis added.
154 See White, Early Writings, 150-151.
155 Moon, 6.
symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.”¹⁵⁶ In these two NT passages, Paul makes explicit what is implicit in in Genesis 2—the man was created first, and afterward the woman; and this sequence signified a difference in their roles. There was no coercion, no “ruling” on Adam’s part before the Fall, but he was the first created, the head of the woman, and he held primacy of position and authority. The Scriptures affirm: the head of man is Christ, the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God (see 1 Cor 11:3). The headship of man is based on the headship in the Trinity.

V. Headship/Submission in the Trinity

The submission of the Son from before the beginning of creation should not be confused with the heresy of the doctrine of Subordinationism (non-equality of being).¹⁵⁷ Some in history have attacked the doctrine of the deity of Christ, His essential equality with the Father (the doctrine of Subordinationism which careless scholars have confused with the orthodox view—Submission from the beginning of creation). But the orthodox formulations of the doctrine of the Trinity have always included both the equality of essence of the persons of the Trinity and differentiation of roles within their existence.¹⁵⁸ Submission of the Son from before the beginning of creation is encapsulated by this phrase, “ontological equality [equality of being] but economic submission,” or “equal in being but subordinate in role.”

A. God is the Head of Christ—Incarnation

“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” (1 Cor 11:3). The author of Hebrews alludes to the

¹⁵⁶ Since the principle of authority and submission exists among angels in heaven, angels would expect to see the principle reflected in beings on earth. Alternatively, since man was created in the image of God and angels recognize the headship principle among members of the Trinity, the angels expect to see the principle manifested in “male and female” created in the image of God.


submission of the Son in the incarnation, coming to do the will of God, as he quotes the
prophecy in Psalm 40.

Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: “Sacrifice and offering You did not
desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You
had no pleasure. Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—In the volume of the book it is written
of Me—To do Your will, O God.’” (Heb 10:5-7).

Following the incarnation, it is self-evident to even the casual reader of the Gospels that
Christ was subject to the Father’s authority. “I can of Myself do nothing. . . . I do not seek My
own will, but the will of the Father who sent Me” (John 5:30, 19); “I always do those things that
please Him” (8:29); God sends His Son into world (3:17). Christ was subject to the authority of
the Father and kept His commandments (15:10). The submission necessary to secure our
salvation is further illustrated by His struggle in the Garden leading to Calvary: “O My Father, if
it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will” (Mt 26:39);
“[He] became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross” (Phil 2:8). The
equality of being of the Son with the Father is apparent in John 1:1-3 as well as Philippians 2:5-
8, where we see the equality as well as the willing submission of the Son to the Father. The role
of directing, sending, and commanding the Son belongs to the Father only.159 Evangelical
feminists limit the submission of the Son to the Father strictly to the incarnation in relation to
solving the sin problem—sometimes referred to as economic subordination.160 However, the
evidence is clear that a relationship of authority and submission between the Father and Son
has existed in parallel with their equality of being from before the beginning of creation.

B. God is the Head of Christ—Eternity Past

The Father-Son relationship of headship/submission existed before the creation—the
Sovereign of the universe had a Co-worker. Describing equality of being and
headship/submission in the Trinity existing in eternity past, Ellen White says, “The Sovereign of

159 Grudem, Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth, 46.
160 Rebecca Groothuis writes concerning economic subordination: “If Christ’s subordination is not limited to a
specific project or function but characterizes His eternal relationship with God, then Christ is not merely
functionally subordinate; he is by nature subordinate. . . . It is by no means clear from Scripture that the members
of the Godhead are related to one another in terms of an eternal structure of rule and submission. This is a
debatable point of theology on which conservative scholars disagree.” Quoted by Wayne Grudem, Evangelical
Feminism and Biblical Truth, 406.
the universe was not alone in His work of beneficence. He had an associate—a co-worker who could appreciate His purposes, and could share His joy in giving happiness to created beings. . . .

Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father—one in nature, in character, in purpose—the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God." The Sovereign of the universe—the One who has supreme rank, authority, and power—had an associate, a co-worker. Although His Co-worker was invested with equal power and authority, the Son of God willingly submitted to the Supreme Sovereign of the universe in His role within the Godhead. Thus, we have inspired evidence for differentiation of roles in the Godhead.

Although it might be assumed that the Son took on the “role of Son” at the incarnation or at some point in eternity past, the inspired record suggests otherwise. The distinction in names, “Father” and “Son,” has always existed, implying role differentiation. Christ has always been the eternal, self-existent Son.

In His incarnation He gained in a new sense the title of the Son of God. . . . While the Son of a human being, He became the Son of God in a new sense.

He was equal with God, infinite and omnipotent. . . . He is the eternal, self-existent Son.

The Word existed as a divine being, even as the eternal Son of God, in union and oneness with His Father. From everlasting He was the Mediator of the covenant.

The terms of this oneness between God and man in the great covenant of redemption were arranged with Christ from all eternity. The covenant of grace was revealed to the patriarchs. . . . Paul speaks of the gospel, the preaching of Jesus Christ, as "the revelation of the mystery, which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested . . ." (Romans 16:25, 26, R.V.).

Edwin Reynolds concludes his study on headship in 1 Corinthians 11 stating that “this paper has shown that there is a clear principle of headship taught in 1 Cor 11:3 that was established by God based on the pattern set within the Trinity by the headship of the Father in

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161 White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 34.
162 White, *Selected Messages*, Bk. 1, 226.
163 White, *Evangelism*, 615.
164 Ibid.
165 White, *God’s Amazing Grace*, 129, emphasis added. See also *Signs of the Times*, August 24, 1891 par. 10.
relationship to Christ, which is an eternal headship grounded in differences in function rather than in essence."  

It is virtually impossible to deny functional role differentiation in the Godhead, if Christ assumed a new role of Mediator (between God and created beings) prior to creation. Based on the inspired record, we must remember that “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever”; Christ has existed in His office as the eternal Son, Mediator, and the Word by inherent voluntary submission to the Father. “The Word existed as a divine being, even as the eternal Son of God, in union and oneness with His Father. From everlasting He was the Mediator of the covenant.” Christ never has changed His position, or role, or office in relation to the Father. The term "role" underscores the fact that it is a relationship willingly entered into by the Son from before the beginning of creation with respect to the Father, and thus it is not permanent in the sense of somehow being inherent in the Son's being. There had been no change in the position or authority of Christ. Lucifer's envy and misrepresentation and his claims to equality with Christ had made necessary a statement of the true position of the Son of God; but this had been the same from the beginning. Many of the angels were, however, blinded by Lucifer's deceptions.  

Christ was appointed to the office of Mediator from the creation of God, set up from everlasting to be our substitute and surety. Further evidence of the Father-Son relationship of headship/submission in eternity past follows. The Father created all things through His Son and for His Son’s benefit (John 1:3; 1 Cor 8:6; Heb 1:2, 10; Eph 3:9; Col 1:16); nevertheless, the Father who sits on the throne is ultimately credited with the creation (Rev 4:11), though He accomplishes it through His Son (Heb 1:2). The Father-Son relationship of headship/submission has always existed. The Father “chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world” and “predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son” (Eph 1:4; Rom 8:29). The Father did the “choosing” and the “predestinating” in Christ. The Son never “chose” or “predestined” us in the Father. The relationship of roles is fixed. The authority-obedience relationship of the Father and the Son in

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166 Reynolds, 44.  
167 Ellen White, Evangelism, 615.  
168 White, Patriarchs and Prophets, 38.  
169 White, Selected Messages, Bk. 1, 74 emphasis added.
the Trinity has existed throughout eternity and is mandatory if we are to account for the
Father’s eternal purpose to elect and save His people through His beloved Son, in Christ. 170

Furthermore, being obedient to the Father, the Son condescended to become the
Commander of the angels, known also as the Angel (Messenger) of the LORD, and Michael the
Archangel, Commander of angels. (See Joshua 5:13-15; Ex 3:3-6, 13-14; Jude 9; 1 Thes 4:16;
John 5:28-29).

The authority-obedience relationship between the Father and the Son has always
existed, from before the beginning of creation, simultaneously with their equality of being. This
apparent paradox was misunderstood by Lucifer, requiring the Father to declare to the host of
heaven that He had invested His Son with authority, endowed Him with unlimited power, and
that the Son would carry out His will and His purposes, but would do nothing of Himself alone.
The one who invests authority in the other possesses supreme authority. The writings of Ellen
G. White confirm the headship/submission principle in the Godhead in eternity past.

Satan in Heaven, before his rebellion, was a high and exalted angel, next in honor to
God’s dear Son. . . . A special light beamed in his countenance, and shone around him
brighter and more beautiful than around the other angels; yet Jesus, God’s dear Son, had
the preeminence over all the angelic host. He was one with the Father before the angels
were created. Satan was envious of Christ, and gradually assumed command which
devolved on Christ alone. The great Creator assembled the heavenly host, that he might in
the presence of all the angels confer special honor upon his Son. The Son was seated on
the throne with the Father, and the heavenly throng of holy angels was gathered around
them. The Father then made known that it was ordained by himself that Christ, his Son,
should be equal with himself; so that wherever was the presence of his Son, it was as his
own presence. The word of the Son was to be obeyed as readily as the word of the Father.
**His Son he had invested with authority** to command the heavenly host. Especially was his
Son to work in union with himself in the anticipated creation of the earth and every living
thing that should exist upon the earth. His Son would carry out his will and his purposes,
but would do nothing of himself alone. . . . There was contention among the angels. Satan
and his sympathizers were striving to reform the government of God. They were
discontented and unhappy because they could not look into his unsearchable wisdom and
ascertain his purposes in exalting his Son Jesus, and **endowing him with such unlimited
power and command**. They rebelled against the authority of the Son.” 171

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From eternity past the Father and the Son entered into a covenant with clasped hands, that if the human race should be overcome by Satan’s deceptions, the Son would become their surety. And when Adam transgressed, the Son received permission from the Father to give His own life as a ransom for the race. Ellen White confirms the submission of the Son to the authority of the Father, who grants permission to His Son to carry out our redemption:

Christ was not alone in making His great sacrifice. It was the fulfillment of the covenant made between Him and His Father before the foundation of the world was laid. With clasped hands they had entered into the solemn pledge that Christ would become the surety for the human race if they were overcome by Satan’s sophistry.¹⁷²

Soon I saw Him approach the exceeding bright light which enshrouded the Father. Said my accompanying angel, "He is in close converse with His Father." The anxiety of the angels seemed to be intense while Jesus was communing with His Father. Three times He was shut in by the glorious light about the Father, and the third time He came from the Father we could see His person. His countenance was calm, free from all perplexity and trouble, and shone with a loveliness which words cannot describe. He then made known to the angelic choir that a way of escape had been made for lost man; that He had been pleading with His Father, and had obtained permission to give His own life as a ransom for the race.¹⁷³

One obtains permission only from another who has supreme authority. The role of the submission of the Son to the Father was clearly understood by Lucifer and the angels to the extent that the Son was perceived as being nearly equivalent to themselves. The full extent of the equality of being and power of the Son to the Father had heretofore been misunderstood, requiring a full declaration by the Father.

C. God is the Head of Christ—Eternity Future

After the ascension, Christ was exalted at the Father’s right hand (Acts 2:33). To be seated at the right hand of a king in the ancient world indicated that that one was second in authority. Such was the aspiration of James and John in Matt 20:21-23. The Messianic promise in Psalm 110, “Sit at My right hand until I make your enemies My footstool” (v. 1), points to the authority of the Father. That Christ would be exalted to the right hand of God after His ascension is found in numerous other passages (Acts 5:31; 7:55-56; Rom 8:34; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1;

¹⁷² White, Manuscript Releases, Vol. 12, 408.
¹⁷³ White, Early Writings, 126, emphasis added.
Heb 1:13; 8:1; 10:12-13; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22). The supreme authority always belongs to the Father. “The Son of God was next in authority to the great Lawgiver.” Thus we have evidence that one can be subordinate in authority and still be equal in being, equal in importance, and equal in personhood. If this is true of the Godhead, then the husband and wife created in the image of God can be equal and different, too.

After His ascension Christ, functioning as our High Priest, intercedes in our behalf before the Father, providing further evidence that the Father possesses supreme authority, since the Son does not command the Father, but brings requests (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25).

Throughout eternity the submission of the Son of God to the authority of the Father will be manifested to the universe of unfallen beings. Forever to retain His human nature, uniquely perpetuating the results of His incarnation, Christ will be one with His brethren, our Elder Brother.

To assure us of His immutable counsel of peace, God gave His only-begotten Son to become one of the human family, forever to retain His human nature. . . . God has adopted human nature in the person of His Son, and has carried the same into the highest heaven. . . . The I AM is the Daysman between God and humanity, laying His hand upon both. He who is “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,” is not ashamed to call us brethren. Hebrews 7:26; 2:11. In Christ the family of earth and the family of heaven are bound together. Christ glorified is our brother. Heaven is enshrined in humanity, and humanity is enfolded in the bosom of Infinite Love.

The Son will forever be subject to the authority of the Father. Paul says that after the last enemy, death, is destroyed, “the Son Himself will also be subject to Him [the Father] who put all things under Him [the Son], that God may be all in all” (1 Cor 15:28). Here we find further confirmation of the eternal, willing submission of the Son to the authority of the Father from eternity past to eternity future. In eternity past, prior to the foundation of the world, the Son was subject to the Father; in the Creation the Son was subject to the Father; following the incarnation the Son was subject to the Father; from His ascension, the Son has been subject to

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175 Grudem, Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth, 411.
177 Greek, _hupotassō_: “to subject, to subordinate, put in subjection, be subject to, submit to.” See the standard Greek Lexicon BDAG (2nd Edition), _hupotassō_, 848.
the Father, sitting at His right hand; today, as He intercedes for us, the Son is subject to the Father; and when death is destroyed, the Son will be eternally subject to the Father.

The confirming evidence that Christ will be subject to the Father throughout eternity is the reality that the Son willingly condescended to encumber himself with a human nature, never to be the same, having become our Elder Brother. The entire Treasury of Heaven was given to the human race. Christ has become the Second Adam, the new head of the human race. Nevertheless, the Son is not eternally inferior to the Father; He is equal to the Father in His being or essence, for He is fully God. This means that along with equality in attributes and deity and value and honor, there is also a subordination in role, and the Son is subject to the Father in authority. The principle of headship, submission, and equality, inherent in divine love and the nature of the Trinity, was ordained of God to be inherent in the creation of mankind, male and female, “made in Our image.”

D. Submission of the Holy Spirit

The principle of headship/submission is manifested also in the relation of the Holy Spirit with the Son and the Father. The Son is subject to the Father and the Holy Spirit is subject to the Son. The Father sends the Son into world, and the Son sends the Holy Spirit into world from the Father (John 15:26). Just as the Son’s mission was to reveal and glorify the Father (14:9; 17:4), the Holy Spirit will reveal and glorify the Son; and He will declare and testify of Christ (15:26; 16:14). The Holy Spirit listens to and is submissive to the authority of the Father and the Son. He never “speaks on His own authority,” but speaks only that which “He hears” from the Father or the Son (John 16:13). The Holy Spirit, being subject to the Father, makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God (Rom 8:27). “The heavenly trio”—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—are inherently equal in being, yet the Son is submissive to Father and the Holy Spirit is submissive to the Father and the Son in their respective functional roles.

Since God never changes, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb 13:8; also Mal 3:6; James 1:17), the equality, headship, and submission, inherent in divine love and the nature of the Trinity has always existed and will continue to exist in the ceaseless ages. And likewise in the years of eternity, as they roll, these principled characteristics will be fully

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178 Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 411, 414
reproduced in the nature of redeemed mankind. The restoration of the image of God will have been completed in the church of the living God.

E. Mutual Submission and the Trinity

The egalitarian commitment to “mutual submission” in marriage is so strong that they have devised a new doctrine of “mutual submission” in the Trinity. Among evangelical feminists who support the case for mutual submission in the Trinity, Stanley Grenz says the following:

The argument from Christ’s example often overlooks the deeper dynamic of mutual dependence within the Trinity. . . . The Father is dependent on the Son for his deity. In sending his Son into the world, the Father entrusted his own reign—indeed his own deity—to the Son (for example Lk. 10:22). Likewise the Father is dependent on the Son for his title as the Father. As Irenaeus pointed out in the second century, without the Son the Father is not the Father of the Son. Hence the subordination of the Son to the Father must be balanced by the subordination of the Father to the Son.179

The Scriptures never show the Father submitting to the authority of the Son. The Scriptures “show the Father planning, initiating, directing, sending, and commanding, and they show the Son responding, obeying the Father, and carrying out the Father’s plans. In order to show ‘mutual submission’ in the Trinity or ‘the subordination of the Father to the Son’ in a way that is parallel, Grenz would have to find some passages that show the Son commanding the Father, or the Son sending the Father, or the Son directing the activities of the Father, or the Father saying that He is obedient to the Son. . . .

“So how does Grenz argue for the ‘subordination of the Father to the Son’? He changes the topic under discussion and confuses the categories. He says nothing about any submission of the Father to the Son’s authority. He rather says, ‘without the Son the Father is not the Father of the Son.’ But this does not address the topic at hand. It is a linguistic sleight-of-hand argument that shifts the discussion to whether the Father would be the Father without the Son (the answer is, of course not, but all that tells us is that if God were not a Trinity, He would not be a Trinity, or if God were different, He would be different). This statement tells us nothing about who the true God is or about the relationships that actually exist among the persons of

the Trinity. And it says nothing to show that the Father submits to the authority of the Son—
which He never does."  

F. Interchangeable Roles and the Trinity

Evangelical feminist in favor of the ordination of women as elders/ministers reject the 
biblical evidence that clearly supports the principle of headship and submission within the 
Godhead from before the beginning of creation. They see clearly that if a relationship of 
authority and obedience is grounded in the immanent, inner-Trinitarian relations of Father, 
Son, and Holy Spirit, then this gives at least prima facie justification to the notion of creational 
human relations in which authority and submission inhere.

The early church clearly embraced the full essential equality of the three Trinitarian 
persons (because each of the three divine persons possesses fully and simultaneously the 
identically same infinite divine nature), nonetheless the church has always affirmed likewise the 
priority of the Father over the Son and Spirit. Since this priority cannot rightly be understood in 
terms of essence or nature (lest one fall into Arian subordinationism), it must exist in terms of 
relationship.

The egalitarian denial of any submission of the Son to the Father, from before the 
beginning of creation, makes it impossible to answer the question why it was the “Son” and not 
the “Father” or “Spirit” who was sent to become incarnate. It has been both stated and 
assumed that any one of the three Persons could become incarnate.  

The egalitarian view 

would permit “any one of the three Persons” to become incarnate. And yet we have scriptural 

revelation that clearly says the Son came down out of heaven to do the will of His Father. This 

sending is not ad hoc. In eternity, the Father commissioned the Son who then willingly laid 

aside the glory He had with the Father to come and purchase our pardon and renewal. Ellen 

White refers to the possibility of the Father stepping down from heaven and veiling His glory so 

that humanity might look upon Him. But that humiliation would not replace the redemptive act 
of Christ in the incarnation and His death at the cross. In other words, the roles of the Father 
and Son are not interchangeable.

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Had God the Father come to our world and dwelt among us, veiling His glory and humbling Himself, that humanity might look upon Him, the history that we have of the life of Christ would not have been changed in unfolding its record of His own condescending grace. In every act of Jesus, in every lesson of His instruction, we are to see and hear and recognize God.\textsuperscript{182}

A running theme in the history of this doctrine is that the Son was commissioned by the Father in\textit{ eternity past} to come as the incarnate Son. As Jesus declares on well over thirty occasions in John’s Gospel, He was \textit{sent to the earth} by the Father to do the Father’s will. Scripture reveals that this sending, or commissioning, took place in\textit{ eternity past}, a commissioning that then is fulfilled in time. Peter confirms the eternal commissioning of the Son. “He [Christ] was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake” (1 Pet 1:20, NIV). If we wonder how far back this commissioning of the Son took place, this verse settles the question. Before the world was made, the Father chose (literally, “foreknew”) the Son to come as the Redeemer. The Son’s coming in time to shed His blood reflects not an \textit{ad hoc} decision nor a toss of the Trinitarian coin but the eternal purpose of the \textit{Father} to send and offer His \textit{Son}. Ephesians 1:3-5 and Revelation 13:8 confirm this understanding. In Ephesians 1, Paul gives praise to God the \textit{Father} for choosing His own \textit{in Christ} before the foundation of the world, and for predestining them to adoption as sons \textit{through Jesus Christ} to Himself.\textsuperscript{183}

The plan of salvation was designed to redeem the fallen race, to give them another trial. Christ was appointed to the office of Mediator from the creation of God, \textit{set up from everlasting} to be our substitute and surety. Before the world was made, it was arranged that the divinity of Christ should be enshrouded in humanity. "A body," said Christ, “hast thou prepared me.” But He did not come in human form until the fullness of time had expired. Then He came to our world, a babe in Bethlehem (Review and Herald, Apr. 5, 1906).\textsuperscript{184}

It is thus clear that the Father’s commissioning of the Son is based in eternity past, and that the Son’s submission to the Father is rooted in their eternal relationship within the Godhead. The authority-obedience relation of Father and Son in the immanent Trinity is mandatory if we are

\textsuperscript{182} White, \textit{Manuscript Releases, Vol. 21}, 393.

\textsuperscript{183} Ware, “Tampering with the Trinity: Does the Son Submit to the Father?” \textit{Biblical Foundations of Manhood and Womanhood} (Wheaton, IL, 2002), 249-250.

\textsuperscript{184} Ellen Whit, \textit{Lift Him Up}, 74.
to account for God the Father’s eternal purpose to elect and save fallen man through His beloved Son.

Because Christ was commissioned in eternity past to come, in time and history, to carry out the will of His Father, when this work is completed, Christ will place Himself in the very position He had with the Father previously. While possessing again the full glory of the Father (John 17:5), He will put Himself in subjection to the Father (1 Cor 15:28). The relation of the Father and Son in eternity past, in Christ’s historic and incarnate life, and in eternity future, then, is the same. Christ is fully equal in essence with the Father, yet subordinate in role.

Scripture clearly upholds these truths. Finally, all of this scriptural evidence provides a backdrop for 1 Corinthians 11:3 which states that God is the head of Christ. While there have been many disagreements about the meaning of the word “head,” its meaning of authority is not only based on the natural meaning of the word *kephalē* but also the scriptural claim that God is the eternal origin of all things and Christ is the eternal agent (1 Cor 8:6). In summary, then, within the Trinity a relationship of headship and submission roles between the Father and the Son has existed from before the beginning of creation.

VII. Restoration of the Image of God

With the creation of mankind, God brought about a new and distinct order of living beings, made in the image of God. “All heaven took a deep and joyful interest in the creation of the world and of man. Human beings were a new and distinct order. They were made ‘in the image of God,’ and it was the Creator’s design that they should populate the earth.” The myriad of angels were not created in the image of God, nor were any other unfallen beings. This distinct privilege was given to humanity. Speaking generically, Ellen White wrote, “God created man a superior being; he alone is formed in the image of God, and is capable of partaking of the divine nature, of cooperating with his Creator and executing His plans.”

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185 Ware, 250.
188 Idem, *Review and Herald*, April 21, 1885, emphasis added.
Not only the moral image of God but the principle of headship/submission, inherent in divine love, was instilled in the creation of man, male and female. But this image was nearly obliterated with the inception of sin. The overarching purpose of the gospel is to restore the image of God—including the principle of headship/submission—in mankind, namely in the church, the pillar and ground of truth. “The central theme of the Bible, the theme about which every other in the whole book clusters, is the redemption plan, the restoration in the human soul of the image of God.”

VIII. Fallacious Objections to the Biblical Principle of Headship/Submission

A. Mutual Submission

Ephesians 5:21 says, “submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.” Those in favor of the ordination of women as elders/ministers say that this verse teaches “mutual submission,” meaning that just as wives have to submit their husbands, so husbands have to submit to their wives. Doesn’t the text say that we have to submit “one to another”? And this presumably means that there is no unique submission that a wife owes to her husband, and no unique authority that a husband has over his wife.190

The Bible clearly states that believers (male and female) are to be considerate of one another’s needs, and they are to esteem others better than themselves (Phil 2:3-4). Peter admonishes the saints “to be submissive to one another,” “clothed with humility” (1 Peter 5:5).

Thus, there is a sense in which the members of the body of Christ must be willing to receive counsel from one another. “God's people must be subject to one another, counsel and advise with each other, and the lack of one must be supplied by the sufficiency of the other. There is a lack of humility.”191 In this context there is a mutuality that Scripture does require: “husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her”; “fathers, do not provoke

189 White, Education, 125.
your children to wrath”; “masters, do good to your servants, giving up threatening”, etc. This is where we find mutuality, not in a shared authority, but in consideration of one another.

However, in a strict sense, the context of Ephesians 5-6 makes clear what Paul means by “submitting one to another.” Wives are to be subject to their husbands (5:22-24), children are to be subject to their parents (6:1-3), and servants are to be subject to their masters (6:5-8). Paul does not tell husbands to be subject to their wives, or parents to be subject to their children (nullifying all parental authority), or masters to be subject to their servants. The idea of mutual submission is absent in the overall context of Eph 5-6. Paul is defining a specific kind of submission to an authority: wife to the authority of her husband; children to parents; servants to masters. Moreover, wives are to submit to their husbands as the church is to submit to Christ (5:24). Here mutual submission is clearly excluded where Christ would submit to the church. Wives are repeatedly told to be subject to their husbands in the NT (Eph 5:22-24; Col 3:18; Titus 2:5; 1 Peter 3:1-6). In not one case is it stated that husbands are to be subject to theirs wives; however, husbands are admonished to love their wives as Christ loved the church—a sense of mutuality between husbands and wives. We may also note a unique concept of mutuality in the marital relationship where the “wife does not have authority [exousiazo] over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, the wife does” (1 Cor 7:3-4). However, within the context of Ephesians 5-6 and the use of Greek word *hupotassō* (to submit), no author saw mutual submission as Paul’s motif until the evangelical feminist movement began to gain prominence in the late 1960s and early ‘70s.

In the NT, the Greek word *hupotassō* (to submit), carries the basic meaning of submission to an authority. Although some have claimed that the word can mean "be thoughtful and considerate, act in love” (toward another), there is little evidence to show that any first-century Greek speaker would have understood it that way, for the term always implies a relationship of submission to an authority. Examples of how this word is used elsewhere in the New Testament are illustrated below:

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192 Some NT manuscripts lack the verb "submit to" (*hupotassō*) in Eph 5:22. But many more manuscripts contain the verb as many popular translations attest. Moreover, the verb exists in 5:21 and 5:24 which makes the context clear that 5:22 demands the idea of submission.
1. Jesus is subject to the authority of his parents (Luke 2:51)
2. demons are subject to the disciples (Luke 10:17; clearly the meaning “act in love, be considerate” cannot fit here!)
3. citizens are to be subject to government authorities (Rom 13:1, 5; Tit 3:1, 1 Pet 2:13)
4. the universe is subject to Christ (1 Cor 15:27; Eph 1:22)
5. unseen spiritual powers are subject to Christ (1 Pet 3:22)
6. Christ is subject to God the Father (1 Cor 15:28)
7. church members are to be subject to church leaders (1 Cor 16:15-16 [cf. 1 Clement 42:4]; 1 Pet. 5:5)
8. wives are to be subject to their husbands (Col 3:18; Tit 2:5; 1 Pet 3:5; compare Eph 5:22, 24)
9. the church is subject to Christ (Eph 5:24)
10. servants are to be subject to their masters (Tit 2:9; 1 Pet 2:18)
11. Christians are subject to God (Heb 12:9; Jas 4:7)

None of these relationships are ever reversed. Husbands are never told to be subject (hupotassō) to wives, nor the government to citizens, nor masters to servants, nor the disciples to demons. Clearly parents are never told to be subject to their children! In fact, the term hupotassō is used outside the NT to describe the submission and obedience of soldiers in an army to those of superior rank. The Greek word, hupotassō, is never "mutual" in its force; it is always one-directional in its reference to submission to an authority.

What then does "one another" mean in Ephesians 5:21? It means "some to others," not "everyone to everyone." The meaning of hupotassō, which always indicates one-directional submission to an authority, prevents the sense "everyone to everyone" in this verse. And the following context (wives to husbands, children to parents, servants to masters) shows this understanding to be true. Therefore, it is not "mutual submission," but submission to appropriate authorities, which Paul is commanding in Ephesians 5:21.

B. Neither Male and Female: Galatians 3:28

Rebecca Groothuis is an evangelical feminist and is representative of those who claim that Galatians 3:28 teaches that there is full gender equality in the kingdom of God with the leadership role of elder/minister open to all. “Of all texts that support biblical equality, Galatians 3:26-28 is probably the most important. . . [I]t is a broadly applicable statement of the

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193 See, for example, Josephus, War 2.566, 578; 5.309; compare the adverb in 1 Clement 37:2). The Liddell-Scott-Jones Lexicon even defines hupotassō [passive] to mean "be obedient" (p. 1897).
inclusive nature of the New Covenant, whereby all groups of people, regardless of their
previous religious status under the law, have now become one in Christ.”

“Many evangelical egalitarians [those in favor of women’s ordination] have attempted
to frame the women’s ordination issue along the lines of slavery. It is contended that the
submission of wives to their husbands in the home and women to male leadership in the
church is akin to slaves being subject to their masters. It is argued that as slaves have been
emancipated from their masters so women must be emancipated from being subject to the
husband in the home and to men in the church. But is the comparison valid?

“[T]he distinction between male and female was part of God’s original pre-fall plan at
creation while slavery was a human institution established by sinful man. If read carefully, the
Bible provides the principles that would eventually lead to the eradication of slavery. But there
is no evidence in Scripture that it is God’s plan to eradicate the functional differences between
male and female.

“Some have sought to make the struggle for women’s ordination a matter comparable
to the civil rights struggle for racial equality in the decade of the 60’s. They argue that the
subjection of women to male headship in the home and in the church is a deprivation of their
equal rights with men and thus is tantamount to discrimination. But upon careful scrutiny this
comparison falls on its face. . . . But ordination to pastoral leadership is not an inalienable right
but rather a calling that is not given by God to all His creatures.

The text of Galatians 3:28 does not say that the distinction between Jews and Greeks is
abolished, and the distinction between slaves and free is abolished, and the distinction
between male and female is abolished. To say that we are “one” means we are united based on
our redemption in Christ Jesus. There should be no factions or divisions among those who have
embraced Christ as Savior and Lord. The context of the passage in Galatians 3 is redemption,
justification in Christ, and baptism into Christ, not full gender equality without gender
distinctions in the home and the church. The members of the body of Christ do not all have the
same function, although we are one body. “For as we have many members in one body, but all

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195 Bohr, 13
the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and
individually members of one another (Rom 12:4-5; see also 1 Cor 12:4-31). “The context of
[Galatians 3:28] shows that Paul is dealing with eligibility for baptism, not ministry. . . . Paul is
not talking about roles of the sexes here [and] therefore this passage is quite irrelevant”\textsuperscript{196} to
Paul’s teaching concerning functional roles of men and women in the church in 1 Corinthians 11
and 1 Timothy 2-3.

In quick succession Paul cements a vertical articulation of human-divine relationships.
The particular context and content of Gal 3:28 is salvation, not gender-specific service
(let alone its abrogation). In short, Gal 3:28 epitomizes relations between humans and
God (vertical), not human-to-human relations (horizontal). Every single verse
establishes this vertical dynamic:

\begin{align*}
\text{Gal 3:26} & \quad \text{“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.”} \\
\text{Gal 3:27} & \quad \text{“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”} \\
\text{Gal 3:28} & \quad \text{“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave or free, there is}
\quad \text{neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”} \\
\text{Gal 3:29} & \quad \text{“And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs}
\quad \text{according to the promise.”}
\end{align*}

After all, conversion does not change one’s ethnicity, status, or gender; the male
remains male, the slave was still a slave post-conversion. In view is the status of any
human before God, not before other humans. The message of Gal 3:28 is precisely
that human perceptions of cultural, economic, or gender advantage/disadvantage do
not correlate to ontological value and salvation status with God. This statement makes
even more sense if functional differentiations are maintained, not abrogated. Paul’s
point is clear: neither ethnicity, economics, nor gender grant one person privileged
soteriological status before God over another person. This text does not cancel
gender-specific ontology. Finally, NT scholarship schedules 1 Timothy after Galatians –
in other words, Gal 3:28 does not prevent Paul from defining certain ministry roles in
gender-specific terms.\textsuperscript{197}

What is perhaps most significant about the categories listed in Gal. 3:28 is that all the
distinctions beside those between male and female are man-made. Race, nationality, social
status, and economic station are all human constructs, products of the age of sin. The Bible
doesn’t say, Black and white created He them, nor does it say, Patrician, plutocrat, plebeian,

\textsuperscript{196} Gordon Wenham, “The Ordination of Women: Why is it so Diverse?” \textit{Churchman} 92 (1978), 312.
\textsuperscript{197} Sorke, 53-54.
and peasant created He them. And certainly the Bible doesn’t say, Slave and free created He them. Here we see the best reason for rejecting the analogy between slavery and Biblical gender-role distribution. Slavery came after the Fall. By contrast, the evidence we have seen from Scripture is conclusive that gender-role distinctions began at creation. Put simply, Galatians. 3:28 is about the universal availability of salvation opportunities. It does not deny the universal Biblical affirmation of spiritual male headship.

If gender distinctions are abolished in Galatians 3:28, then marriage between two men or two women becomes a new liberty in Christ, as some evangelical feminists are advocating.198 But the Bible forbids this aberrant behavior (Lev 18:22; 20:13; Rom 1:26-27; 1 Co 6:9; 1 Tim 1:10). Although Galatians 3:28 endorses the abolition of social injustice (including slavery and caste systems) and rivalry and pride among believers, nevertheless gender distinction between male and female in marriage, in the home, and in the church have timeless application.199 If we take the entire New Testament as the inspired word of God in the New Covenant today, then any claim that Galatians 3:28 should overrule other texts such as Ephesians 5 and 1 Timothy 2 would be a claim that the apostle Paul contradicts himself, and therefore that the Word of God contradicts itself. We allow the Bible to interpret itself.200

“Some egalitarians have used the following quotation from the pen of Ellen White201 to bolster their case in favor of ordinations to pastoral leadership without regard to gender:

“No distinction on account of nationality, race, or caste, is recognized by God. He is the Maker of all mankind. All men are of one family by creation, and all are one through

200 The method of interpretation (hermeneutics) often seen in feminists expositions of Gal 3:28 derives from a form of literary criticism called “destruction” (see above, note 3). Ingo Sorke perceptively observes “Galatians 3:28 represents a hermeneutic, catalyzed by Krister Stendahl’s ‘progressive hermeneutic.’ . . . With astounding transparency he concedes that ‘the ideology or dogma which underlies both the movements of emancipation and the demand for the ordination of women is a secularized philosophy of equality with roots in the Enlightenment or in Hellas or in the cult of Baal—in any case alien to the Bible.’ Stendahl’s hermeneutical bedfellow F. F. Bruce does not hide his bias either when he establishes his exegetical criterion: ‘Whatever in Paul’s teaching promotes true freedom is of universal and permanent validity; whatever seems to impose restrictions on true freedom has regard to local and temporary conditions.’ In the estimation of Allen, this defines a hermeneutic that has descended into unsustainable relativism: . . . ‘Every domain of inquiry and every value is relative to a culture and even to subcultures.’” See Sorke, 48-49 and citations therein. On-line edition: http://www.adventistarchives.org/adam,-where-are-you.pdf, 51-52.
201 Ellen White, Christ Object Lessons, 386.
redemption. Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, to throw open every
compartment of the temple, that every soul may have free access to God. His love is so
broad, so deep, so full, that it penetrates everywhere. It lifts out of Satan's circle the
poor souls who have been deluded by his deceptions. It places them within reach of the
throne of God, the throne encircled by the rainbow of promise. In Christ there is neither
Jew nor Greek, bond nor free. All are brought nigh by His precious blood. (Galatians
3:28; Ephesians 2:13)

“Are those who use this quotation in this manner respecting its legitimate context? First
of all, it is important to underline that although Ellen White is clearly alluding to Galatians 3:28
she did not include the phrase ‘male or female’ in this quotation. Not only did she stop short of
quoting the last phrase of the verse, but at the beginning of the quotation she refers only to a
distinction of nationality, race and caste. Gender is totally absent from the quotation!”

“Galatians 3:28 argues that Christ’s death created an opportunity for humans to change
their status from slaves to sons, thus rendering them heirs and therefore receiving adoption
status regardless of ethnicity, status, or gender. The text cannot be used to annihilate all gender
distinctions or functional differentiations in church practice as profiled by the same author.
Social and ecclesiastical implications fall outside the context of Gal 3:28.”

Galatians 3:28 articulates the vertical dimension of human-divine relationships; it does
not erase all gender roles or functional distinctions.

C. Priesthood of All Believers: 1 Peter 2:9, 10

Does the NT doctrine of the “priesthood of all believers mean that both men and
women are qualified to fill positions of leadership in the church as elders/ministers? Although
the exact expression, “priesthood of all believers” does not exist in Scripture or the Writings of
Ellen G. White, the concept of a “priesthood” of believers is quite apparent. “But you are a
chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may
proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once
were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have
obtained mercy” (1 Pet 2:2-10). God’s people are to be a “holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual

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202 Bohr, 43.
203 Sorke, 53.
sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (v. 5). The apostle Peter extracts the “royal priesthood” concept from Exodus 19:6, where at Sinai God declares that Israel was to be “a kingdom of priests and holy nation.” But it must be noted that Moses distinguishes between the people of Israel as a “kingdom of priests” in Exodus 19:6 and the appointed ministerial priests in 19:22, 24 (a precursor to the Levitical priesthood). The concept of a priesthood of all believers already existed in the Old Testament period, and therefore it should be not understood as a revolutionary concept introduced in the NT. So in what way is the NT “royal priesthood” similar to the OT “kingdom of priests?”

Peter is echoing the covenant language of Exodus 19 in 1 Peter 2, indicating that “This covenant is of just as much force today as it was when the Lord made it with ancient Israel.”

White continues the linkage of Exodus 19 with the “royal priesthood” of the NT:

So it is clear that the Scripture is calling both OT and NT Israel, both dispensations, to be a royal priesthood. But is this an indication that both genders were being called by God to be “priests” or spiritual leaders? The answer is “no” for both the OT royal priesthood and in the NT royal priesthood. In the OT God appointed men from the tribe of Levi to the priesthood, and in the NT God appoints men who rule their own house well (1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).

The people of Israel had God-given responsibilities as a kingdom of priests. Likewise, what is our function as members of the royal priesthood? Jesus Christ as our heavenly High Priest functions as our Mediator with God, the Father. “There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim 2:5). As part of the royal priesthood, we too have a function as a “mediator.”

“Every member of Israel belonged to the covenant community and therefore was responsible to mediate the gospel to the world in order to draw out those who were in

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204 White, God’s Amazing Grace, 142, emphasis added.
205 Idem, PH011, 16, emphasis added.
darkness unto Christ’s marvelous light. That is to say, every Israelite who became a member of God’s church at Mt. Sinai was called by God to be a missionary with the specific purpose of preparing the world for the arrival of the Messiah. The fact that all Israel was called to mediate Christ to the world did not mean that the office of the priesthood was unnecessary. This role of Israel as God’s mediator of the gospel to the nations was beautifully portrayed by the Gospel Prophet Isaiah:

“‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.’” (Isaiah 49:6)

God calls His royal priesthood today, without gender distinction, to “offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5). This, however, is not a universal call to the office of elder/minister. “So what are the spiritual sacrifices that all Christians must now offer without regard to gender? David, who was not a priest, offered such sacrifices already in the Old Testament. In his penitential Psalm of repentance David prayed to God: ‘For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise’ [Psalm 51:16-17].”

In a similar manner the apostle Paul exhorts the people of God, “by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:1-2). Christians are a royal priesthood chosen with the specific purpose of declaring to the world the praises of Him who called them out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9).

From the beginning it has been God’s plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory.

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206 Bohr, 9.
207 Ibid., 9-10. In other texts sacrifices are identified with praise (Psalm 116:17; Hebrews 13:15, 16), joy (Psalm 27:6), thanksgiving (Psalm 107:22; Hebrews 13:15, 16) and mercy (Hosea 6:6).
In both the OT and NT dispensations, the entire people was called as a royal priesthood was called to mediate God’s truth to the nations, but neither in the OT or the NT dispensation does this qualify all to officiate as priests or elders/ministers/pastors without regard to gender in the narrow sense of the word. Even of the men, only a relatively few served in this way. 

One truth of Scripture (the priesthood of all believers) does not override or deny other passages of Scripture specifying the appointment of elders/ministers (1 Timothy 2:12; 3:2; Titus 1:6 along with passages that establish a pattern of male leadership in the church). The Bible is internally consistent, and its parts will not contradict each other. Thus, Psalm 119 confirms this principle when it says, “The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever” (v. 160).

“The ‘priesthood of believers’ was Luther’s slogan asserting that every believer had the right (authority) to read the Bible for themselves, every believer had received the illumination of the Holy Spirit to interpret Scripture for themselves, and every believer had the standing with God to approach Him directly in Jesus’ name. In the 16th century, all of these were thought to be exclusive prerogatives of priests. So the slogan ‘priesthood of believers’ spoke a powerful truth to the members of the medieval church, which had taught that only the priests had direct access to God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and Scripture.

“In the 21st century, however, the social and political context is so different that the term ‘priesthood of every believer’ acquires some actually unbiblical connotations. In the context of modern democracies, ‘every member a minister’ has a subtle but pervasive democratizing influence on the concept of church, which results in a great diminution of the ‘specialness’ of the ordained ministry. . . .

“To reassert the special responsibilities of ordained ministers, and restore the biblical difference between ordained men and unordained men and women would do much to restore the rightful authority of the ministers.”

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209 Moon, 19-20.
D. The Case of Deborah

Does Deborah’s role as a prophet and judge in Israel show that women can assume leadership over men in the church? The period of the judges following the death of Joshua and his contemporary elders was a time when the order established by Moses had degenerated and disorder ensued, in which “everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” Over a period of 200 years, apostasy was followed by repentance numerous times, and God called specific men to judge Israel. Deborah was called of God to be a prophetess, but there is no scriptural evidence that God called Deborah to be a judge. God specifically called willing and courageous men, such as Gideon (Jud 6:12-14), to be judges when the people cried out for deliverance (see also 3:9, 15; 11:29; 13:24-25). At the time when Deborah was called to be a prophet (not a judge), there was a dearth of willing and courageous men. God used Deborah’s prophetic office to call a reticent Barak to function in the capacity of military leader of Israel to fend off the advances of Jabin, king of Canaan, and his commander, Sisera. The abnormal nature of the situation with no men to function as judge is confirmed by Barak’s timidity\(^{210}\) and the rebuke implied in his subsequent loss of glory, “there will be no glory for you” (Jud 4:9); Deborah expresses surprise in her “Song” that no man had stepped forward to initiate Israel’s rescue from the oppressor, but that a mother had to prophetically call a military leader (5:7).

Without exception, all the men who were called to judge Israel were military leaders. With the lack of a man called of God to be a judge and military leader in Israel, the people sought the services of Deborah, the prophet, not as a military leader, but for counsel and justice, and she judged under her palm tree (Jud 4:4-5). It was highly unusual for a woman to serve as a civil magistrate, as White explains: “She [Deborah] was known as a prophetess, and in the absence of the usual magistrates, the people had sought to her for counsel and justice.”\(^{211}\) The text does not say that Deborah ruled over or taught God’s people. Teaching was the responsibility of the priesthood (Lev 10:11; Mal 2:6-7).

\(^{210}\) “Although he had been designated by the Lord Himself as the one chosen to deliver Israel, and had received the assurance that God would go with him and subdue their enemies, yet he was timid and distrustful.” White, Sons and Daughters of God, 37, emphasis added.

\(^{211}\) White, Sons and Daughters of God, 37, emphasis added.
“When the text says that ‘Deborah . . . was judging Israel at that time’ (Jud 4:4), the Hebrew verb *shāpat*, ‘to judge,’ in this context does not mean ‘to rule or govern,’ but rather has the sense of ‘decide controversy,’ discriminate between persons in civil, political, domestic and religious questions.”²¹² This is not a picture of Deborah ruling as queen in a leadership role, but she is simply settling private disputes. Additionally, there is no evidence that she taught the people in any assembled group. Furthermore, Deborah refused to lead the people in military battle, but insisted that a man do this (Jud 4:6-7, 14). Schreiner points out that Deborah is the only judge in the book of Judges who has no military function.²¹³ Her prophetic function was to issue a command to Barak that God had called him to take up arms and lead the people into battle. Her function as with many women of God was to encourage and exhort a man to take the leadership role to which God has called him, as she did with Barak. “Deborah delivers the ‘divine declaration or decision’ (4:6) regarding the people’s ‘call for help’ (4:3). The divine response is indicated by her issuing the call to Barak to lead Israel into battle (4:6), designating him as the next individual to lead Israel.”²¹⁴ It is Barak’s, not Deborah’s, leadership that is later cited by Samuel and again in the book of Hebrews. Samuel tells the people, “And the Lord sent Jerubbaal and Barak . . . and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side” (1 Sam 12:11). And the author of Hebrews says, “And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson . . . and the prophets” (Heb 11:32).

**E. The Case of Huldah**

The Book of the Law was discovered in the temple during the reign of Josiah following his order to repair the temple. When Josiah learned of the discovery and that the Book of the Law contained the covenant blessings and curses that would hinge upon Judah’s faith and obedience, he tore his clothes in repentance for the history of apostasy in Israel. Josiah was anxious to know what pending action God would take with Judah in view of the curses foretold (2 Kings 22:8-13). At his request for some inspired counsel, one of God’s prophets, Huldah the

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²¹² Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism*, 133.
²¹³ Cited by Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism*, 133.
²¹⁴ Ibid., 135; see also note 11 therein.
prophetess, was summoned with the inquiry from Josiah. She faithfully delivered the message of fate to come upon Judah, “this what the Lord says,” (v. 15) which would occur after Josiah’s reign. He and his contemporaries would be spared because of his faithful leadership of Judah (22:16-20).

Huldah was never anointed and was never an elder or a priest. She did not take the reins of leadership in Judah; she did not take the throne; she did not take over the priesthood to clean up the temple. She was merely a messenger of God to encourage Josiah to move forward in faithful obedience. It was the king who led Judah to repentance, reformation, and revival. Huldah gave the king the inspired message, and the king implemented the counsel given to him.

“There is clear Biblical evidence that prophets served as inspired advisors and counselors to rulers and yet the rulers had the governing authority to accept or reject the counsel. That the rulers had executive power over the prophets is made clear by what the rulers frequently did to prophets who delivered politically incorrect messages. Among others, Isaiah was sawn asunder, Elijah had to flee, Jeremiah was committed to the dungeon (2 Chronicles 36:11-15), John the Baptist was beheaded, and Stephen was stoned.”

F. The Case of Miriam and Others

Miriam, the sister of Moses, was a prophetess who “was richly endowed with gifts of poetry and music and ‘in the affections of the people and the honor heaven she stood second only to Moses and Aaron.’” She prophesied specifically to women of Israel: “And Miriam sang to them [the women]” (see Exodus 15:20-21). In the OT women prophets always prophesied privately or to women. And the prophecy was always a message from God to His people. It was different from teaching God’s people and different than ruling God’s people, neither of which women did with God’s blessing in the Old or New Testament.

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216 Bohr, 73

217 Ibid., 11 quotes PP 382.

218 Grudem, Evangelical Feminism, 138.
The Old Testament frequently honors women who are faithful to God and portrays them very favorably. Examples include: Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, Sarah, Rebekah, Ruth, Naomi, Abigail, Esther, and the godly wife of Proverbs 31. They are always seen as submissive either to the leadership of their husbands (1 Pet. 3:5-6) or to some other person in authority.

Instances where women seized ruling authority over God’s people in the OT are always viewed negatively. Queens such as Jezebel (1 Kings 16:31; 18:4, 13; 19:1-2; 21:5-25) and Athaliah (2 Kings 11) led the people into evil when they gained power. Jezebel, strong-willed, evil, manipulative, and unrepentant, becomes the ultimate symbol of treachery, idolatry, and immorality in Revelation (2:20ff). Athaliah, Jezebel’s daughter, was worse, having become the ruling monarch of Judah through murderous treachery (2 Chron 22:10-12; 23:12-15). Discovering the somewhat secret coronation of Joash, Athaliah screamed, “Treason! Treason!” but she herself was slain outside the temple. So ended the ruthless rule of the sole female monarch recorded in Scripture.219

“There were wise queens such as Esther, but she did not rule as a monarch, since the authority rested with Ahasuerus the king, and she was not queen over Israel, but over Persia. The Queen of Sheba (1Kings 10:1-13) is also viewed positively, but as a foreign queen she did not rule over God’s people.”220

“Women were highly influential and important in the history of God’s people. Some had godly influences on their children to the third and fourth generation. Some faithfully transmitted the Word of God to those inquiring. Some were strong to do righteousness when all the men around were cowardly. Some women were so evil the nation of Israel never really recovered. The stories of these women are instructive examples of faith and unfaith. These were women of influence, all. Not priests, not elders, but yes, they were women of influence for good or evil.”221

G. Phoebe

The apostle Paul highly commended her for her ministry to the congregations in Rome.

“I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant [diakonon] of the church in Cenchrea,  

219 Laurel Damsteegt, 20.  
220 Grudem, Evangelical Feminism, 146.  
221 Laurel Damsteegt, 23.
that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also” (Romans 16:1, 2). Those in favor of the ordination of women as elder/minister assert that Phoebe was not simply a self-sacrificing servant (diakonon) of the church, but she was appointed to the office of deacon.

First, it must be recognized that the office of deacon in the NT does not include the governing and teaching authority that is reserved for elders. The Greek word diakonos has two basic meanings in the NT, servant and deacon. The vast majority of occurrences describe a servant fulfilling his master’s wishes; only two occurrences clearly employ diakonos in the sense of a defined office (1 Tim 3:8, 12). Was Paul honoring Phoebe as a deacon or as a servant to the church? Within the context of Paul’s writings, Phoebe would naturally fall under the category of servant. From the standpoint of the principle of headship, it makes little difference in the case of Phoebe. In neither case does this passage show that she had any teaching or governing authority in the church. Teaching and governing authority is granted only to the elder/minister (1 Tim 3:2, 5; 5:17; Titus 1:9; also Acts 20:17, 28).

Some evangelical feminists interpret the word Greek word prostatis, “helper,” as “leader or “ruler” (“she has been a helper [leader] of many and of myself”). Was Phoebe a leader or ruler over Paul? Paul did not think that even the Jerusalem apostles ruled over him (Gal 1:1, 11-12). Those who “seemed to be influential” in Jerusalem did not rule over Paul (2:6); and he rebuked Peter publicly (2:11-14). Paul did not consider himself to be subject to any human leader but to Jesus Christ alone. In addition, Paul employs a play on words in Romans 16:2 with the word “helper” (prostatis) and the verb “assist [help her],” both of which are derived from the Greek root histēmi. Thus Paul says that the church should “help (paristēmi) her in whatever she may require from you for she has been a “helper” (prostatis) of many and of myself as well” (16:2).

In view of the fact that Phoebe was a helper to Paul, it seems more likely she functioned as a self-sacrificing servant in behalf of Christ to Paul and others rather than in the office of deacon. During His ministry, Jesus admonished each and every one of His followers to be a

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222 Sorke, 40.
223 Grudem, Evangelical Feminism, 220-221. See also citations therein.
\textit{diakonon} or servant in the general sense of service or ministering, but this does not mean that all have been called to be elders/overseers. Jesus said: “But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant [\textit{diakonos}]” (Matthew 23:11). “And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, ‘If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant [\textit{diakonos}] of all’” (Mark 9:35). “If anyone serves [\textit{diakonē}] Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant [\textit{diakonos}] will be also. If anyone serves [\textit{diakonē}] Me, him My Father will honor” (John 12:26).

Ellen White clearly explained that Phoebe had the spiritual gift of hospitality and was foremost in providing lodging and food to those who visited the church of Cenchrea. In this sense she ministered to the needs of the saints and encouraged the church today to do the same: “Phoebe entertained the apostle, and she was in a marked manner an entertainer of strangers who needed care. Her example should be followed by the churches of today.”

**H. Junia(s)**

Those in favor of the ordination of women claim that if Junia was an apostle, a woman can hold any other church office as well. The apostle Paul closes the book of Romans with greetings to many of his co-laborers in the ministry, including Andronicus and Junia(s). “Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note [well-known] among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me” (Rom 16:7). A number of questions revolve around this text: first, concerning the name Junia(s), was this person a man or woman? Second, the Greek syntax is debatable. Was this person “well-known among the apostles” or “well-known to the apostles?” Finally, was this person an apostle, like the original twelve, or was did this person function as a messenger (\textit{apostolos})?

Regarding the gender of this person, there is no uniformity among twenty common translations of the text—some specify a man, Junias (NIV, NASB, RSV, ASV), while others specify a woman, Junia (KJV, NKJV, NRSV, NLT, ESV), usually indicating the alternative in the margin. Evidence from the early church (patristic) fathers and Latin is also non-uniform concerning the gender question.

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\footnote{White, \textit{Testimonies for the Church}, vol. 6, 343, emphasis added.} \footnote{Grudem, \textit{Evangelical Feminism}, 225-226 and citations therein.}
What about the Greek syntax (grammatical sentence structure)? Was Junia well-known among or to the apostles? In light of recent research in Greek syntax, the more suitable translation seems to be, “Greet Andronicus and Junia(s) . . . well-known to the apostles.”

Therefore it does not make much difference if this is a man’s or a woman’s name, because it does not say that Junia(s) was an apostle. This person was well-known to the apostles.

Finally, the word translated “apostles” could just as well mean “church messengers” in this text as it does elsewhere in Paul’s writings. The Greek word apostolos can mean either ‘apostle’ or ‘messenger’ in the NT. A number of examples of apostolos meaning messenger are found in the NT (John 13:16; 2 Cor 8:23; Phil 2:25). Since Andronicus and Junia(s) are otherwise unknown as apostles, even if someone wanted to translate “well known among,” the sense “well known among the messengers” would be more appropriate.

Ellen White assumed that apostles were exclusively male: "The apostles and elders, men of influence and judgment, framed and issued the decree, which was thereupon generally accepted by the Christian churches." 228

“In conclusion there is not a single unambiguous instance in the NT where the word ‘apostle’ is applied to a woman. The feminist claim that there was an apostle named Junia is built upon on one uncertainty (gender of the name) on top of another uncertainty (the meaning of ‘apostle’ [or ‘messenger’] in this verse) on top of an improbable meaning of a phrase (‘well-known among’ rather than ‘well-known to’). This is a highly speculative and flimsy foundation upon which to base any argument. It carries little weight against the clear teaching of the exclusive male eldership and male apostleship in the rest of the New Testament.” 229

I. Priscilla

“When Priscilla and Aquila [the sequence: “Aquila and Priscilla” follows the Textus Receptus (KJV)] heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately” (18:26). Evangelical feminists uniformly cite evidence that Priscilla and Aquila both

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227 Grudem, Evangelical Feminism, 227.
229 Grudem, Evangelical Feminism, 227.
“explained” to Apollos “the way of God more accurately” (Acts 18:26), and therefore women can exercise the teaching role of an elder and serve in the same capacity.

It should be noted that Priscilla and Aquila were not teaching Apollos in a public setting. They “took him aside”\textsuperscript{230} privately to explain the way salvation more fully. The context indicates that they waited to speak to Apollos until he finished speaking publicly in the synagogue (18:26), so they could take him aside, out of public view. When he was instructed concerning the gospel, Apollos was given written endorsement by the brethren to function as a public teacher (v. 27). He then crossed into Achaia and “refuted the Jews publicly” (18:28). There is a clear contrast between the public teaching of Apollos and the private teaching of Priscilla. In situations where the whole church is assembled, Paul restricts the governing and teaching activities to men (see 1Cor 14:33-36; 1 Tim 2:11-15; see qualifications for elders in 1 Tim 3 and Titus 1). The example of Priscilla and Aquila in instructing Apollos privately does not contradict this.

In a number of Greek manuscripts Priscilla’s name is put before Aquila’s name, especially when they are in ministry situations. Those advocating ordination of women suggest this indicates that Priscilla was the leader in their ministry team. There is much speculation about what might be meant by the order of the names Priscilla and Aquila, but very little hard evidence to go on. Various expositors have various suggestions regarding the order of the names.\textsuperscript{231} The claim that the order is always “Priscilla and Aquila” in the context of ministry is not correct, since Paul “reverses the order of names in connection with ‘the church in their house’ (1 Cor 16:19), which is surely a ministry connection: ‘Aquila and Prisca [Priscilla], together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord.’”\textsuperscript{232}

The example of Priscilla and Aquila provides excellent encouragement for women and men to talk with each other about the meanings of Bible passages in private discussions and in small group studies, as Christians everywhere have done for centuries.\textsuperscript{233}

\textsuperscript{230} BDAG understands proslambanō in this verse to mean, “to take or lead off to oneself, take aside” (883).\textsuperscript{231} Grudem, Evangelical Feminism, 180 and citations therein.\textsuperscript{232} Ibid.\textsuperscript{233} Ibid., 178; see also 75.
IX. Summary

As we follow the guidelines of the Methods of Bible Study Document (MBSD), allowing Scripture to interpret itself, we discover that the principle of headship and submission permeates the pages of Scripture. Genesis 1-3 reveals the development of the creation headship principle. Twenty-six identifying points of creation headship in Genesis 2-3 have been documented in this paper. The leadership role of Adam and the complementary submissive role of Eve are highlighted by this partial summary of evidence from Genesis 2: Adam was created first; Adam was given primary responsibility for the Garden; Adam was given primary responsibility for avoiding the tree of knowledge of good and evil; Adam was given the task of naming the animals (Gen 2:19-20); Eve was created out of Adam; Eve was created as a helper for Adam; and Adam spoke first upon the creation of Eve and named Eve (Gen 2:23). In Genesis 3, Eve, seeks a higher sphere than her original position by her husband’s side, attempts to usurp Adam’s headship, reversing the creation headship role. Adam relinquishes his headship role by submissively yielding to his wife’s initiative and grasping the fruit from her and eating of it. Instantly they both became naked, and the reversal of the headship role of Adam was consummated, resulting in the fall of mankind. Genesis 3 is a commentary on the reversal of the divinely ordained male headship of Genesis 2, for in Genesis 3, God holds Adam responsible for relinquishing his headship responsibilities—“Because you have heeded the voice of your wife . . .” (v. 17). Restoration of male headship is imposed by God in the curse of 3:16. Just as Adam was place in the Garden first, followed by Eve, likewise, Adam is expelled from the Garden first, followed by Eve. Male headship in Genesis 2-3 may be briefly summarized and confirmed by Adam’s priority associated with: 1) Creation and Establishment in the Garden, 2) The Forbidden Tree Test, 3) Communication, 4) Naming, 5) Marriage 6) Nakedness, 7) Apprehension 8) Indictment and Interrogation, 9) Accountability (heeding his wife), 10) Death Sentence — Romans 5:12, and 11) Expulsion from Garden.

When God says, “Let Us make man in our image,” it is clear that the One speaking is giving permission to the others to unite for the commencement of the creation of mankind. Headship in the Godhead is implied in Genesis 1:26 and “headship” is a metaphor for designated authority. Man was made in the image of God, male and female. Male and female
created in the image of God reflects, at a minimum, the principle of headship and submission. Paul concludes his instruction concerning male headship in the church in 1 Timothy 2-3, where he says the “mystery of godliness” is to be manifested in the church, and “the mystery of godliness: God manifested in the flesh” embraces the headship/submission principle inherent in the Trinity.

The apostle Paul uses the creation headship principle of Genesis 2 to affirm male headship in the home and the church (1 Cor 11:8-9; 1 Tim 2:13-14). In 1 Corinthians 11:3 he establishes the principle of headship/submission and correlates headship in the Trinity with male headship in the church (11:3-16). The headship of Christ and the headship of God the Father form the pattern for the headship of the husband-wife (in the home) and man-woman (in the church). Just as there is no reciprocity in headship relations in the Trinity, there is no reciprocity for headship relations in the home and the church. Mutual submission with respect to authority is outside of the headship relation. Headship is a metaphor for designated authority. Paul provides preliminary justification for male headship with his declaration that “man was for the glory of God” and “woman for the glory of man.” His concluding justification is based on the Genesis 2 record—the priority of the creation of Adam (“from man,” 11:8), and Eve was created “for man” (11:9). Man was created for God; woman was created for man.

In 1 Timothy 2-3, the priority of the creation of Adam is the basis for the teaching and governing authority of certain men in the church and for men to serve as elders in the church. Paul concludes his teaching on the proper conduct of men and women in the church with the enigmatic statement that the mystery of godliness should be manifested in the church. What is the mystery of godliness? God was manifested in the flesh. The incarnation of the Son of God was not a temporary display of the principle of headship and submission in the Godhead but a principle existing from before the beginning of creation. For Paul, creation headship and male headship in the home and church are integrally related to the mystery of godliness, which describes the very nature and character of the Godhead and the relationship among the persons of the Trinity.

The order of the whole universe is essentially a fabric of loving relationships, structured by authority and voluntary submission. This is evident not only in the nature of the Godhead,
but also in the nature of created beings. More could have been said in terms of how evil originated through the attempt to thwart the structure of authority established by God. We have demonstrated evidence for both order and headship and submission among the angels. Moreover, the biblical evidence clearly supports the principle of headship and submission within the Godhead from before the beginning of creation which includes not only Christ’s incarnate earthly redemptive act, but includes also eternity past before the foundation of the world, and also eternity future where Christ will be subject to the Father (1 Cor 15:28).

Eternal equality of being and a functional relation of headship and submission exist among the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Equality of being and functional role differentiation constitute the image of God in which man was created—male and female.

Finally, objections to the biblical principle of headship and submission have been shown to be without biblical foundation. Mutual submission is excluded since non-reciprocal relationships are demanded by the headship principle. There is no headship reciprocity among the Trinity. Galatians 3:28 does not qualify as a “canon within the canon” to support the appointment of women in the office of elders/ministers with governing and teaching authority in the church. The same argument applies to the “priesthood of all believers” (1 Peter 2:9, 10), where the appointment of all believers includes ministering praise to God and good news to the world, “offer[ing] up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God.” Although Deborah, Huldah, Miriam, Phoebe, Junia(s), and Priscilla functioned as faithful servants of God, performing extremely valuable service, none of them possessed any teaching or governing authority in the church. Teaching and governing authority is granted only to the elder/minister (1 Tim 3:2, 5; 5:17; Titus 1:9; also Acts 20:17, 28).

X. Conclusion

The principle of headship and submission, equivalently called authority and submission, is firmly rooted in Scripture and runs as unifying golden thread from Genesis to Revelation. The headship of the 12 Patriarchs and 12 Apostles is self-evident in the Old and New Testaments respectively, and the male headship principle is confirmed in Revelation 21 with the names of the 12 Patriarchs on the gates and the names of the 12 Apostles on the foundations of New
Jerusalem. The biblical principle of headship and submission among angels and within the
Godhead is the foundational basis that undergirds the teaching of male headship in the home
and in the church and is the basis for the appointment (ordination) of men in biblical headship
roles as local elders or the conference-employed elders/ministers\textsuperscript{234} with governing and
teaching authority in the church. With the exception of the roles of elder/minister and local
elder, women may be appointed to other ministry roles in the church.

A. Fatal Implications of Rejecting the Headship Principle

Jesus states the paradox of equality of being and functional submission: “My Father and
I are one” (John 10:30) and “My Father is greater than I” (John 14: 28). In addition to equality
of being in the Trinity, we also see evidence for authority/submission roles with the Godhead.
Consequently, if male and female are made in the image of God, we can be certain they would
reflect the authority and submission roles operative within the Godhead. “\textit{Human beings were
a new and distinct order. They were made ‘in the image of God.’\textsuperscript{235} “God created man a
superior being; he alone is formed in the image of God.’\textsuperscript{236} Inherent in the image of God is the
principle of headship and submission. And “God created man in His own image; in the image of
God He created him.”

The fundamental assumption of those advocating the ordination of women in the role
of elder/minister is that the principle of headship and submission was not divinely ordained at
creation and was non-existent until after the Fall. This assumption has been shown to be
without biblical foundation. Therefore, moving forward with the ordination of women both as
local elders and as elders/ministers\textsuperscript{237} would be a rejection of the creation headship principle
which in turn would be equivalent to the rejection of the restoration of the image of God in
man.

Since the purpose of the plan of redemption is to restore the image of God in fallen
human beings, any rejection of the restoration of the image of God, which includes the creation
headship principle and its restoration in the home and the church, would be unthinkable. First,

\textsuperscript{234} See above, note 8.
\textsuperscript{235} White, \textit{Review and Herald}, February 11, 1902, emphasis added.
\textsuperscript{236} Ibid., April 21, 1885, emphasis added.
\textsuperscript{237} See above, note 8.
it is tantamount to the rejection of the very nature of God, and second, it is a virtual
repudiation and rejection of the gospel itself, the purpose of which is to restore the image of
God in man. Continuing down this path will only lead to a misrepresentation of the character of
God to the world by the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the consequential hindering of the
ultimate purpose of the gospel and the delaying of the coming of Christ.

Moving forward with the ordination of women as elders/ministers and local elders
would constitute a reversal of divinely ordained roles of men and women in the home and the
church. This in turn would constitute a rejection of the mystery of godliness, the very nature of
God and the image of God. Since the purpose of the gospel is the restoration of the image of
God, all attempts at reversing the roles of men and women in the church would result in a
rejection of the gospel itself. The consequences are serious and demand a decision to return to
the Bible as our only authority and a decision at the 2015 General Conference Session not to
ordain women as pastors/elders and reversing the unauthorized decision of the 1975 Spring
Council to ordain women as local elders. That decision belongs solely to the General Conference
in session.

B. Hermeneutics—the Pivotal Issue

Hermeneutics (methods of interpreting the Bible) lie at the heart of the theology of
ordination issue. This paper has followed the historical-grammatical method of interpreting
Scripture which relies on “the plain meaning of Scripture,” accepting the Bible “just as it
reads.” This approach is endorsed by the “Methods of Bible Study” Document (MBSD),
which has been taken as the fundamental exposition of Seventh-day Adventist hermeneutical
method to be used in the study of the theology of ordination.

238 “Let the Bible explain its own statements. Accept it just as it reads, without twisting the words to suit human
ideas.” Loma Linda Messages, 55. “All who exalt their own opinions above divine revelation, all who would change
the plain meaning of Scripture to suit their own convenience, or for the sake of conforming to the world, are
taking upon themselves a fearful responsibility.” GC 268. “When those who profess to believe present truth come
to their senses, when they accept the Word of the living God just as it reads and do not try to wrest the Scriptures,
then they will build their house upon the eternal Rock, even Christ Jesus.” 21 MR 346. Emphasis added.
239 “Methods of Bible Study” [MBSD], a statement voted by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
Executive Committee at the Annual Council in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 12 October 1986, available from
pages 241ff, accessed 12-1-2013. The preamble to the MBSD makes very clear that the use of the historical-critical
method of Bible study, which “de-emphasizes the divine element in the Bible as an inspired book (including its
resultant unity)” and “minimizes the need for faith in God and obedience to His commandments,” is to be rejected.
Adventist Bible scholars who favor the ordination of women have adopted a two-pronged hermeneutical approach—the MBSD approach to many portions of Scripture, but for troublesome or uncomfortable texts dealing with women in ministry they employ a special, flexible hermeneutic they call a “principle-based, contextual, linguistic and historical-cultural” reading strategy which is at the heart of their biblical approach for certain texts.240

“Fundamental to this approach is its recognition that the text is semantically independent of the intention of its author. The text is primarily seen as a construct, insofar as meaning is taken to reside in the encounter or interchange between text and reader. Meaning thus emerges as an outcome of interplay between text and reader, both of which are culturally and historically conditioned.”241 The principle for Adventist egalitarians is found in the key message of Galatians 3:28, “a canon within the canon,” which says that in Christ there is “neither male and female.” “The key principle for them is restoration in Christ which needs to be taken into account when handling the specific texts regarding church organization.”242

For Adventist favor the ordination of women, the text determines which hermeneutic to employ—a plain reading of Scripture or the “principle-based” method. Adventist egalitarians, who selectively choose when to employ the “principle-based hermeneutic,” see “biblical inspiration as a mediated process in which God imparts information that is then ‘contaminated’ by the social, cultural, historical and language context of the human author. In its nature, Scripture, while containing the divine message, also contains human baggage. For this reason, a plain reading of Scripture could potentially be misleading.”243 This method of interpretation could just as easily be employed to justify new interpretations regarding gender-orientation issues, Sunday sacredness, and the immortality of the soul and should be soundly rejected by the world church in General Conference Session.

241 Ibid., 28.
243 Ibid.
There is sufficient evidence to suggest that the flexible, “principle-based” hermeneutic is
distantly related to a modified form of literary criticism (a hermeneutic) called
“deconstruction”\(^{244}\) fathered by German philosopher Martin Heidegger\(^{245}\) and fully developed
multiple meanings to a text or passage with no true meaning possible,\(^{246}\) recontextualization of
the text, and rejection of all authority and hierarchy. Literary criticism as found in
*Deconstruction* gives the reader the authority over the text. The Bible no longer has authority
over the interpreter; the interpreter has authority over the text. A.K.M. Adam’s, *What Is
Postmodern Biblical Criticism*, sets forth a concise summary of the hermeneutic of
Deconstruction.\(^{247}\)

Heidegger’s and Derrida’s philosophy of “deconstruction” infiltrated the feminist
movement\(^{248}\) and has been adopted by feminist theologians.\(^{249}\) It is significant to note that the
hermeneutic of deconstruction for Bible interpretation has also been embraced and adopted by
leaders of the Emergent Church Movement,\(^{250}\) Brian McLaren and Leonard Sweet.

A quasi-feminist hermeneutic employing limited biblical authority is a radical departure
from the methods of interpretation employed by the Reformers and our Adventist pioneers.

Allowing culture, literary criticism, rhetorical criticism, or inter-textual criticism to supersede a

\(^{244}\) See above, note 3.


\(^{246}\) A definition of “deconstruction” is found in the American Heritage Dictionary: “A philosophical movement and theory of literary criticism that questions traditional assumptions about certainty, identity, and truth; asserts that words can only refer to other words; and attempts to demonstrate how statements about any text subvert their own meanings: ‘In deconstruction, the critic claims there is no meaning to be found in the actual text, but only in the various, often mutually irreconcilable, ‘virtual texts’ constructed by readers in their search for meaning’” (Rebecca Goldstein). [http://www.answers.com/topic/deconstruction#ixzz2mXGvsxSn](http://www.answers.com/topic/deconstruction#ixzz2mXGvsxSn). accessed 12-4-2013.


\(^{249}\) For “deconstruction” in the feminist theology see: [http://books.google.com/books/about/Deconstruction_Feminist_Theology_and_the.html?id=nhfJHq_RHZkC](http://books.google.com/books/about/Deconstruction_Feminist_Theology_and_the.html?id=nhfJHq_RHZkC). accessed 12-4-2013.

plain reading of Scripture, and not permitting Scripture to interpret itself has led to our current quandary. Our only safeguard is in returning to the principle of *sola scriptura*.

But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority—-not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain "Thus saith the Lord" in its support.²⁵¹

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