



*Women  
In  
Ministry*

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Scriptures are taken from the Interlinear Greek-English (KJV)  
or the KJV 2000. All Scripture is shown in ***bold and italicised***  
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## On The Subject of Women in Ministry

The following information is available to those wishing to understand what the scriptures say on the issue of women in ministry. It is a response to a paper '*On The Subject of Women in Ministry*' delivered by the Church of Christ at Burleigh Heads, Queensland, Australia. The paper issued by them stated that it '*reflected the Queensland Churches of Christ in Queensland and... nationally*'.

The paper represents similar views increasingly being adopted by the Baptist Union and other affiliations.

I have quoted from sections in the paper in *italics* and then commented on each statement in **bold** and brackets.

(Appendix Page 25) '*The church must be considered an organism that should be in a state of growth, and not stagnating in tradition*'.

[**The church should be aiming for growth of its members in *spiritual* terms and in evangelism to the unsaved, etc. But what is meant here by '*stagnating in tradition*'? Certainly we must not allow *unbiblical* traditions to encroach on our forms of worship and service. However, if '*traditions*' are biblical and apostolic then they do not need to 'stagnate' since they are based on the word of God itself which is full of *life*. Is the 'tradition' of male leadership and male preaching a tradition that can 'stagnate' if it is based upon the word of God? Far too many churches today are using such arguments of '*stagnating in tradition*' to be an excuse to do away with apostolic traditions that were and are from '*the faith once delivered to the saints*' (Jude 3) and continued to be historical Christianity for more than 1800 years until the advent of *liberal* theology. This argument concerning 'traditions' is also too often used as a 'strawman' to diverge from the real issue: *Is male only leadership and teaching, biblical?*]**

(Page 25) *'Lets get united, and support any man or woman who loves the Lord to fulfil the great commission'.*

[Are we not already united in *'one faith, one baptism...'* (Eph.4:5)? However, it is granted that unity can be threatened in a variety of ways. One of those ways is to introduce false teaching or to question the *order* and *functions* of man and woman as established in scripture from the book of Genesis and throughout the Bible. Unity is not gained by introducing new teaching or by wrangling over texts that have until the *20th century* been clearly understood in a *unity* of evangelical thought!]

(Page 26) *'There are other instances where Jesus demonstrated his unbiased regard to sex. After all, the word tells us there is no male or female in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28) - AMEN'.*

[Galatians 3:26-28 says: *'For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus'.*

This verse says:

1. Christians are *'one'* and there is no bias or preference in race (*'Jew or Greek'*), class (*'bond or free'*) or sex (*'male or female'*).

The passage is about *salvation*, not offices, authority, or functions in the church! This has been the generally accepted understanding of the verse down the running centuries until the 20th century. *The context is about salvation, being one in Christ and all being baptised into the one body of Christ.* It is not at all about women's roles in churches or their possible offices!

It is a misuse of scripture to apply this to women holding offices of authority or of teaching within the church and it shows either a lack of understanding of basic interpretation of scripture or an utter disregard for the context of the passage! If Galatians 3:28 teaches that the differences in *authority* and *functions* of male and female are abolished, then how could anyone likewise say that homosexual marriages are wrong?]

(Page 26) *‘There is no ground for division in the church. Problems that can potentially lead to division must be dealt with quickly. The church needs to be fast and bold to correct, because division is like a cancer. We cannot allow it to create disunity and confusion ... those who create division must be disciplined and dealt with quickly’.*

**[The Apostles constantly exhorted the elders to ‘contend’ against false teaching. *False teaching creates division. There was no division in the area of women in ministry until arguably the 19th and especially the 20th century, when Holiness and Pentecostal/Charismatic groups added new doctrines to orthodox evangelical beliefs. In fact the history will show that women in offices of ministry were exceptions, a *minority* rather than a larger movement as it affects the church today. From the earliest days of the apostolic church most orthodox Christians accepted male leadership and did not accept women in offices of ministry.***

**The women’s liberation movements *in the world* has had a profound effect on this issue. The modern church is now simply reflecting the culture of our day. But still this controversy is really a late invention! Major denominations did not approve women ordination until 1956 and that was due to the influence of *liberal theology*. Research will show that it is really not until the 60’s and 70’s that women in ministry became a more widespread controversial issue and yet it still was consistently rejected and resisted.**

**The seat of the ‘*division*’ is not caused by those wanting to remain with the apostolic traditions as they were in the ‘faith once delivered’ (Jude 3); but rather by those who want to change the order of Biblical headship in the church! So, who is creating ‘*division*’ here? And who ‘*needs to be fast and bold to correct*’?]**

(Page 27) *‘We must put aside disagreements and even personal preferences for the sake of unity’.*

**[If the disagreements are to do with fundamental doctrines such as *headship* (taught from Genesis), do we ‘*put aside*’ such? Do we keep unity *at the expense of truth and sound doctrine* unchanged for nearly 1,800 years?]**

(Page 28) *'Increasingly secular thinkers attack Christianity as against women and thus irrelevant to the modern world'*.

**[This is nothing new. The world has always been against the church. The modern world has increasingly shifted in its idea of headship in the family and has capitulated and mirrored this. But why should we cater for the thinking of the world? Do we bow to the culture of the day when scripture conflicts with that culture? The relationship of man and women and the creation order thereof is not variable or reversible according to culture.**

**John 15 tells us clearly that the world will '*hate*' the church! Why should this argument of what the world thinks ever be brought into an argument that rests entirely on clear scripture?]**

(Page 28) *'The Assemblies of God and other denominations birthed in the Holiness and Pentecostal revivals affirmed women in ministry... two thirds of all missionaries were women. The 19th century women's movement fought for women's right to vote ... and the abolition of slavery ... For Bible believing Christians, however, mere precedent from church history cannot settle a question; we must establish our case from scripture ... '*

**[Then why raise such '*history*'? Our authority must be what the Bible teaches, not what a *minority* of women have done in the past. (The trend to ordain women in positions in ministry never became a thorny issue until the advent of *liberal theology* in the 2nd half of the 20th Century. For 1800 years there was widespread opposition to '*ordaining*' women!). And why raise the Pentecostal movement that was considered unorthodox and heretical at the time? Further, why raise history that is also purely *secular*? What has secular '*women's right to vote*' got to do with women in ministry?**

**Likewise, the existence of '*slavery*' is not rooted in any creation ordinance - *which is the very reason why Paul forbids women to teach or usurp authority* in 1Timothy 2! The New Testament never commands or forbids slavery. Slavery did not**

exist in the creation, but the headship and the order of men and women and the authority therein was existent. The eventual abolition of slavery did not nullify any biblical teaching; but the new allowance of women in roles of authority does disregard several texts of God's word. The issue of 'slavery' is a 'strawman' and such secular arguments only cloud the real issue. And any oppression of women in the *secular* world does not justify a change in what scripture teaches.]

(Page 29) *'Deborah was not only a prophetess but a judge (Judges 4:4). She held the place of greatest authority in her day ...'*

[These 'exception' arguments from the Old Testament must be interpreted by the *clear* in the New Testament. Sound interpretation never interprets the clear in the New Testament with the unclear or the 'exceptions' in the Old.

Deborah was more of a 'prophet' than anything else and nowhere is it written that she ever prophesied or taught in public. Her prophetic role was limited to private or individual instruction, (Jdg.4:5). She deferred to men when in battle although it is obvious that Barak was a weak leader. Many fail to see that the Bible views Deborah's judgeship as a rebuke against the weak or absence of male leadership (eg. Judges 4:9).

Deborah is also not mentioned in the line up of heroes in Hebrews 11, but Barak is.

We must be careful in drawing conclusions about women leadership from the book of Judges when it has examples of things *not* to imitate - such as Samson's marriage to a Philistine woman (14:1-4); his visiting a prostitute (16:1); Jephthah's foolish vow (11:30-31; 34-39); and the wrong doing of the men of Benjamin at Shiloh (21:19-23), etc.

Such isolated references of women such as Deborah should not make a rule *when there is clear teaching in NT as to women in ministry!* I Timothy 3 is clear that elders/pastors are to be male - '*the husband of one wife*', not 'the wife of one husband'! Other scriptures are also clear that a woman is not to 'teach' or 'usurp authority over a man', (1Tim.2). The weight of evidence in the New testament interprets any seeming 'exceptions' in the Old.]

(Page 29) *'Jesus allowed women to join his ranks (Mark 15:40,41; Luke 8:1-3)'*.

[These scriptures say *nothing* about women being elders, women preaching or women in ministry'. They simply say women served: *'There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; (Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him;)* and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem', (Mk.15:40,41). *'Ministering unto him'* is not preaching, teaching or eldering! The *'ministering'* here refers to *waiting* upon someone and *servicing* them. There is *nothing* in these scriptures that can be used for any argument that women can hold offices of ministry or teach.]

(Page 29) *'He allowed a woman who wished to hear his teaching 'sit at his feet' (Luke 10:39)'*.

[Again, there is *nothing* in this scripture that can be used for any argument that women can hold offices of ministry or teach men. Luke 10:39 shows a *learning* situation, not a teaching one! Mary simply sat at Jesus feet and *'heard his word'*! What argument is there in this for women teaching men or women in offices of ministry?]

(Page 29) *'The gospels unanimously report that God chose women as the first witnesses of the resurrection. ...'*

[These women were simply witnesses of the resurrection and they simply reported the event to the disciples. *There is no public preaching or teaching or usurping authority here!* They went to a private home and reported events. There is no prohibition against women preaching the gospel or to be involved in evangelism where it does not involve publicly teaching men or usurping authority over them. Scripture encourages men and women to talk to each other about the Gospel, (Acts 18:26).



These women who were the *'first witnesses of the resurrection'* simply did not have any offices of ministry when they reported this historic event. It simply does not follow that because women ran to tell the disciples that Jesus was risen that Jesus would oppose His own laws of headship and Paul's limitation of leadership to men]

(Page 30) *'Many of the apostles co-labourers in the gospel, were women'*.

[No scripture is given here. Obviously there were women who accompanied the apostles on their journeys and *ministered to the apostles*. They held no offices of leadership and did not teach. They simply *served* or ministered to the apostles. The scriptures are plentiful with women ministering to men in this fashion of serving, (Matt.8:15; Mk.15:41; Lk.8:3). Philippians 4:2,3 mentions Paul's co-workers or 'fellow labourers'. The Greek word is *'sunergos'* and it does not mean equal authority or that these people had any teaching authority.]

(Page 30) *'Phoebe was a servant of the church at Cenchrea. 'Servant' may refer to a deacon. ...'*

[Again, *nothing* is said here of Phoebe teaching or holding any office in the church. The best translations here have *'servant'*. Phoebe was a 'servant' in the church as we *all* should be. 'Servant' here does not refer to the *office* of a deacon. The office of a deacon is clearly male in 1Tim.3. The Greek word for servant here, *'diakonos'* (29 times in NT), has a *wide* usage including the concept of *servicing* or *ministering* for both men and women. The same word is used for a variety of serving functions such as serving meals, (Martha: Lk.10:40). A review of this word in the New Testament will show clearly that it cannot be used for the office of a deacon excepting the passages where the qualifications for the office of a deacon are obviously mentioned, (1Tim.3).

Everyone is supposed to be doing the work of ‘deaconing’ but not everyone has the *office* of a deacon. Paul never refers to women deacons as an office. Interestingly, he does refer to deacon’s ‘*wives*’, yet does not qualify that with the word ‘deacons’ for them. *Women are never found to be holding ordained offices*]

(Page 31) ‘Elsewhere we learn that she [Priscilla] and her husband taught scriptures to another minister, Apollos (Acts 18:26)’.

[In Acts 18:6 ‘*Aquila and Priscilla*’ took Apollos aside and ‘*expounded*’ a better way. The word ‘*ektithemi*’ means to *explain* and this does not have to include teaching or taking any authority over a man. It was not public preaching/teaching by Priscilla and there is no evidence that Priscilla was ‘*usurping authority over*’ Aquila or Apollos. This is simply a case of the wife being *with* the husband. Again, *no office of ministry or teaching or authority is ever implied here.*]

(Page 31) ‘Paul listed two fellow apostles, Andronicus and Junia (Rom. 16:7).... Paul could have here referred to a female apostle. . .’.

[There is no real evidence that Junia was female. Masculine names ending in ‘*as*’ are not unusual in the New Testament. (Andrew - Andreas, Matt.10:12; Elijah - Elias, Matt.11:14; Zacharias, Lk.1:5, etc). Names ending in ‘*as*’ are often contracted forms for clearly masculine forms. For example, Silas (Acts 15:22) is short for Silvanus (1Thess1:1; 1Pet.5:12). The ending of the Greek word for ‘Junia’ does not definitely tells us whether it is male or female.

Some later church fathers may have been undecided as to Junia. One single quote by the church father, Chrysostom (347-407), is often used to prove Junia was a female. However, what is not shown by those who use his one quote is that Chrysostom was against women teaching men in public. It must also be recognised that the word ‘*apostle*’ in Greek (‘*apostolos*’) literally means ‘sent one’ and is used in a wide context of meaning,

including that of ‘messenger’, (eg. Epaphroditus as a ‘messenger’ in Phil.2:25; and other ‘messengers’ in 2Cor.8:23).

The extent of church fathers who considered Junia to be male is extensive. One has to question the honesty and integrity of those who would single out one quote from a Church father hundreds of years later against a massive amount of quotes to the opposite! Epiphanius (AD315-403), bishop of Salamis in Cyprus, wrote: *‘Iounias [Junia] of whom Paul makes mention, became bishop of Apameia of Syria’*. (1) In Greek, the phrase ‘*of whom*’ is a masculine relative pronoun (‘*hou*’) and shows that Epiphanius thought Junia was a man. Origen (who died AD 252), in the earliest Latin commentary on Romans, also wrote of Junia as a male. Added to this is the *unanimous* and numerous quotes by church fathers who teach that women cannot hold offices of pastoring, eldering or teaching men in public.

Jesus did not select a single female apostle. He did not choose 6 women and 6 men. All 12 of the apostles chosen by Jesus were male. When Peter speaks of a replacement apostle for Judas he says it had to be one ‘*of these men who have companied with us*’, (Acts 1:21). The term for ‘*men*’ here is ‘*aner*’ - a *male* human being.

The book of Revelation also states clearly that the 12 apostles will have their names on the walls of the city of the New Jerusalem.]

(Page 31) *‘Paul’s women colleagues in this region [Philippi] may have moved more quickly into prominent offices in the church (cf Acts 16:4,15)’*.

[‘*may have*’ ?... This is pure supposition and an argument from silence. There are simply no mention of women in ministerial offices.]

(1) *‘An Index of Apostles’, (125.19-20)*

(Page 31) *‘Those who complain that Paul did not specifically mention women pastors by name miss the point. Paul rarely mentioned any men pastors by name either’.*

**[This is a ‘strawman’ argument because Paul does not mention ‘pastors’ in *any* church! Those in this office were not called ‘pastors’ but ‘elders’ or ‘overseers’. The only time ‘pastor’ is mentioned for a Christian minister is *once* in Ephesians 4:11 and it is not the office but a *gifting* to the church. Nowhere else is ‘pastor’ mentioned except for Jesus Christ himself! This is a diversionary argument that has nothing to do with the issue of women in ministry.]**

(Page 31) *‘Paul commended them [women] and included commendations to women apostles and prophets, the offices of the highest authority in the church’.*

**[No scripture is given here - the reason is because there is none! There is no mention of the continuing office of prophets in the New Testament. Also, prophecy differs substantially from teaching. Prophecy is spontaneous revelation (1Cor.14:29-33), while teaching is exposition of received revelation and very often has doctrinal content.**

**A prophet delivers the message but has no authority of their own but to speak God’s word. It is separate to teaching - which includes explaining, correcting and has a doctrinal element.**

**Women prophets never prophesied publicly. This understanding is attested to by the church fathers. Tertullian (160-220) taught that women could prophesy but not teach and that they must be under obedience. (2) He also wrote *‘It is not permitted to a women to speak in the church; but neither [is it permitted] to teach, nor to baptise’.* (3)**

**It should also be noted that Prophets and Priests in the Old Testament were different roles. The Old Testament women who**

prophesied were never priests. No women were priests. This is not to deny that women may have the gift of teaching. But that gift has a function and order as Paul commands clearly in several places. No doubt some women did prophesy which simply means literally they ‘spoke forth the word of God’. But there is no mention that they held any *offices* or that they taught men, pastored, or held any office of leadership with authority.]

(Page 32) *‘Paul seemed to oppose women in ministry. ...’*

[At face value and taking scripture objectively this is the only conclusion one can come to! Paul *‘forbids’* women to *‘teach’* in public and to *‘usurp authority over a man’* (1Tim.2:12). He also elsewhere lays down the qualifications of an elder/pastor clearly as being the *‘husband of one wife’*, (1Tim.3; Tit.1). No amount of semantic gymnastics, strawman arguments or arguments from silence can change Paul’s words. The word translated ‘elders’ in Tit.1 is not feminine (*‘presbytera’*) but is masculine *‘presbyteros’*. And clearly that passage is speaking of a male. The Greek word used here is a word always used for older *men*, (eg. Lk.1:18 *‘old man’*; Philemon 9 *‘the aged’*)]

(Page 32) *‘Women specifically covered their heads to prevent men other than their husbands from lusting after their hair’.*

[This is pure conjecture and certainly not the primary issue. The primary issue being taught in 1Corinthians 11 is *headship!* The covering of the head had nothing to do with ‘lusting’ but was part of headship principles rooted in Genesis, as the verses following in 1Corinthians 11 and 1Timothy 2 explain clearly.]

(2) Tertulian, *‘Against Marcion,’* (5.8.11)

(3) Tertulian, *‘On the Veiling of Virgins’*, (9.1)

(Page 33) ‘Because Paul, in some cases, advocated women’s ministry’

**[The issue is not that women can or cannot be involved in ‘ministry’. No one would deny that women can be involved in ministries too numerous to mention within a church. What is so often forgotten in this debate is that there are numerous roles women can be involved in, in church life. In fact the positions for women to fill in church ministries far outnumber the very few positions that the Bible says are the role of a male only!]**

**The issue is whether women can publicly teach men and have authority over them and therefore take roles such as offices of elder, pastor, etc.**

**The primary scriptures that teach against women in such ministries have up to this point of the paper not even been touched.]**

(Page 33) ‘Two passages in Paul’s writings at first seem to contradict the progressive ones. Keep in mind that these are the only two passages in the Bible that could remotely be construed as contradicting Paul’s endorsement of women in ministry’.

**[The ‘two passages’ are actually not ‘remotely contradicting’ the ‘progressive’ view but rather abruptly so! They are direct and unequivocal. And what does ‘progressive’ mean - is this not just another word for what was once described as ‘liberal’ only a few decades ago? So far not one of the ‘progressive’ verses used in this paper have even remotely taught that women can teach or have any authority in leadership!]**

**The paper later states: ‘The only passage in the entire Bible that could directly cite against women teaching the Bible is 1Tim.2:11-15’. However, there are several other passages that the paper does not deal with, such as the qualifications for an elder/overseer in 1Timothy 3 and Titus 1 which more than directly cite against women holding offices in church. 1Tim.3 and Tit.1 clearly teach the office of elder/pastor/overseer is a**

*male. It is ‘the husband [‘aner’] of one wife...One that rules well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)’.* The context here concerns a male. The Greek word for ‘man’ is ‘aner’, not the more general word for mankind ‘anthropos’ which would include male or female. The word ‘rule’ here also refers again to headship and the order in creation: ‘One that rules well his own house’. Since when does the Bible say a woman fulfils this role of ‘ruling his own house’? The Greek and English is absolutely unbending on this. It is a *mans role* here whether we like it or not!]

(Page 35) *‘In any case, here [1Tim.2:1-15] Paul forbade women to ‘teach’, something he apparently allowed elsewhere (Rom.16; Phil.4:2,3)’.*

**[Romans 16 and Philippians 4 simply do *not* have any women ‘teaching’! This is clearly a misuse of scripture here and I urge the reader to read these scriptures for themselves. Nowhere has the paper proved that Paul allowed women to teach men. And neither has the paper beforehand stated that women were teaching in these same scriptures used. *The Bible has not one single example of any women teaching in public to an assembled group of believers!*]**

(Page 35) *‘Women were the most susceptible to false teaching only because they had been granted the least education.... so Paul provided a short term solution: ‘Do not teach’ (under the present circumstances); and a long range solution: ‘Let them learn’ (1Tim.2:11)’.*

**[This has several errors. Women were simply not ‘susceptible to false teaching’ because of their ‘lack of education’ and *Paul never uses this argument!* There is considerable evidence that many women received literary skills in that era. The Greek, Roman and Jewish cultures testify to this. Both man and women could read and write. Priscilla herself proves this fact (Acts 18:26).**

It must also be remembered that Jesus clearly chose men in the beginning who were relatively ‘less educated’! The reason for women not teaching was therefore obviously not due to ‘uneducated’ women, but was based on the *creation order* as Paul teaches in several passages.

It is also of interest to note that in the passages that speak of false teachers at Ephesus, the false teachers are men, not women, (1Tim.1:19,20; 2Tim.2:17,18; Acts 20:30).

If women were intellectually inferior Paul arguably would not allow them to teach other women and children. But women knew the scriptures as well as the men, heard the same sermons, were taught by their men, etc. The papyri show literacy among Greek women and the ability to read and write. And it is a ridiculous notion to assume that because they were ‘less educated’ they would not *discern* ‘false teaching’. This is and was a gift of the Holy Spirit, not given because of ‘education’.

And since when is something in scripture only a ‘*short term*’ command and the next phrase a ‘*long range*’ one? This is nothing short of ‘picking and choosing’ the word of God for ones own ‘progressive’ theology. It will not stand up to any sincere or established method of interpretation. The passage is in the present tense. If this passage is ‘temporary’ then what do we do with 1Timothy 2:1 ‘*I urge that supplications...*’; and Romans 12:1 ‘*I appeal to you...*’? If we make such passages ‘temporary’ then there will be a large number of passages in the NT to ignore. This would open up an unnecessary question mark over many commands in the Bible. It diminishes the authority of scripture itself. Paul’s command to Timothy in 1Timothy 2:12 is one from an apostle who is accredited and sent by God. It is part of ‘*all scripture*’ which is ‘*given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness...*’, (2Tim.3:16).

In 1Timothy 2:12 Paul uses the word ‘*suffer*’ (‘*epitrépo*’) as an exercise of his apostolic authority. It does not mean anything ‘temporary’ or ‘short term’. The proof of this is in the verses following (vs.13,14) where the headship of Genesis is referred to - and this *from Genesis* is not ‘short term’ but universal! Paul’s



instruction is not based on women being ‘less educated’ but rather based on the *creation* and the Fall.

‘*To teach*’ (‘*didaskein*’) in the Jewish rabbinical context of the New Testament church carried with it an *authority*. This is also supported by the connection of the term with the function of an elder/pastor/overseer in 1 and 2 Timothy. The Greek word and its cognates denote transmission of apostolic tradition and authoritative proclamations. They are not to be split into what is ‘temporary’ or ‘long term’. The passage (1Tim.2:12-15) has in fact a complete absence of temporary or cultural references. It rather clearly teaches a transcultural and theological concept *based on Genesis!*

The basic instruction in 1Tim.2 is that women *learn*; that they *not teach the men* and that they be *in submission* in a quiet manner and *not exercise authority*. The ‘teaching’ referred to here in this passage is not allowed because it would be exercising oversight and thus would violate the principle of submission. Also the command concerning women not to teach men is enforced by the word ‘silence’ as an opposition to teaching. The context here is clear.

The command ‘*let the woman learn...with all submission*’ is not just to husbands and wives but to all women and men. The word ‘*gune*’ (women) and ‘*aner*’ (male human being) are used in a general sense. If Paul wanted to confine himself to husbands and wives only he would have used a definite article or a possessive pronoun as he does elsewhere, (eg.Eph.5:22).]

(Page 37) ‘*Paul spoke only of the husband as head of his wife, not the male gender as head of the female gender*’.

[The Greek ‘*gune*’ does not distinguish between ‘woman’ and ‘wife’. The interpretation is determined by the context. 1Corinthians 11 is obviously referring to wives. 1Timothy 2:12 is not necessarily referring to wives only as most good translations show. If one inserts ‘husband’ or wife’ into the entire passage (including the previous verses on ‘modesty’), it will be obvious that the context is not just to husbands and wives. The passages

in the New Testament where ‘husband’ is meant are clearly discernable *by the context*. But all this misses the real issue and the clear command - a women cannot ‘teach’ or ‘usurp authority’ over a man.]

(Page 37) ‘Today we should affirm those who God calls whether male or female...’.

[If a sexual pervert is ‘called’ to a children’s ministry, do we ‘affirm’ them? Do we break the word of God and Paul’s commands so as to be positive and ‘affirm’ such? Anyone can say they are ‘called’, but how is this to be tested? 1Corinthians 14 tells us clearly that gifts can be misused. The Word of God must be the final arbitrator and it carefully says that the offices of elder/Pastor is male (1Tim.3; Tit.1); and that women are not to publicly teach men or usurp authority over them, (1Tim.2:12-15). As well as this there is an overwhelming *silence* as to any women teaching or holding authoritative offices! If any ‘calling’ breaks God’s word then it is not a true ‘calling’. Do we ‘affirm’ false prophets and false teachers who would say they are ‘called’?

Scriptural gifts are not only given by God but *they are regulated by the scriptures.*]

### Final Thoughts

This paper is indicative of the current misuse of scripture and poor ‘apologetics’ on this issue. It is full of scriptures that do not say what the paper is attempting to teach. *It is full of teaching that argues from the silence of scripture or scriptures that do not teach what is affirmed.* Why put emphasis on things that Paul did not say in preference to what he did say!

The principle of interpretation in the paper has been to use out of context scriptures to suit a bias; and twist or ignore others that are clear. Much of what is documented as evidence is in fact ‘strawmen’ arguments or assumptions. Nowhere does the paper clearly demonstrate that headship and submission are now abrogated.

What is most importantly missing too is the *headship* issue, which is dealt with in verses 13,14 *following* 1Tim.2:12. The paper simply does not deal with these verses. In 1Timothy 2:12 the rule of *'I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man'* is because of two reasons given in the following verses: (A) Vs.13: The original *creation* - *'Adam was first formed, then Eve'* (B) Vs.14: The original order of *sin* (Adam was not deceived by Satan as was the woman. The women took the lead in sin). These following verses are simply left unattended to throughout the paper.

Paul's convictions for male leadership are heavily rooted in the *headship* issue. The whole debate is rooted in Genesis 1-3 and *any argument for women in ministry must deal with this issue!* Paul uses the fact that *'Adam was formed first'* (1Tim.2:13) to reason for men and women having *different roles*. This fact is missed by most who argue for women in ministry positions with authority over men. It was Adam who is named as representing the whole human race, not Adam and Eve.

It is not just the Old Testament that addresses this headship issue. The New Testament also teaches Christ as the head, then man, then woman: *'But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God'*, (1Cor.11:3). The order has not been changed from Genesis. As long as men and women are descended from Adam and Eve, this will not change. Eve was made for Adam and after him; not the reverse, and not at the same time as Adam. There is *order* here. This order is played out in many scriptures such as Colossians 3:18-19: *'Wives submit yourselves unto to your own husbands...husbands love your wives...'*; and Ephesians 5:23 *'the husband is the head of the wife...'*. God said this creation with its order was *'very good'*! The relationships were never to be reversed. What authority do we have to change this?

Israel was troubled by this issue in their history of decline: *'Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands*

*shall be given him. 12 As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead you cause you to err, and destroy the way of my paths’, (Is.3:11).*

**God’s word is unbending on this issue. Those who ignore or twist Paul’s commands for male leadership and authority do despite to the creation order as well as nullify the authority of the word of God. ‘Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add you not unto his words, lest he reprove you, and you be found a liar’, (Pr.30:5,6).**

**What is really at stake in this whole debate is the authority of the Bible. If that authority is nullified then marriages and family ‘order’ are in great danger.**

**The harmful effects of this new teaching on women in ministry has already shown itself in statistics that show a decrease in male attendances and a ‘feminising’ of many churches, as well as a decrease in a ‘high view’ of scripture as the only authority for doctrine. Many denominations that have adopted the liberal views on women in ministry are already experiencing decline in membership and income. \***

**The very authority of the word of God is at stake in this issue. Our Lord Himself said: ‘He that rejects me, and receives not my words, has one that judges him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day’, (Jn.12:48).**

### **Dr Martin Lloyd-Jones on ‘Women Preachers’**

*‘In many ways the root trouble, even among good Evangelicals, is our failure to heed the plain teachings of Scripture. We accept what Scripture teaches as far as our doctrine is concerned; but when it comes to practice, we very often fail to take the Scriptures as our only guide. When we come to the practical side we employ human tests instead of Scriptural ones. Instead of taking the plain teachings of the Bible, we argue with it. ‘Ah yes’, we say, ‘since the*

**\* There is not enough space to prove such claims here but several works are available, including the ‘recommended reading’ (See next page)**

*Scriptures were written times have changed'. Dare I give an obvious illustration? Take the question of women preaching, and being fully ordained to the full ministry. The apostle Paul, in writing to Timothy (1Tim2:11-15) prohibits it directly. He says quite specifically that he does not allow a woman to teach or preach. 'Ah yes', we say, as we read that letter, 'He was only thinking of his own age and time; but you know times have changed since then, and we must not be bound. Paul was thinking of semi civilised people in Corinth and places like that'. But the Scripture does not say that. It says, 'Let the women learn in silence with all subjection, but I suffer not a woman to teach nor usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence'. 'Ah, but that was only temporary legislation', we say. Paul puts it like this: 'For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding, she shall be saved in child bearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety'. Paul does not say that it was only for the time being; he takes it right back to the Fall and shows that it is an abiding principle. It is something that is true, therefore, of the age in which we live. But thus you see, we argue with Scripture. Instead of taking its plain teaching, we say that times have changed when it suits our thesis we say it is no longer relevant'. 'If you want to avoid terrible disillusionment at the day of judgement, face the Scripture as it is. Do not argue with it, do not try to manipulate it, do not twist; face it, receive it and submit to it what ever the cost'.*

(From 'Studies in the Sermon on the Mount', Vol.2).

**Recommended reading: 'Countering the Claims of Evangelical Feminism' by Wayne Grudem**

- (1) 'An Index of Apostles', (125.19-20)
- (2) Tertullian, 'Against Marcion', (5.8.11)
- (3) Tertullian, 'On the Veiling of Virgins', (9.1)

**\* There is not enough space to prove such claims here but several works are available, including the 'recommended reading' above.**

## Other Literature By Terry Arnold:

*'Eternal Questions'*

*'To Catholics Whom I Love'*

*'Tongues and the Baptism With The Spirit'*

*'Finding The Balance'*

*'The Toronto Blessing - A Critique'*

*'Diakrisis (Australia)'* (Free bi-monthly newsletter)

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# Appendix





# Churches of Christ in Australia

## Church of Christ at Burleigh Heads, Queensland.

### On the Subject of Women in Ministry

The following information is available for those wishing to more fully comprehend the position of this Church on the above subject.

Please bear in mind that the following reflects the stand of Churches of Christ in Queensland, and for that fact nationally, as there are numerous women already serving in paid and unpaid positions of authority and teaching at this very time.

The underlining thrust of this document is to provide the reader with the tools to prayerfully consider the need for unity in our church. The church must be considered an organism that should be in a state of growth, and not stagnating in tradition.

As the Elders of this Church, we have seen far too long now the division caused by this subject. As a result of prayer and in answer to our Lord we provide you with the following challenge.

Let's get united, and support any man or woman who loves the Lord to fulfil the Great Commission.

The attached extract has been viewed by the eldership of the Burleigh Heads Church of Christ and has been adopted as the recommended statement of opinion on the subject of “Women in Ministry”

We have a modern acronym 'WWJD'? (What Would Jesus Do)? We ask that anyone holding to any opinion or theological interpretation to consider.

It leads us (the Eldership) to the declaration from our Lord, that a woman would for all time be the teacher of the Gospel by her actions whenever the Gospel is preached. (Matthew 26:6-13). There are other instances where Jesus demonstrated his unbiased regard to sex After all, the Word tell us there is no male or female in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28) – AMEN

As the following is not to convince the reader otherwise; may it, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, allow them to understand our theology on, this matter. If the reader still holds to the opposing belief, may they, in the cause of unity - desist from dissention if they decide to stay with this loving congregation at Burleigh Heads Church of Christ.

The eldership recognises the importance of unity in our church and in fulfilling the obligations of elder, is required to maintain unity.

### **There must be unity in our local church.**

- There is no ground for division in the church. Problems that can potentially lead to division must be dealt with quickly, The church needs to be fast and bold to correct because division is like cancer. We cannot allow it to create disunity and confusion.

- The criteria for choosing team members must be determined wisely and biblically: no independent spirit but total accountability to team members. On the other hand, those who create division must be disciplined and dealt with quickly.

- We must put aside disagreements and even personal preferences for the sake of unity. It is very important to preserve unity for the sake of the whole body and therefore, we exercise flexibility on the non-essentials without compromising on the essentials. Gradually we will grow in unity of vision and affection for one another, so that the advancement of the church will not be hindered.

- We discourage negative criticisms to maintain a positive atmosphere, so that the visitors to our church would stay in our church.

- The church can only meet the need in general, not to the individual. Hence, let us be contented and keep the unity, by not opposing stated and accepted principles.

- If there is any problem, we need to speak directly to the person concerned or upward to our leaders only. We choose to major on our strengths and resources. When we discover any weaknesses or faults we should seek to be a contributor by not complaining or urging others to come to our aid and side with us.

The following article portrays the accepted principles of this subject to which we now adhere.

# Was Paul for or Against Women in Ministry

By Craig S. Keener

The question of a woman's role in ministry is a pressing concern for today's church. It is paramount first, because of our need for the gifts of all the members God has called to serve the Church. The concern, however, has extended beyond the Church itself. Increasingly, secular thinkers attack Christianity as against women and thus irrelevant to the modern world.

The assemblies of God and other denominations birthed in the Holiness and Pentecostal revivals affirmed women in ministry long before the role of women became a secular or liberal agenda.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, in the historic missionary expansion of the 19th-century; two-thirds of all missionaries were women. The 19th-century women's movement that fought for women's right to vote, originally grew from the same revival movement led by Charles Finney and others who advocated the abolition of slavery. By contrast, those who identified everything in the Bible's culture with the Bible's message were obligated both to accept slavery and reject women's ministry.<sup>2</sup>

For Bible-believing Christians, however, mere precedent from church history cannot settle a question; **we must establish our case from Scripture**. Because the current debate focuses especially around Paul's teaching, we will examine his writings after we have briefly summarized other biblical teachings on the subject.

## WOMEN'S MINISTRY IN THE REST OF THE BIBLE

Because Paul accepted both the Hebrew Bible and Jesus' teachings as God's Word, we must briefly survey women's ministry in these sources. The ancient Near Eastern world, of which Israel was a part, was a man's world. Because God spoke to Israel in a particular culture, however, does not suggest that the the culture itself was holy. The culture included

polygamy, divorce, slavery, and a variety of other practices we now recognize as unholy.

Despite the prominence of men in ancient Israelite society, God still sometimes called women as leaders. When Josiah needed to hear the word the Lord, he sent Hilkiah the priest and others to a person who was undoubtedly one of the most prominent prophetic figures of his day: Huldah (2 Kings 22:12—20). Deborah was not only a prophetess, but a judge (Judges 4:4). She held the place of greatest authority in Israel in her day. She is also one of the few Judges of whom the Bible reports no failures (Judges 4,5)

Although first-century Jewish women rarely, if ever, studied with teachers of the Law the way male disciples did,<sup>3</sup> Jesus allowed women to join His ranks (Mark 15:40,41; Luke 8:1-3) something the culture could have regarded as scandalous.<sup>4</sup> As if this were not scandalous enough, he allowed a woman who wished to hear His teaching "sit at his feet" (Luke 10:39) taking a posture normally reserved for disciples. Other Jewish teachers did not allow women disciples; indeed, disciples were often teachers in training.<sup>5</sup> To have sent women out on the preaching missions (e. g. Mark 6:7-13) might have proved too scandalous to be practical; nevertheless, the Gospels unanimously report that God chose women as the first witnesses of resurrection, even though first-century Jewish men often dismissed the testimony of women.<sup>6</sup>

Joel explicitly emphasized that when God poured out His Spirit, women as well as men would prophesy (Joel 2:28,29). Pentecost meant that all God's people qualified for the gifts of his Spirit (Acts 2:17,18), just as salvation meant that male or female would have the same relationship with God (Galatians 3:28). Subsequent outpourings of the Spirit have often led to the same effect.

## **PASSAGES WHERE PAUL AFFIRMED THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN**

Paul often affirmed the ministry of women despite the gender prejudices of his culture. With a few exceptions (some women philosophers), advanced education was a male domain.

Because most people in Mediterranean antiquity were functionally illiterate, those who could read and speak well generally assumed teaching roles, and - with rare exceptions - these were men.<sup>7</sup> In the first centuries of our era, most Jewish men-like Philo, Josephus, and many later rabbis-reflected the prejudice of much of the broader Greco-Roman culture.<sup>8</sup>

Women's roles varied from one region to another, but Paul's writings clearly rank him among the more progressive, not the more chauvinistic, writers of his day. Many of Paul's collaborators in the gospel were women.

Paul commended the ministry of a woman who brought his letter to the Roman Christians (Romans 16:1,2). Phoebe was a servant of the church at Cenchrea. "Servant" may refer to a deacon, a term that sometimes designated administrative responsibility in the Early Church.

In his epistles, however, Paul most frequently applied the term to any minister of God's Word, including himself (1 Corinthians 3:5; 2 Corinthians 3:6; 6:4; Ephesians 3:7; 6:21). He also called Phoebe a "succorer" or "helper" of many (Romans 16:2); this term technically designated her as a church's patron or sponsor, most likely the owner of the home in which the church at Cenchrea was meeting. This entitled her to a position of honour in the church.<sup>9</sup>

Phoebe was not the only influential woman in the church. Whereas Paul greeted about twice as many men as women in Romans 16, he commended the ministries of about twice as many women as men in that list. (Some use the predominance of male ministers in the Bible against women in ministry, but that argument could work against men's ministry in this passage.) These commendations may indicate his sensitivity to the opposition women undoubtedly faced for their ministry and are remarkable, given the prejudice against women's ministry that existed in Paul's culture.

If Paul followed ancient custom when he praised Priscilla, he may have mentioned her before her husband Aquila because of her higher status (Romans 16:3,4). Elsewhere we learn that she and her husband taught Scripture to another minister, Apollos (Acts 18:26). Paul also listed two fellow apostles, Andronicus and Junia (Romans 16:7). Although Junia, is clearly a feminine name, writers opposed to the possibility that Paul could have referred to a female apostle, <sup>10</sup> suggest that Junia is a contraction for the masculine Junianus. This contraction, however, never occurs, and more recently has been shown to be grammatically impossible for a Latin name like Junia. This suggestion rests not on the text itself, but entirely on the presupposition that a woman could not be an apostle.

Elsewhere Paul referred the ministry of two women in Philippi, who, like his many male fellow ministers, shared in his work for the gospel there (Philippians 4:2-3). Because women typically achieved more prominent religious roles in Macedonia than in most parts of the Roman world, <sup>11</sup> Paul's women colleagues in this region may have moved more quickly into prominent offices in the church (cf., Acts 16:14,15). Although Paul ranked prophets second only to apostles (1 Corinthians 12:28), he acknowledged the ministry of prophetesses (1 Corinthians 11:5), following the Hebrew Bible (Exodus 15:20; Judges 4:4, 2 Kings 22:13,14) and early Christian practice (Acts 2:17,18; 21:9). Thus those who complain that Paul did not specifically mention women pastors by name miss the point. Paul rarely mentioned any men pastors by name, either. He most often simply mentioned his traveling companions in ministry. who were naturally men. Paul's most commonly used titles for these fellow labourers were "servant" and "fellow worker" - both of which he also applied to women (Romans 16:1,3). Given the culture he addressed, it was natural that fewer women could exercise the social independence necessary to achieve positions of ministry. Where they did, however, Paul commended them and included commendations to women apostles and prophets, the offices of the highest authority in the church.

While passages such as these establish Paul among the more progressive writers of his era, the primary controversy today rages

around other passages in which Paul seemed to oppose women in ministry. Before turning there, we must examine one passage where Paul clearly addressed a local cultural situation.

## **PAUL ON HEAD COVERING**

Although Paul often advocated the mutuality of gender roles <sup>12</sup> he also worked within the boundaries of his culture where necessary for the sake of the gospel. We begin with his teaching on head coverings because, although it is not directly related to women's ministry, it will help us understand his passages concerning women in ministry. Most Christians today agree that women do not need to cover their heads in church, but many do not recognize that Paul used the same kinds of arguments for women covering their heads as for women refraining from congregational speech. In both cases, Paul used some general principles but addressed a specific cultural situation.

When Paul urged women in the Corinthian churches to cover their heads (the only place where the Bible teaches about this), he followed a custom prominent in many Eastern cultures of his day. <sup>13</sup> Although women and men alike covered their heads for various reasons, <sup>14</sup> married women specifically covered their heads to prevent men other than their husbands from lusting after their hair. <sup>15</sup> A married woman who went out with her head uncovered was considered promiscuous and was to be divorced as an adulteress. <sup>16</sup> Because of what head coverings symbolized in that culture, Paul asked the more liberated women to cover their heads so they would not scandalize the others.

Among his arguments for head coverings is the fact God created Adam first; in the particular culture he addressed, this argument would make sense as an argument for women wearing head coverings. <sup>17</sup>

## **PASSAGES WHERE PAUL MAY HAVE RESTRICTED WOMEN'S MINISTRY**



Because Paul, in some cases, advocated women's ministry, we cannot read his restrictions on women in ministry as universal prohibitions. Rather, as in the case of head coverings in Corinth, Paul addressed a specific cultural situation. This is not to say that Paul here or anywhere else wrote Scripture that was not for all time. It is merely to say that he did not write it for all circumstances and that we must take into account the circumstances he addressed to understand how he would have applied his principles in very different situations. In practice, no one today applies all texts for all circumstances, no matter how loudly they may defend some texts as applying to all circumstances. For instance, most of us did not send offerings for the church in Jerusalem this Sunday (1 Corinthians 16:1-3) If our churches do not support widows, we can protest that most widows today have not washed the saints' feet (1 Timothy 5:10). Likewise, few readers today would advocate our going to Troas to pick up Paul's cloak; we recognize that Paul addressed these words specifically to Timothy (2 Timothy 4:13).

## **LET WOMEN KEEP SILENT**

Two passages in Paul's writings at first seem to contradict the progressive ones. Keep in mind that these are the only two passages in the Bible that could remotely be construed as contradicting Paul's endorsement of women in ministry.

First, Paul instructed women to be silent and save their questions about the service for their husbands at home (1 Corinthians 14:34--36) Yet, Paul could not mean silence under all circumstances, because earlier in the same letter he acknowledged that women could pray and prophesy in church (1 Corinthians 11:5); and prophecy ranked even higher than teaching (12:28).

Knowing ancient Greek culture helps us understand the passage better. Not all explanations scholars have proposed have proved satisfying. Some hold that a later scribe accidentally inserted these lines into Paul's writings, but the hard evidence for this interpretation seems slender.<sup>18</sup> Some suggest that Paul here quoted a Corinthian position (1 Corinthians 14:34,35), which he then refuted (verse 36);

unfortunately, verse 36 does not read naturally as a refutation. Others think that churches, like synagogues, were segregated by gender, somehow making women's talk disruptive. This view falters on two counts: First, gender segregation in Synagogues may have begun centuries after Paul; and, second, the Corinthian Christians met in homes, whose architecture would have rendered such segregation impossible. Some also suggest Paul addressed women who were abusing the gifts of the Spirit or a problem with judging prophecies. But while the context addresses these issues, ancient writers commonly used digressions, and the theme of church order is sufficient to unite the context.

Another explanation seems more likely. Paul elsewhere affirmed women's role in prayer and prophecy (11:5), so he cannot be prohibiting all kinds of speech here. (In fact, no church that allows women to sing actually takes this verse to mean complete silence anyway.) Since Paul only addressed a specific kind of speech, we should note that the only kind of speech he directly addressed in 14:34-36 was wives asking questions.<sup>19</sup> In ancient Greek and Jewish lectures settings, advanced students or educated people frequently interrupted public speakers with reasonable questions. Yet the culture had deprived most women of education. Jewish women could listen in synagogues, but unlike boys, were not taught to recite the law while growing up. Ancient Culture also considered it rude for uneducated persons to slow down lectures with questions that betrayed their lack of training.<sup>20</sup> So Paul provided a long-range solution: The husbands should take a personal interest in their wives' learning and catch them up privately. Most ancient husbands doubted their wives' intellectual potential, but Paul was among the most progressive of ancient writers on the subject.<sup>21</sup> Far from repressing these women, by ancient standards Paul was liberating them.<sup>22</sup>

This text cannot prohibit women's announcing the word of the Lord (1 Corinthians 11:4,5), and nothing in the context here suggests that Paul specifically prohibited women from Bible teaching. The only passage in the entire Bible that one could directly cite against women teaching the Bible is 1 Timothy 2:11-15.

## IN QUIETNESS AND SUBMISSION

In 1 Timothy 2:11—15, Paul forbade women to teach or exercise authority over men. Most supporters of women in ministry think that the latter expression means "usurp authority"<sup>23</sup> something Paul would not want men to do any more than women, but the matter is disputed.<sup>24</sup> In any case, here Paul also forbade women to "teach," something he apparently allowed elsewhere (Romans 16; Philippians 4:2,3). Thus he presumably addressed the specific situation in this community. Because both Paul and his readers knew their situation and could take it for granted, the situation which elicited Paul's response was thus assumed in his intended meaning.

It is probably no coincidence that the one passage in the Bible prohibiting women teaching Scripture appears in the one set of letters where we explicitly know that false teachers were targeting and working through women. Paul's letters to Timothy in Ephesus provide a glimpse of the situation: false teachers (1 Timothy 1:6,7,19,20; 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 2:17) were misleading the women (2 Timothy 3:6,7). These women were probably (and especially) some widows who owned houses the false teachers could use for their meetings.

(See 1 Timothy 5:13. One of the Greek terms here indicates spreading nonsense.)<sup>25</sup> Women were the most susceptible to false teaching only because they had been granted the least education. This behaviour was bound to bring reproach on the church from a hostile society that was already convinced Christians subverted the traditional roles of women and slaves.<sup>26</sup> So Paul provided a short-range solution: "Do not teach" (under the present circumstances); and a long-range solution: "Let them learn" (1 Timothy 2:11).

Today we read, "learn in silence" and think the emphasis lies on "silence." That these women were to learn "quietly and, submissively" may reflect their witness within society (these were characteristics normally expected of women). But ancient culture expected all beginning students (unlike advanced students) to learn silently; that was why women were not supposed to ask questions (as noted above). The

same word for "silence" here is applied to all Christians in the context (2:2). Paul specifically addressed this matter to women for the same reason he addressed the admonition to stop disputing to the men (2:8): They were the groups involved in the Ephesian churches. Again it appears that Paul's long-range plan was to liberate, not subordinate, women's ministry. The issue is not gender but learning God's Word.

What particularly causes many scholars to question this otherwise logical case is Paul's following argument, where he based his case on the roles of Adam and Eve (1 Timothy 2:13,14). Paul's argument from the creation order, however, was one of the very arguments he earlier used to contend that women should wear head coverings (1 Corinthians 11:7-9). In other words, Paul sometimes cited Scripture to make an ad-hoc case for particular circumstances that he would not apply to all circumstances. Although Paul often makes universal arguments from the Old Testament, he sometimes (as with head coverings) makes a local argument by analogy. His argument from Eve's deception is even more likely to fit this category. If Eve's deception prohibits all women from teaching, Paul would be claiming that all women, like Eve's, are more easily deceived than all men. (One wonders, then, why he would allow women to teach other women, since they would deceive them all the more.) If, however, the deception does not apply to all women, neither does his prohibition of their teaching. Paul probably used Eve to illustrate the situation of the unlearned women he addressed in Ephesus; but he elsewhere used Eve for anyone who is deceived, not just women (2 Corinthians 11:3).<sup>27</sup>

Because we do not believe Paul would have contradicted himself, his approval of women's ministry in God's Word elsewhere confirms that 1 Timothy 2:9-15 cannot prohibit women's ministry in all situations; rather, he addressed a particular situation.

Some have protested that women should not hold authority over men because men are the head of women. Aside from the many debates about the meaning of the Greek term "head" (for instance, some translate it "source" instead of "authority over"),<sup>28</sup> **Paul spoke only of the husband as head of his wife, not of the male gender as head of the female gender.**

## CONCLUSION

Today we should affirm those whom God calls, whether male or female, and encourage them in faithfully learning God's Word. We need to affirm all potential labourers, both men and women, for the abundant harvest fields

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## ENDNOTES

1 . Victor Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1971) 188,89.

2. See S. Grenz and D. Muir Kjesbo, *Women in the Church* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity 1995), 42—62; N. Hardesty, *Women Culled To Witness* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984); G. Usry, and C. Keener, *Black mans Religion* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity. 1996), 90-94, 98-- 109

3. Ibid

4. See G. Stanton, *The Gospels and Jesus* (Oxford: Oxford., 1989), 202; J. Starnbaugh and D. Balch, *The New Testament in Its Social Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986). 104; W. Liefeld, "*The Wandering Preacher as a Social Figure in the Roman Empire*" (Ph. D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1967), 240, Critics often maligned movements supported by women. See E. P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (New York: Penguin, 1993), 109

5. To "sit before" a teacher's feet was to take the posture of a disciple (Acts 22:3; m. Ab. 1:4; ARN 6, 38, A; ARN 11, §28 B;b. Pes. 3b; p. Sanh. 10:1, §81) On women in Jesus' ministry, see especially B. Witherington 111, *Women in the Ministry of Jesus*, SNTSM 51 (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1984).

6. Jesus' contemporaries generally held little esteem for the testimony of women (Jos. Ant. 4.219; m. Yeb. 15:1, 8--10; Ket. 1:6-9; tos. Yeb. 14:10; Sifra VDDeho. Pq. 7:45.1.1; cf., Luke 24:11) In Roman law, see similarly J, Gardner, *Women in Roman Law and Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1986), 165

7. Although inscriptions demonstrate that women filled a prominent role in some synagogues (see B. Brooten, *Women leaders in the Ancient Synagogue: Inscriptional Evidence and Background Issues* [Chico, Calif.: Scholars, 1982]), they also reveal that this practice was exception rather than the norm.

8. E. g., Philo Prob. 117; see further Safrai, "Education," J PFC 955; R. Baer. *Philo's Use of the Categories Male and Female*, AZLGHJ 3 (Leiden: Brill, 1970).

9. See further Keener, *Women*, 237-40 .

10. Because Paul nowhere else appeals to commendations from the apostles, "notable Apostles" remains the most natural way to construe this phrase (see, e.g., A. Spencer, *Beyond the Curse: Woman Called to Ministry* [Peabody. Mass.: Hendricks, 1989], 102).

11. See V. Abrahamsen, "*The Rock Reliefs and the Cult of Diana at Philippi*" (Th.D. dissertation, Harvard Divinity School, 1986).

12. See e.g., comments in C. Keener, "*Man and Woman*," pp. 583-92 in *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity 1993), 584-85.

13. Jewish people were among the cultures that required married women to cover hair (e.g., m B.K. 8:6; ARN 3, 17A; Sifre Num. 11.2.2; 3 Macc 4:6). Elsewhere in the East cf., e.g., R. MacMullen, "Women in Public in the Roman Empire," *Historia* 29 (1980): 209--10.

14. Sometimes men (Plut. R.Q. 14, Mor. 267A; Char. Chaer. 3.3.14) and women (Plut. R.Q. 26, Mor. 270D; Char. Chaer. 1.11.2; 8.1.7; ARN 1A) covered their heads for mourning. Similarly, both men (m. Sot. 9:15; Epict. Disc. 1.11.27) and women (ARN 9, §25B) covered their heads for shame. Roman women normally covered their heads for worship (e.g. Varro. 5.29130; Plut. R.Q. 10, Mor. 266C), in contrast to Greek women who uncovered their heads (SIG 3d ed., 3.999). But in contrast to the custom Paul addressed, none of these specific practices differentiates men from women.

15. Hair was the primary object of male desire (Apul. *Metam.* 2.8,9; Char, Chaer. 1.13.11; 1.14.1; ARN 14 § 35B; Sifre Num. 11.2.1; p. Sanh. 6:4, § 1 ). This was why many peoples required married women to cover their hair but allowed unmarried girls to go uncovered (e.g., Charillus 2 in Plut. *Sayings of Spartans*, Mor. 232C, Philo Spec, Leg. 3.56).

16. E.g. m. Ket. 7:6; b. Sot 9a; R. Meir in Num. Rab. 9:12. For a similar custom and reasoning today in traditional Islamic societies. see C. Delaney. "*Seeds of Honor, Fields of Shame*", pp. 35-48 in *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean*, ed. D. Gilmore, AAA 22 (Washington, D.C.: American Anthropological Association 1987), 42, 67; cf., D. Eickelman, *The Middle East: An Anthropological Approach*, 2d ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1989), 165.

17. On Paul's various arguments here, see more fully Keener, *Women*, 31-46., or more briefly, in "*Man and Women*", 585-86. For a similar background for 1 Timothy 2:9,10, see. D Scholer, "Women's Adornment: Some Historical and Hermeneutical Observations on the New Testament Passages", *Daughters of Sarah* 6 (1980), 3--6; Keener, *Women*, 103-7.

18. G. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 699-705. Fee may be right that the entire Western tradition displaces this passage, but this might happen easily with a digression (common enough in ancient writing), and even in these texts the passage is moved, not missing.

19. E. g., K. Giles, *Created Woman: A Fresh Study of the Biblical Teaching* (Canberra: Acorn, 1985), 56.

20. See e. g., Plut. *On Lectures* 4, 11, 13, 18 Mor. 39CD, 43BC, 45D, 48AB; cf. tos, Sanh. 7:10.

21. One of the most progressive alternatives was Plut., *Advice to Bride and Groom*, 48, Mor. 145BC, who, nevertheless, ended up accusing women of folly if left to themselves (48. Mor. 145DE).

22. For more detailed documentation, see Keener, *Women* 70-100; similarly, B. Witherington, 111, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, SNTSM 59 (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1988), 90-104.

23. See further discussion in Keener, *Women*, pp. 108, 9.

24. For recent and noteworthy arguments in favour of "exercise authority," see the articles by Baldwin, K. Stenberger, and Schreiner in *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995),

25. The Greek expression for the women's activities here probably refers to spreading false teaching; see G. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy Titus*, NIBC (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1988), 122.

26. Given Roman society's perception of Christians as a subversive cult, false teaching that undermined Paul's strategies for the church's public witness (see Keener, *Women*, 139-56) could not be permitted (cf., I Timothy 3:2, 7, 10; 5:7, 10, 14; 6:1; Titus 1:6; 2:1-5, 8, 10; A. Pagett, "The Pauline Rationale for Submission: Biblical Feminism and the Hina Claus-es of Titus 2: 1 – 10," EQ 59 (1987) 52; D. Verner, *The Household of*



*God: The Social World of the Pastoral Epistles*, SBLDS, 71 [Chico, Calif.: Scholars, 1983]).

27. First Timothy 2:15 may also qualify the preceding verses; see Keener, *Women*, 118-20.

28. Catherine Clark Kroeger and others believe of it implies "source", Wayne Grudem and others that it implies "authority over." With Gordon Fee, I suspect that ancient literature allows both views but that Paul used an image relevant in his day (see. further Keener, *Women*, 32-36,168).

## **Notes**

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### About Terry Arnold:

Terry Arnold holds a Doctorate in theology and a Masters degree in Arts and Biblical Studies as well as diplomas in Bible and Ministry Studies and a diploma in teaching. He was formerly the founder and the president of Pacific Bible Institute in Queensland.

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