

REPORT 33
COMMITTEE ON HEADSHIP IN THE BIBLE

I. PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

A. *The Mandate*

The Synod of 1981 adopted the following recommendations pertaining to this committee:

"1. That synod postpone the implementation of the decision of the Synod of 1978 regarding the ordination of women as deacons, pending the findings of a study committee on headship.

"2. That synod appoint a study committee with the following mandate: To examine the meaning and scope of headship in the Bible as it pertains to the relationships of husband and wife and man and woman to ascertain:

- a. Whether headship has implications for authority and leadership in marriage and family, church, business, educational institutions and government, and, if so, how?
- b. How these conclusions apply to the question of whether women may hold office in the church.

Ground: Because the issue of headship remains unresolved, Synod of 1981 has not seen fit to accept any of the proposals before it relative to Report 32—Synodical Studies on Women in Office and Decisions Pertaining to the Office of Deacon.

"3. That this study committee report to the Synod of 1983" (*Acts of Synod 1981*, p. 98).

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C. *Brief History of Previous Committees and Decisions*

The Synod of 1970 appointed a study committee to examine the Reformed practice of excluding women from ecclesiastical office. This committee submitted an extensive report to the Synod of 1973, concluding that "the practice of excluding women from ecclesiastical office cannot be conclusively defended on biblical grounds" (*Acts of Synod 1973*, p. 588). One member of this committee, the Rev. Peter M. Jonker, submitted a minority report to the Synod of 1973 in which he concluded that "underlying principles in the Scriptures concerning the relation between man and woman confirm the soundness of the position maintained in the Reformation of excluding women from the place of authority over the whole of the congregation" (p. 593). As one of the grounds for his position Mr. Jonker states: "Whatever may be said about the notion *head*, it cannot be denied that it also indicates a position of authority and representation" (p. 592).

The Synod of 1973 appointed a new study committee to evaluate the 1973 report and to advise synod further on this matter. This committee also concluded that "biblical teaching is not opposed in principle to the ordination of women to any office that men may hold in the church" (*Acts of Synod 1975*, p. 593, Recommendation 3). One of the conclusions arrived at by this committee was this: "To invest a woman with the authority of the offices of the church under present conditions involves the unacceptable risk of conflict between her authority as office-bearer and her husband's authority as head of the home" (p. 592). Appended to this report was a note from the committee's reporter, Rev. Henry Petersen, indicating that he was withdrawing his support from Recommendation 3. His note included the following statement: "Further reflection has led me to the conviction that the headship principle precludes the ordination of women to existing church offices" (p. 593).

The Synod of 1975 appointed a new committee on "Hermeneutical Principles Concerning Women in Ecclesiastical Office." Four of the conclusions recommended by this committee to the Synod of 1978 read as follows: "(2) The Bible teaches that the husband is the head of the wife and it may also teach that man is the head of woman. (3) This headship involves an element of authority. (4) Although the husband's rule over his wife is first explicitly mentioned after the fall, such headship is implied already in the pre-fall situation. (5) This headship is to be recognized in marriage and upheld in the church" (*Acts of Synod 1978*, p. 530).

The majority of this committee recommended to synod that consistories be allowed to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon, giving as one of its grounds: "Women can function in the office of deacon without violating the principle of the headship of husband (man) over wife (woman)" (p. 532). The minority of this committee recommended to synod "that consistories be allowed to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon, provided that their work is distinguished from that of elders" (p. 532). One of the grounds given for this recommendation was the following: "The headship principle in which the woman (wife) is to be subject to the man (husband) is not violated as long as the office of deacon is expressed in terms of assistance and service" (p. 533). The minority also went on to recommend to synod that the offices of elder and minister not be opened to women, giving as one of its grounds the following: "If women were to function as elders and ministers (as those offices are presently defined), they would be in conflict with the headship principle that is enunciated in the Old and New Testaments" (p. 533).

The Synod of 1978 adopted the minority report of this study committee, namely, "that consistories be allowed to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon, provided that their work is distinguished from that of elders" (*Acts of Synod 1978*, p. 104). The Synod of 1979 received many responses from churches and classes regarding the above-mentioned decision. The 1979 Synod therefore decided to appoint yet another committee to deal with "Synodical Studies on Women in Office and Decisions Pertaining to the Office of Deacon." At the same time this synod instructed consistories to defer implementation of the 1978 decision allowing women to serve as deacons (though under certain restrictions) until the study committee appointed by this synod had rendered its report (*Acts of Synod 1979*, p. 122).

The committee appointed by the Synod of 1979 reported to the Synod of 1981. In the body of its report this committee made the following statement: "As long as the extent and the application of the headship idea are as ill-defined as they now are, the church is well-advised not to admit women to the offices which may embody headship functions" (*Acts of Synod 1981*, p. 515).

This committee presented three sets of recommendations: a majority report and two minority reports. Among the observations found in Minority Report I was the following: "In view of the considerable ambiguity around the headship principle, we feel that progress will not be made in clarifying the possible role of women in the office of elder and minister until a comprehensive study is made by a committee..." (p. 524). Minority Report 2 recommended that the present practice of excluding women from ecclesiastical office be maintained, giving as one of its grounds for this recommendation the following: "The headship principle would be violated if women held such office" (p. 531).

It will be noted that all four of the study reports presented to synod so far on the question of the ordination of women have made references to the so-called headship principle—that is, the principle of the headship of the husband over the wife and/or of the man over the woman (though some reports express uncertainty about the latter). The Synod of 1981, therefore, was of the conviction that the question of the ordination of women could not be settled until more light had been shed on what the Bible teaches about this "headship principle." That synod adopted none of the recommendations presented to it by the study committee appointed in 1979, but decided instead to appoint our

committee, giving it the mandate quoted above (see A under Preliminary Considerations).

D. *The Work of the Present Committee*

Shortly after the appointment of our committee, two of the members originally appointed resigned. The Synodical Interim Committee then appointed two persons to replace those who had resigned, thus constituting the present committee. The members of the present committee are as follows: John A. De Kruyter (chairman), Anthony A. Hoekema (reporter), Sarah Cook, Willis P. DeBoer, Wayne Kobes, Gordon H. Pols, and Thea B. Van Halsema (Mrs. Dick L.).

The members of your committee were given a great deal of material about the subject of headship in the Bible, including many articles from periodicals and a number of books. This material was studied, reported on, and discussed. We were also sent materials by various individuals and organizations. Members of the committee were given various assignments, and this material was later discussed and critiqued.

Because of the extended illness of the secretary, the committee found itself unable to report to the Synod of 1983 (see *Acts of Synod 1983*, p. 459). Hence we are presenting our report to the Synod of 1984.

The committee held fourteen three-day meetings. Except where prevented by illness or other emergencies, all the members of the committee were present at every meeting. Though we arrived at different recommendations, we did work together amicably all the way. At the last meeting (October 19-21, 1983) the report of the majority of the committee was submitted and finalized, and the final recommendations of the majority were adopted. These recommendations will be found at the end of this report, together with two minority reports, each of which will have its own recommendations.

E. *A Preliminary Caution*

The pronounced difference of opinion within our own Christian Reformed circles with respect to the ordination of women to ecclesiastical office is an indisputable and inescapable fact. These differences are basic and substantial, resulting in a wide range of alternative solutions.

For many this is an utterly perplexing reality. How can there be so wide a divergence on a matter of such significance among members of the same Reformed church family? It is tempting to lay hold of what appears to be the easiest way of accounting for the differences: conservative versus liberal. There is the conservative who takes the Bible seriously, literally, at face value, and who has no question about the church's traditional understanding of the relevant Bible passages. Then there is the liberal who is less concerned with what the Bible says than with the realities of contemporary culture. The liberal mind, it seems, is much more ready than the conservative to accommodate, to compromise the biblical witness, and to embrace novel, nontraditional exegeses.

Tempting as such categorization is, we as members of the family of faith must resist it. Issues will not be settled in a Christian way by hurling derogatory epithets at each other. Impugning the character of avowed fellow Christians with whom we may disagree, questioning their sincerity, doubting their commitment, or maligning their integrity are weapons which belong to the arsenal

of the church's great enemy. Such weapons serve only to charge the air with suspicion and to make honest discussion impossible.

The fact is that on the matter before us there are differences between honest, sincere, committed, devout, and well-intentioned Christian brothers and sisters. While this acknowledgment does not solve the problem, it does place the problem in a context where Christians who differ significantly on these matters can speak with each other, accept each other, and live with each other in the same family of faith. Important as the matter before us is, it does not concern an essential creedal affirmation such as the church faced in the controversy with Arius.

We urge everyone who is considering the question of the ordination of women to do so with charity and humility. We ask everyone to acknowledge that the matter is not crystal-clear. If it were, it would have been solved long ago. Some of the most gifted theological minds and pastoral hearts in our denomination have wrestled with this matter and have come to different conclusions. This alone should suffice to eliminate stridency from our discussions.

But there is more. It would be rash and foolish to presume that anyone could approach the issue before us with a totally unprejudiced and unbiased mind. For one thing, this issue is not new. It has been in or near the forefront of ecclesiastical news, discussion, and debate for a good many years. In our own denomination it has been discussed for more than a decade. We have all been confronted by a variety of arguments and opinions, and have gradually formed our own positions.

The stance of each one of us about the role and place of women has been influenced by a host of factors. It has been influenced by the thinking of parents, friends, spouses, and respected leaders in the Christian community, as well as by the structure of contemporary social and cultural institutions. Basically, of course, we want the Bible to have the last word on this matter also.

But what does the Bible have to say on this matter? This question has been the main concern of a number of previous synodical reports; it will once again be the chief focus of this report. The Bible does not *directly*, in so many words, answer our question about whether it is permissible to ordain women to any or all of our present ecclesiastical offices. That is one complexity.

There is another complexity which we do well to acknowledge openly. This is the fact that each one of us comes to the Bible with certain preunderstandings, with certain precommitments, with certain already-present notions about the matter at hand. We may call them biases; we may speak of colored glasses—but whatever we call them, the reality is there. And this reality affects what we hear God saying in the Bible. Recognition and honest acknowledgment of such "biases" is an important ingredient in reading the Bible, in allowing God's Word to speak without our talking back to it—for only then can God's Word correct and redirect our own mistaken notions.

Bible study can only be done in a context of humility. We must always say, "Speak, Lord, for your servant listens." It is with that attitude and in that spirit that this report was written and is now presented for the church's consideration. May it be read and discussed in the same way.

F. Notes on *Our Times*

The issue which our mandate places before us does not come to us in a social, cultural, and intellectual vacuum. The perception and the role of the woman in

the enterprise of society has undergone drastic changes in modern times. To trace the development and contours of that change is the work of historians. No doubt a complexity of roots and causes is involved. Such a study and tracing work are beyond both our competence and our mandate. But of the fact that a great change has taken place we are certain. Indeed, the change is still in an active state of process and progress. Women have found and are finding places in society which traditionally have been associated with men. This is visibly true in industry, business, commerce, the professions, politics, the church, the armed forces—yes, in all areas and on all fronts of life. Efforts, and at times agitation, for still further changes—not least of all legal-status changes—are the order of the day.

We readily acknowledge the limits of our competence. Nonetheless we make bold to present a few comments about what we perceive to be some of the spirits, forces, and dynamics which have given rise to our current societal landscape, and which we see operative today. We do so because in our judgment these forces and dynamics are integrally related to the changed and changing role of women as well.

It can be agreed that the secularizing spirit of the Enlightenment had and has much to do with the shape and dynamics of our own society. This spirit came to brutal and society-wrenching expression in the French Revolution. While the bloody excesses of that Revolution horrified the world, its fundamental spirit expressed in the famous slogan of "liberty, equality, fraternity" has become deeply embedded in the thinking and shaping of the modern world. This spirit has been anathema to the so-called "old order," not least of all to the order of a hierarchical society. It cannot be surprising that in the course of time one of the fruits of this revolutionary and egalitarian spirit has been a new structuration of traditional male and female roles.

The Industrial Revolution also gave great impetus to a changed perception of the place and role of women. The rise of the modern assembly line and the factory system of production employed the skills and energies of many women. What had formerly been done in small home-related businesses and shops was now centralized in large factories. Here the speed, efficiency, and economy of the machine could be utilized. But the factories removed many women from their traditional place and role in the home. The great wars of this century accelerated the process. As millions of men were called up to arms, the women were asked to take their work-a-day places, or volunteered to do so. Thus women entered almost every facet of the labor force. So it has remained to this day, and the trend is still expanding. There are few, if any, areas of life today where women have not attained or aspire to attain positions of significant leadership—the "top" positions.

A third impetus to the changed and changing role of women in the life of society deserves mention. We refer to the phenomenon of universal education. A minimum of education is required today by law. No gender distinction is made or allowed. The minimum prescribed has steadily risen. Today most people do not leave school with less than a grade twelve education. Many, indeed, graduate with a college or university degree. Equal opportunity, position, pay, and status would seem to follow naturally for men and women with equal or similar academic credentials, competence, and expertise.

All three of the above-mentioned factors are exemplified in our modern democracies. These factors have contributed to what we would signalize as one

of the main spiritual forces of our times, namely *individualism*. The spirit of individualism tends to a leveling of all social, racial, moral, personal, and creedal distinctions. As a result, there are in our society few certainties left. Everywhere the "old" foundations are crumbling. There is a crisis of authority. Having largely abandoned the Bible as revealing God's unalterable norms, directives, and standards for life, society is groping its way to a new order in personal ethics, sexual morality, human relationships, economics, politics, education, family life, the arts—yes, in the whole of life.

Whereas at one time the *family* was commonly considered to be the smallest social unit, today it is the *individual*. People today tend to be viewed as isolated, self-contained, of-equal-value *individuals*. People are social atoms. Each is related to the other by the way of an equal sign. Each is a unit, each a whole, each complete, with individual (personal) rights to match. At least so people are regarded by and before the law, and in the public affairs of society. Differences between individuals, such as gender, sexual preference, creed, family status (whether single, married and/or supporting dependents) are regarded as accidental. Such differences are judged to be irrelevant, not only in matters pertaining to housing and hiring practices, but more generally in matters of place, task, role, and responsibility.

Training, ability, skills, gifts, "image," speed, efficiency, productivity, profit—these are among the main criteria by which people (individuals) are accorded their status, their role, their task and position in life today. These criteria are almost purely functional, pragmatic, and economic in orientation. These are the criteria which count. Tasks and responsibilities, for instance, are assigned on the basis of a real or perceived need. A "slot" is then opened, a job is created (with a job description to suit), and then the position is filled by any individual who is judged best to exemplify the requisite skills, expertise, and efficiency. Such an individual, of course, is highly vulnerable—subject to being replaced by anyone or anything thought to be able to do the job better. This reality touches the life not only of unskilled laborers, but reaches up to the highest management and leadership levels in every area of life, including the realm of government and justice.

Small surprise that in a society where the *individual* is stressed and exalted and the *communal* is barely acknowledged, many people feel and find themselves "lost," *impersonal*, *dehumanizing*, and *alienation* have become in-vogue words. When people are regarded as isolated social atoms, replaceable parts in a social and industrial "machine," many understandably drift about, trying to "find themselves." They seek answers to the most basic questions of human existence: Who am I? What is my task, my place, my purpose?

The forms of society such as we find reflected in the Bible, and such as existed right up to modern times, we may call *traditional*. In contrast, today's society may be called *functional*. We detect as one of the key differences between a traditional and functional society the *view of man*, the place accorded to the *individual*. Traditional and functional societies operate with different understandings and definitions of such concepts as person, leadership, office, freedom, responsibility, equality, and human rights.

The trend toward individualism is everywhere evident in our society. The exaltation of the individual has wrought many deep, profound, and lasting changes in all of our social structures. Individualism is a potent acid which has worked to dissolve a host of traditional relationships, structures, and values.

Individualism pushed to its extreme dissolves the binding quality of *all* human relationships. Communal bonds, communal values, and communal obligations are inexorably jeopardized by a one-sided stress on individual happiness. So, indeed, individualism has fanned the winds of a certain kind of "emancipation," but society in terms of *community* pays a heavy price.

Individualism is not a biblically defensible social norm. Individualism demands that many of the crucial ligaments which bind a society, a community, together be severed when it comes to establishing social roles, social life, and social structures. As such, individualism runs completely counter to the biblical stress on *covenant*, and to the New Testament teaching on the Christian community as the *body of Christ* (1 Cor. 12; Rom. 12). Individualism and certain companion notions of liberty, equality, personal rights, as currently understood and concretized in our society, are in fact destructive of true society. The tendency is to level all people and all relationships to the same functional plane. The idea of office is thereby emasculated and in principle robbed of all authority. *Authority* in our society has become a taboo word. The same is true for any notion or mention of *roles*—social roles, sexual roles, and other roles. Such notions do not fit with a secular, egalitarian spirit. Individualism horizontalizes. It removes, or at least reduces, the vertical. It diminishes height and depth in human relationships. It is a potent and pernicious affirmation of the autonomy of the (individual) person.

It is in this climate of an individualistic and functionalized society, with a mainly functional notion of office, that the question of women in ecclesiastical office faces us today. That is not an indictment or a prejudgment of the issue or of its relevance for the church. It does alert us to a context which we ought not to ignore. It would be naive to assume that the church, the Christian community, has been unaffected by the individualism and functionalism so characteristic of our times. Christians, too, have drunk from this modern well; they have to some degree imbibed and embraced this spirit. They too have bought into the modern world-and-life-view, the individualistic and functional assessment of the human person. The gospel which the church proclaims by the authority and injunction of her Lord calls for a "way of life" which at a great many points is at variance with that followed and promoted by the "world."

II. EXEGETICAL STUDIES

A. Old Testament Teaching

1. Before the Fall into Sin

a. Genesis 1

Genesis 1 reveals the magnificent and moving message, simple and yet unspeakably profound, that there is nothing in all creation of which God, Israel's God, our God, is not the sole Author and Creator. No forces or powers, whether good or evil, exist or can act independently. Genesis 1 proclaims the gospel of liberation for all who are ensnared in the web of paganism and polytheism, and for all who live in cringing fear of the so-called powers of nature. Mankind need have only one fear—the humble and yet adoring fear of the One, Almighty, Creator God.

It is in the context of this declaration of the universal kingship of God that we are informed of mankind's creation, Mankind, too, owes its existence to God. He is also our God and King. The key verses of Genesis 1:26-28 reveal

that mankind was created by God from the very beginning to consist of a unity, to consist of male and female. To a strongly male-dominated and male-oriented world, Genesis 1 proclaims the gospel that the woman is not an accident, an aberration of man, or inherently evil. Rather, woman like man has been from the beginning willed and created by God.

We are informed that of all of God's creative work mankind alone has been made in his image. Mankind is uniquely God's reflection on earth—not only male but female too. Man and woman, each and together, are God's image. Mankind's creation as male and female is crucial to imaging God. With reverence we may say that Genesis 1 reveals God's creation-work as one of being fruitful and multiplying. Mankind as male and female must image him, and that means—as we are plainly told—that men and women too must be fruitful and multiply. Further, mankind is to image God in a second way. As God—by virtue of being the source, the origin, of all that is—has dominion over all that he has made, so mankind as male and female is to have dominion over all that is. Creation is therefore subject to a dual dominion: namely, that of God and of mankind. It is in the harmonious rule of God and mankind that the creation finds its *shalom*, its Sabbath rest.

All that God says in Genesis 1 about imaging him, being fruitful, multiplying, subduing, having dominion, is said to *both*, to male and female. No part of the blessing of the mandate is given to one or the other only. Conjunction and parity come to the fore in the Genesis 1 revelation about male and female. Here we are told little if anything about the relationship that is to obtain between male and female as they image God in being fruitful, multiplying, subduing, having dominion. That is, chapter 1 says nothing significant about roles.

b. Genesis 2

Let us see whether chapter 2 says more. Genesis 2 provides the foundation for much New Testament teaching about the relationship between man and woman. Genesis 2:4-25 focuses specifically on the place of mankind within the created order. It provides the most direct Old Testament teaching regarding the role relationship which obtains between men and women.

However one views the relationship between Genesis 1 and 2, our conviction of the integrity of Scripture precludes us from reading them as being contradictory. Chapter 2, it appears, supplements, expands, enlarges on the relationship of God and man and of male and female as first revealed to us in chapter 1. Chapter 2 tells us first of all about the creation of man as male, Adam. And the first thing we want to note about Adam is that with respect to God, God is *first*, God is *prior*. Parallel to this with respect to the relation between Adam and woman—and that relation is the focus of our mandate and our study—it is not the woman but Adam who is *first*, Adam who is *prior*. This is so obvious that one may easily overlook it. Yet to the ancient mind, certainly to the Hebrew mind, this whole matter of firstness—priority—was very significant. The notion of being *first, prior*, still retains some of the same significant connotations today.

The Bible certainly makes a case for the significance of firstness. This particularly comes to expression in the notion of the *firstborn*. The firstborn was accorded a preeminence with respect to the others who followed. To be firstborn implied authority, rank, status, and inheritance rights. The father's

firstborn implied authority, rank, status, and inheritance rights. The father's firstborn was considered "the first issue of his strength" (Deut. 21:17).^{*} In the absence of the father the firstborn son had authority over his brothers and sisters (Gen. 24:55, 60). He ranked highest after the father. The firstborn inherited twice as much as every other son (Deut. 21:15-17). Among kings the right of the firstborn implied the succession to his father's rule (II Chron. 21:1-3). The high rank of the firstborn led to the metaphorical use of the term (Ex. 4:22; Ps. 89:27). The status of the firstborn retains its relevance in the New Testament. It is significant that Christ is called "the first-born of all creation" (Col. 1:15).

Technically speaking, Adam was not firstborn; he was *first-created*. Precisely because he was *first* he could not be born the way subsequent human generations were. But surely that technicality ought not to obscure the parallel between first-created and firstborn. The prerogatives of the firstborn were Adam's. Luke called Adam "the son of God" (Luke 3:38). With respect to the woman we may say that Adam was "firstborn."

Adam's dependence on God is almost embarrassingly driven home. Adam is "formed" by God as a potter might form clay. He is formed, in fact, from the *dust!* Adam receives his breath of life, his vitality, from God. Adam receives the garden—his well-watered "home"—and his food from God. Adam receives his how-to-live and how-to-stay-alive instructions from God. Adam receives his authority and power over all living things from God. Finally, Adam receives his fitting help, woman, wife, from God. All that Adam is and all that Adam has he is and has because of God. Adam must acknowledge God as his source, his origin, and from that flows the demand that Adam must *obey* God.

It is in the context of this declaration of Adam's total dependence on God, his accountability to God (do not eat), as well as his dominion over all creatures (he names them), that the creation of woman is narrated. We are told that it was not good that Adam should be alone. Indeed, for alone he could not carry out God's mandate to be fruitful and multiply, to subdue the earth and have dominion, to till the garden and to keep it. In a word, Adam needed a suitable and fitting helper.

Both in verses 18 and 20 we are told that the woman was created as Adam's *'ēšer kəneḡdā*. The first of these two Hebrew words means *help*, and the second means *corresponding to him, answering to him, suitable to him, or complementing him*. We may therefore translate the expression as *fitting help, suitable help*. Adam recognized no such fitting help among any of the animals he named. God therefore embarked on a new work of creation.

God created woman to be Adam's fitting helper. Many are quick to point out that the use of the word *help* does not imply any submission of the woman to Adam, nor that Adam in any way stands in a position of leadership or authority with respect to her. After all, the word *'ēšer* is used sixteen times in the Old Testament with reference to God's being man's help or helper. Yet no one would argue from this fact that God must submit to man, or that man is in a position of leadership and authority with respect to God. Quite true. But then God is nowhere said to have been created as man's fitting help either. On the contrary, man was created *by* and *for* God. Yet of the woman it is explicitly stated that she was created *for* Adam, given to

*Note: All Scripture quotations not otherwise identified are from the Revised Standard Version.

be Adam's fitting help. That's the difference, and that makes all the difference. The meaning and implications of the word *help* cannot be determined in the abstract, but only in the setting of a context.

Woman, like Adam, is said to owe her existence to the forming activity of God. In addition, however, we are told that she owes her existence also to Adam. God formed her from one of his ribs. She was taken *from*, out of, Adam, as well as having been made *for* him. *From* and *for*—this differs from Adam, who was made *from* the dust but not *for* the dust. Woman, therefore, has a dual origin and source, and is dependent upon and subject to both. The woman's relationship to Adam bears analogy, in fact, to Adam's relationship with God, who is clearly Adam's origin and source, *for* whom Adam was created, and thus *to* whom Adam owes allegiance and submission.

When God presents Adam with his fitting help, Adam breaks out in jubilation: "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman [*'ishshah*], because she was taken out of Man [*'ish*]" (Gen. 2:23). The unity, the fittingness of the woman with respect to the man is thus clearly expressed. Man and woman belong together. Nonetheless, it is Adam who sings this song, and it is Adam who calls (names) her "Woman." This latter observation is noteworthy because scholars point out that at that time—even more than today—the act of name-giving was the prerogative of someone in authority over the person or thing named. It would follow, then, from the fact that Adam called her "Woman," that Adam was in a position of authority over her.

Some dispute this conclusion on the ground that Adam is not said actually to *name* (the Hebrew noun is *shem*) her in the way that he is said to name (*qara' shemuth*) the animals. He is said only to "call" (*qara'*) her, and that, so it is argued, implies no authority *per se*. This argument, however, ignores the larger context. No such disjunction can be intended between *naming* and *calling*. In the activity of calling, Adam is imaging God. In Genesis 1 God is not said to *name* either; instead we are told that God *called* (*qara'*). God *called* the light Day and the darkness Night; he *called* the firmament Heaven; he *called* the dry land Earth; he *called* the gathered waters Seas. Undoubtedly God's activity of *calling* indicates his *authority* over that which he had made. Similarly, in the account of Adam's naming the animals (2:19–20) the accent is not on his assigning them a name (*shem*), but on his activity of calling (*qara'*), whereby his authority over them is indicated. "... The Lord God... brought them [the animals] to the man to see what he would call (*qara'*) them; and whatever the man *called* (*qara'*) every living creature, that was its *name* (*shem*)."

There are not a few who grant that in the Genesis 2 account Adam stands in a position of prominence and authority with respect to the woman. But they hold that the relationship or role here described between the first human pair applies to marriage, to the husband-wife relationship only. Is the marriage relationship indeed all that is in view? The fact is that Genesis 2 doesn't say. It doesn't even say that Adam and the woman were husband and wife. The words *'ish* and *'ishshah* can designate a husband and wife, but they can also designate the more generic man and woman. No doubt we correctly conclude that they were married from the fact that verse 24 draws a general conclusion which pertains to marriage: "Therefore a man leaves his

father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh." (Incidentally, this statement points to the leadership role of man [*'ish*], the initiative for establishing a new family and home rests primarily with him.)

It is the understanding and position of the committee, however, that what we learn about the relationship of Adam and woman in Genesis 2 has relevance beyond the bounds of marriage as well. Several considerations give us reasons for this. First, two words are used in Genesis 2 for man, namely, *adam* and *'ish*. The first, *adam*, is never used in the sense of husband but only in the more generic sense of *man*, *male*, *mankind*; sometimes, indeed, as a proper name. The word *'ish*, on the other hand, can be used in the same sense as *adam* but also in the sense of *husband*. When God says that it is "not good that the man should be alone: I will make him a helper fit for him," then the word used for man is the generic *adam*, and not the word *'ish*, which could mean husband. The fitting help is given to *adam*. And in Genesis 2:22 God is said to bring the woman to *adam*.

Second: the woman is clearly given to man to be his fitting help in fulfilling God's mandate (Gen. 1:26–28, 2:15). This mandate embraces the whole of human life. It is the "charter" for human life. It defines the enterprise of the whole human race as it is called to image God. It is true that Genesis 2 does not speak about the man-woman relationship as it comes to expression in politics, business, education, and so on. This is beyond the view of Genesis 2. Such relationships and realities can only come to expression as the human race grows, multiplies, unfolds, and develops. The only relationship we could reasonably expect to find mentioned in the context of the *first* and *only* human pair is the relationship of marriage. And, indeed, that is the relationship which is referred to. But we do not doubt that the first chapters of Genesis give fundamental, foundational revelation which sheds light on the task and calling of humankind as well as on the relationships which concern the whole human race in all of its subsequent expressions and manifestations.

Third: there is still another consideration which is not so much exegetical as practical. Some are of the opinion that if what is revealed in Genesis 2 about Adam's priority, prominence, authority, and leadership with respect to woman were applicable only to marriage, it would not need to be a factor in the church, business, education, statercraft, and the like. In our conviction this reasoning makes an assumption which is contrary to fact. It assumes that what holds for one area of life has no real bearing on other areas of life. But such is not the case. Just as economic, educational, political, and other social factors have a bearing on and impinge on marriage and family life, so the reverse is also true. The person involved in the business, or educational, or political arena of life does so not merely as a neutered human being, but does so as a man or a woman, and if married, then as a married man or a married woman. While modern individualism tends to rupture the integrity of life, it nonetheless remains a fact that human life is *one*. It is a *unity*, no part of which exists in isolation from the other. Thus it is difficult to see how a husband's priority, authority, and leadership can be confined to marriage only, can be isolated so as to function inside the bonds of marriage only. By way of anticipating the New Testament, it is not irrelevant at this juncture to point out that the apostle Paul certainly did not so confine it. He affirmed that the husband's position with respect to the wife had relevance for life in the church as well.

We conclude that Genesis 2 teaches that Adam was *first, predominant, preminent* with respect to the woman. His was the position of authority, of leadership. Yet the woman shares fully in Adam's life. With him she becomes a joint heir to the joy and blessing of life in the garden. She also becomes a joint heir with Adam to God's prohibition and warning. But she becomes an heir *through* Adam. Surely he was the one who introduced her to the garden and to life in the garden. He introduced her to God's promise and prohibition as well. She was "naturally" subject to his lead. And this lead was not a burden but a blessing; it was the *sine qua non* for her life. Left unprovided with Adam's leadership and left unarmed with Adam's life-and-death knowledge, she would have been exposed to the danger of death by eating unwittingly of the forbidden fruit.

That in fact she did eat the forbidden fruit was no fault of either God or Adam. Genesis 3:3 says that she knew about the tree of which she was not to eat. Against better knowledge she submitted herself to the lies and deceit of the serpent. In so doing she rebelled not only against the command of God but also against the good (that is, obedient-to-God) leadership given her by Adam. In her disobedience she set both God *and* Adam aside and took the serpent as her leader, following and submitting to the serpent's destructive lead.

2. After the Fall: Genesis 3

It is significant to note that after the fall had occurred, "The Lord God called to the man [*Adam*], and said to him, 'Where are you?'" (Gen. 3:9). Though the woman had first eaten of the fruit of the tree, God called upon the man *first* to give an account of what had taken place. In the light of what we have seen about the priority, the authority, and the leadership of Adam in Genesis 2, it is not surprising that God calls on Adam first: God holds Adam *first of all* responsible for the weal and woe of humankind. His rank and position understandably place him in a representative role. This confirms our understanding of the way in which Genesis 2 describes the role of man and woman and their relation to each other.

It seems noteworthy, in fact, that in being called to account, the order is: Adam-woman-serpent. In pronouncing the sentences the reverse order is followed: serpent-woman-Adam. This may well be deliberate, a way of structuring which focuses the chief attention on Adam, who is thus mentioned first and last.

Genesis 3 informs us that God passed sentence upon all three of the parties (serpent, woman, man) directly involved in the fall. The serpent is said to be cursed (v. 14); the ground is also said to be cursed for Adam's sake (v. 17), but the word *curse* is not used for the man and woman themselves. In their cases we prefer, therefore, to speak of God's *sentence* or *judgment* upon them.

The judgment which—in terms of our mandate—is of particular significance to us is the one God pronounced upon the woman (or *wife* [*ishshah*], see 3:16). In considering in this verse the words "he shall rule over you," words which are of crucial significance for our mandate, it is important to note a parallel with the judgment passed upon the man (vv. 17-19).

The ground is cursed because of Adam's sin: "In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life." Yet in the light of Genesis 2:15, where God is said to have put man in the garden to "till it and keep it," it is clear that work as such is not a curse. Had man not fallen into sin he would presumably have tilled the soil and

worked the ground in unbroken joy and happiness. We therefore note two elements in this judgment on the man: (1) There is continuity with an original arrangement: man must continue to work (keep and till) and the ground will continue to provide food; this continuity is a blessing. (2) There is discontinuity in that man's work will henceforth be attended by distortion and hardship; he shall eat bread "in the sweat of his face"; this discontinuity is the painful sentence.

When we now turn to God's judgment upon the woman (wife), we find the same two elements: continuity and discontinuity.

To the woman he said,

"I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children,

yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you" (Gen. 3:16).

From the command to be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 1:28) we may infer that the woman would have brought forth children even if there had been no fall. We therefore note two elements in God's judgment on the woman: (1) There is continuity with an original arrangement: the woman may continue to bear children; this continuity is a blessing. (2) There is discontinuity in that woman's childbearing will henceforth be attended by greatly increased hardship and pain; this discontinuity is the painful sentence.

We note the same two elements in the words of God's judgment upon the woman which read: "yet your desire shall be for your husband." The word here used for *desire*, *teshuqah*, is used very rarely in the Old Testament. It is used to describe the desire of sin to master Cain in Genesis 4:7, and the desire of the lover for the beloved in the Song of Solomon 7:10. In Genesis 3:16 it probably indicates the desire or longing for sexual fellowship of the wife with her husband. Thus (1) there is continuity with an original arrangement: the woman retains the desire for her husband without which procreation would be impeded; this continuity is a blessing. (2) There is discontinuity in that this desire will henceforth be attended by pain-filled childbearing; this discontinuity is the painful sentence.

We come now to the last words of God's judgment upon the woman: "and he shall rule over you." Some maintain that the matter of the husband's "rule" over the woman is a new, post-fall reality. Our study of Genesis 2, however, led us to the conclusion that this is not so. We have seen that Adam held a position of priority, authority, and leadership with respect to the woman. Thus, once again, in the words "he shall rule over you" we note continuity with an original arrangement. Adam's priority and authority are reaffirmed after he had submitted himself to the woman's disobedient lead.

More must be said, however. These words were spoken as an aspect of God's judgment upon the woman: here for the first time the Bible specifically states that man will rule over the woman. The Hebrew word used (*maschal*) does not necessarily connote a sinful kind of domineering; it means a rule which may take either a beneficent or malevolent form. As we noted, man's leadership over the woman, his role as a direction-setter, was already established as an aspect of the original creation structure. But these words were spoken after the fall, in a context where the woman was told what will be the penalty for her sin. Although she should have followed her husband's leadership, she had sinfully taken the lead in the garden of Eden, influencing her husband to follow her

example in eating of the forbidden fruit. Now God says to her that, as a penalty for her transgression, her husband shall rule over her. Though in itself the rule of husband over wife does not need to be sinful, the fact that these words were spoken after the fall, and as a part of God's judgment on the woman, implies that the ruling of the wife by the husband will from now on tend to be a sinful or oppressive kind of rule. Ideally this rule should be of a benevolent and loving nature, but because of the fall this rule will tend to be tyrannical and dominating. The woman's penalty, then, is not the rule of the husband as such, but the sinful exercise of that rule.

That this is the correct interpretation of these words is strengthened when we consider the analogy between these words and the words spoken to the man in verses 17-19: Adam, who had been told to till the soil in order to provide food for himself and his loved ones, was now informed that this work (which in itself was a blessing) would be attended by suffering and discomfort: "in toil you shall eat of it [the ground] all the days of your life." Comparably, the woman is told that her husband will continue to have a leadership role over her—which in itself is a blessing, and which reflects the structure built into human relationships at the time of creation. But because of the fall, this rule will now become a sinful one, bringing suffering and hardship to the woman.

We conclude that the fall of man into sin did not take away man's leadership role over the woman, nor did the fall introduce this rule as something new. This leadership role of the man was there from the beginning, but because of the fall it became a sinful and distorted kind of leadership. In the redemptive process the sinful distortion of this role is to be taken away, but the leadership role itself is to be retained—purified and sanctified by grace.

3. The Rest of the Old Testament

In the rest of the Old Testament the leadership role of the man is recognized in various ways. At the time of the flood God came to Noah as the head and representative of his family—indeed, in a sense, as the head of the new generation of mankind which was now to fill the earth. During the patriarchal period Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob functioned as the heads of God's covenant people. The leader of the people of God during the time of the Exodus was again a man, Moses. Through Moses God gave the people of Israel his laws; these laws were addressed to males as the heads of families—note, for example, the wording of the tenth commandment of the decalogue: "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife" (Ex. 20:17).

Generally, with few exceptions, the judges, military leaders, kings, and prophets of Israel were all men. Among these exceptions Miriam, the sister of Moses, should be mentioned. She is called a prophetess in Exodus 15:20. Together with Moses she led the people of Israel in singing a song of praise to God for their deliverance from Egypt. During the desert journey she functioned as a prophetess and leader. Later she and Aaron tried to undermine the authority of Moses. In punishment for this act of rebellion she was stricken with leprosy (Num. 12:1-10). It is obvious that in this instance Miriam's leadership was not a blessing. Nevertheless, later God included her as one of the leaders he had sent at the time of the exodus (Mic. 6:4).

Another important exception to the above-mentioned rule was Deborah, who was recognized by the Israelites as one of the judges (Judg. 4:4-5). She sat as judge over various civil cases brought before her. She commanded Barak to gather an army together and to attack Sisera, the Canaanite general. At Barak's

insistence, she accompanied him in the battle in which Sisera's hosts were decisively defeated. Deborah stands out in the narrative as the real leader, a person of stronger character and stronger faith than Barak. Some commentators surmise that the appointment of Deborah as judge implied a negative judgment about the spiritual state of Israel at that time, and was for the shaming of Israel. This might be so, but it is not explicitly stated.

In this connection mention must also be made of Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab, the only queen of Judah spoken of in the Old Testament. She was queen mother while her son Ahaziah was king. After his death she massacred all the royal seed, her own grandchildren (with the exception of Joash, who had been hidden). For the next six years she was queen of Judah. In II Chronicles 24:7 she is described as "that wicked woman." Obviously, Athaliah's evil reign did nothing to suggest legitimate leadership roles for women in the Old Testament period.

Another exception of which we should take account is Huldah, the prophetess, who lived in Jerusalem during the reign of Josiah (II Kings 22:8-20). When the Book of the Law was discovered in the temple, the high priest and the counselors of the king consulted Huldah for advice on what to do about the long-neglected words of the book. Her prophetic utterance was accepted as coming from the Lord. Why Huldah was consulted rather than Jeremiah or Zephaniah, both of whom were prophesying at that time, is not known. Commentators conjecture that perhaps Jeremiah was then too young, or that possibly neither Jeremiah nor Zephaniah were in Jerusalem at that time. We are not told what the reason was, but what is clear is that Huldah did function as a prophetess and that her words were accepted as authoritative.

Though it is significant that the women just discussed functioned as they did in Old Testament times, it must be remembered that they were indeed exceptions to the rule. The general rule, as was said, was that the judges, military leaders, kings, and prophets of Israel were men.

The elders among the Israelites were always men. During the time of the monarchy the rulers of Israel were all kings, with one exception, as noted above. The leaders of the people during the return from exile were again men: Joshua, Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah. The leaders of the religious life of Israel after the exodus were invariably male priests—there were no women among them. The exclusion of women from leadership in the cultic area, in fact, set Israel apart from neighboring nations. It should be noted, however, that the headship of the man as described in the Old Testament extends not only to the cultic area but to the judicial, military, and political areas as well. The rest of the Old Testament, therefore, further illustrates the headship of the man over the woman which was found to have been established in Genesis 2 and 3.

B. Observations on the Concept of Headship

Our mandate is "to examine the meaning and scope of headship in the Bible as it pertains to the relationships of husband and wife and man and woman...." We should note at the outset that the term "headship" is not found in the Bible. The Bible does, however, use the word *head*. After we have met the word on a few occasions, we tend to develop the concept of "headship" as a quick way of referring to the idea or set of ideas associated with the word *head*. The concept of headship has become widely used in our current church discussions. In fact, we have come to use the phrase, "the headship principle," suggesting that the headship idea is seen to be a leading one for our lives. Our present study must

seek as far as possible to learn what the Bible means when it uses the word *head*, and in the light of this biblical usage either to confirm or to modify our traditional understanding of "headship," in the hope that in this way we shall also gain further insight into the question of the relationship between men and women.

As we begin this section of our study, it is important to note that we are dealing with a metaphor. The frequent uses of the word *head* in the Bible to designate an aspect of human or animal anatomy are not our concern. Rather, our concern is with the metaphorical use of the term *head*. The recognition that we are dealing with a metaphor should alert us to use care in our interpretation. When Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-dresser" (John 15:1), we must ask how Jesus is like a vine and how the Father is like a vine-dresser. The key to a sound interpretation is to see the likeness or analogy intended. In our study we shall have to face the question: In what sense is the word *head* used in each passage where we find it?

In modern English the word *head* has come to be used in an extraordinary variety of senses. After stating the literal sense of *head* as a part of a human or animal body, Webster's *Third International Dictionary* goes on to list twenty-four additional ways of using the word, with several subheadings under most of these headings. In which sense, now, is Christ the head of the church or the husband the head of the wife? Does the word *head* as used in the Bible have one continuous sense or does it have a combination of senses? Paul's uses of the metaphor will be crucial for our study. Does Paul always use the metaphor *head* in the same way? Does the meaning of this word perhaps change from one of Paul's Epistles to another? Might the meaning even change within a single epistle? Responsible biblical interpretation must be alert to these things.

C. The Biblical Words for Head

Our committee mandate calls for the examination of the meaning and scope of *headship* in the Bible "as it pertains to the relationships of husband and wife and man and woman...." The specific passages which use the word *head* in connection with these relationships are found in both the Old and the New Testament. The Old Testament term is the Hebrew word *rosh*, and the New Testament term is the Greek word *kephalē*. Since the New Testament usage of *kephalē* may have been influenced by the Old Testament use of the Hebrew word *rosh*, we shall first look at the various meanings and usages of *rosh*.

Uses of *rosh*. (1) Literal usage: the head of a person or animal: Genesis 40:16; Leviticus 1:2; etc. (2) *Rosh* may denote the whole person or the life of the person: I Samuel 28:2 (where "keeper of my head" (KJV) is rendered in the RSV "bodyguard for life"). (3) *Rosh* may indicate the top, summit, upper end of something, e.g., of a mountain (Gen. 8:5), or of Jacob's ladder (Gen. 28:12). (4) *Rosh* may also indicate first, beginning, source, e.g., Judges 7:19 (the beginning of the middle watch), Genesis 2:10 (the river became four heads or "head-streams" [NIV]), Isaiah 40:21 (from the beginning).

(5) Of particular interest for our study is the use of *rosh* as denoting the chief, foremost person, or leader. This is a very frequent usage. There can be heads in various societal relations: e.g., chief priest (II Kings 25:18; II Chron. 19:11), heads over the people (Ex. 18:25), heads of thousands (Num. 1:16), heads of their fathers' houses (Ex. 6:14; Num. 1:4; 7:2; Josh. 22:14; and many more). In this usage of the word *rosh* there are clear indications of rulership or of being in a

position of authority over others. Sometimes *rosh* is used for the first in a series of leaders (e.g., I Chron. 12:9; 23:8, 11, 19, 20), an indication of how closely the position of chief (head) is associated with seniority or priority. *Rosh* can also be a designation for God: II Chronicles 13:12 ("God is with us at our head," or "as our head," [in the context of battle formation]); I Chronicles 29:11 ("you [God] are exalted as head over all" [NIV]). There can be no doubt that the Old Testament word *rosh* frequently meant a ruler, a person exercising authority over others.

Uses of *kephalē*. One of the most complete Greek lexicons (covering Homeric, classical, and *koinē* Greek) is that of Liddell, Scott, Jones, and McKenzie. It is based on Greek writings from 1000 B. C. to about A. D. 600. This lexicon lists the following meanings for *kephalē*: head, the whole person, the life, the upper part of anything, the source of a river, source or origin, starting point, crown or completion, sum, total, or conclusion. It will be noted that the meaning "ruler," "one possessing authority," or "one with superior rank" is not found in this list. This raises the question of whether the word *kephalē* in its New Testament usage has some meanings which Liddell-Scott failed to mention.

If secular Greek does not show *kephalē* used in the sense of a ruler or authoritative person, might not such a usage have arisen by way of biblical Greek? The Hebrew Old Testament Scriptures were translated into Greek between 250 and 150 B. C., in the so-called Septuagint translation. In the Septuagint *rosh* was sometimes translated by *kephalē*. In all, the Septuagint translators used nearly thirty different Greek words to translate *rosh*. When these translators selected a Greek word to translate *rosh* as head of a people or a family, they almost invariably used the Greek word *archōn* or one of its cognates—a word group that has the double meaning of "beginning" and "rulership." According to Berkeley and Alvera Mickelsen (*Christianity Today*, Feb. 20, 1981, p. 21) there are only 8 clear instances out of a possible 180 where the Septuagint translators used *kephalē* for *rosh* when the Hebrew word indicated a ruler or person in authority—and most of these, according to the Mickelsens, are in relatively obscure places. So one cannot make a strong and clear case to the effect that by New Testament times *kephalē* has developed a new usage by way of Septuagintal Greek. The Septuagintal translators very seldom chose *kephalē* to translate that idea so prominent in the Hebrew word *rosh*: namely, ruling headship.

However, one cannot exclude the meaning of ruling headship from the Greek word *kephalē*. After all, the usage can be found in the Septuagint: e.g., in Judges 11:11; II Samuel 22:44 (= Ps. 17:44); Isaiah 7:8f. It has also been proposed that *kephalē* and *archē* are used interchangeably in the Septuagint—the *kephalē* of Isaiah 9:13 becomes *archē* in verse 14. These two words are indeed very close in meaning. This closeness in meaning has been used as an argument to strengthen the "rulership" sound in *kephalē*; it has also been used as an argument to strengthen the "source" sound in *kephalē*. In short, we are here confronted by subtleties of language usage and language translation which permit no easy answers. *Kephalē* as a metaphor could be used in quite a variety of senses, both in secular and in Old Testament biblical Greek.

It is interesting to note what Stephen Bedale says in an article entitled "The Meaning of *kephalē* in the Pauline Epistles" (*Journal of Theological Studies*, V, [1954], pp. 211-15). He agrees that in common Greek usage the word *kephalē* does not mean ruler or person with superior authority. But, he adds, in order to understand the meaning of *kephalē* in the New Testament we must take account

of the uses of the word *rosh* in the Old Testament, since the New Testament is a completion of the Old and must therefore never be seen in isolation from the Old. *Rosh* in the Old Testament, he goes on to say, may mean not only "head" but also "beginning" or "source." Bedale admits that in the Septuagint *kephalē* comes to be used interchangeably with *archē*, which means "beginning"; therefore *kephalē* also often means "beginning" or "source" in the New Testament. But he goes on to say (and this is very important) that the word *kephalē* in the New Testament "unquestionably carries with it the idea of 'authority,'" adding that "such authority in social relationships derives from a relative priority (causal rather than merely temporal) in the order of being" (p. 215).

We should also note what has been said about Paul's use of the word "head" (*kephalē*) by Markus Barth in his *Commentary on Ephesians in the Anchor Bible* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1974). Barth states that when Paul uses the noun *head* to describe Jesus Christ, he is not giving this word a meaning independent of the various senses attached to respective Hebrew or Greek terms (Vol. 1, p. 183). From the Old Testament conception of *head* as meaning "ruler" or "chief" we may understand what Paul means when he speaks of Christ as head over principalities, powers, and all things.

Then the OT political meaning of head is indeed taken up... Again, the same is true of the statement "the Messiah is the head of each man" (1 Cor. 11:3). The same position of authority is proclaimed in the affirmation that the "head over all" is appointed "head of the church" (Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18) (*ibid.*, pp. 184-85).

Also, Paul could and probably did learn from the OT... the idea expressed in Ephesians and Colossians... that the *head* exerts a one-sided control over all that is subjected to it (*ibid.*, p. 189).

Barth goes on to say that Paul's understanding of the word *head* may also have been influenced by the views held by the doctors of his time. Hippocrates, for example, a Greek physician often called "the father of medicine," who lived approximately from 460 to 380 B.C., is quoted as follows:

The eyes, ears, tongue, hands, and feet carry out their work according to the discernment... of the brain. The brain is in command, the members obey. It exerts its rule by sending dispatches to the seat of awareness... and it is also the interpreter of the messages coming to it from awareness. Therefore the brain both instructs and interprets (*ibid.*, pp. 187-88; the reference in Hippocrates is to his *De Morbo Sacro*, 16-17).

Barth adds: "In sum: according to Hippocrates the brain is the source of thought and of awareness, and the ruler and judge of all other things" (*ibid.*, p. 188). We could say that for Hippocrates the head, in which the brain is found, is indeed the directive center of man.

Markus Barth goes on to state that among the Greeks the views of Hippocrates were further developed by Galen, who lived from approximately A.D. 130 to 200, and who summed up the accumulated scientific knowledge attained between 300 B.C. and A.D. 100. In other words, Barth believes that Galen's views represent the scientific understanding of the function of the head which was prevalent in Paul's day. Since, however, Galen lived after Paul, we shall not summarize Galen's position, though we can understand why Barth refers to him.

Putting together the evidence from the Old Testament and that from Hippocrates and Galen, Barth goes on to say:

Just like the OT concept of "head," so also the scientists' views suggested to Paul a completely unilateral and irreversible relationship between head and body, or between ruler and subjects respectively. If Christ is the head then he is the "greatest power," the "source," the "beginning" or the "rule" (*archē*), the "acropolis" of all members (*ibid.*, pp. 190-91).

Barth summarizes Paul's understanding of the headship of Christ as follows: The image of Christ, the head of the body, denotes his authority over the church, his power exerted in the church, his presence to the church, the unity of the church, and the coordinated operation of all its members (*ibid.*, p. 192).

The solution to our problem, then, would seem to be this: the meanings of "source" and "person having authority over someone" for the New Testament word *kephalē* are not mutually exclusive, but rather inclusive. In other words, *kephalē* in the New Testament can mean both "source" and "person with authority." This point will be further discussed under the exegesis of the following passages: Ephesians 1:22; 5:23; 1 Corinthians 11:3, 8-9.

The Arndt and Gingrich Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament gives as one of the meanings of *kephalē* the following: "fig.—in the case of living beings, to denote superior rank" (p. 431). We shall have to look carefully at each use of the word to determine what it means in each passage. But we are not justified in ruling out from the outset the possibility that *kephalē* may sometimes mean "a person with superior rank" or "a person who has authority over others."

D. The New Testament "Head" Passages

In the New Testament the word *head* (*kephalē*) appears seventy-four times. We pass over fifty-seven of these passages, since they speak of the literal *head*, a part of the human or animal anatomy. Our interest is in the seventeen remaining passages where the word *head* is used in a metaphorical sense. Most of these make a statement about Christ's being head. But twice there is a statement about man as head in connection with a statement about Christ as head. We shall organize our review of the material under four contexts for Christ's headship, and append the discussion of man's headship to the appropriate section on Christ's headship. The sections are as follows:

1. Christ as Head of the Corner
2. Christ as Head over All Things
3. Christ as Head of His Body, the Church (The Husband as Head of His Wife)
4. Christ as Head of the Man (The Man as Head of the Woman)

1. *Christ as Head of the Corner* (Matt. 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:7)

Psalms 118:22 is quoted five times in the New Testament. The psalm verse describes the way the stone rejected by the builders became the head of the corner. All five New Testament passages see in this psalm verse a picture of Jesus' rejection by his contemporaries and of his exaltation by God. The early speeches in Acts suggest that this point was the very heart of earliest Christian preaching in Jerusalem—it directly confronted Jerusalem with the issues. The frequency of the quotation in the New Testament testifies to the prominence of its usage among the early Christians.

"Headship" is a metaphor widely used in architecture. It speaks of being at the top in a position of prominence and importance. When it is connected with the idea of previous rejection, as it is in the psalm verse, headship carries ideas of exaltation, recognition of true worth, vindication.

The remaining twelve instances of the New Testament usage of *head* as a metaphor are all from Paul. They occur in three of his letters: 1 Corinthians 11:3 (three times), 4, 5; Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; 5:23 (two times); Colossians 1:18; 2:10; and 2:19.

2. Christ as Head over All Things (Eph. 1:22; Col. 2:10)

Ephesians 1:22. In Ephesians, while Paul does not directly quote Psalm 118:22 about the rejected stone becoming the head of the corner, his thought is clearly along the same lines. His beginning doxology and prayer is that Christians may realize the hope, the riches, and the incomparably great power at work in them (1:18-20). This is the power which raised Christ from the dead and "seated him at his [God's] right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way" (1:20-23, NIV). Christ has indeed become supreme.

"Far above (*huperanō*)...placed under (*hypotaxen hupo*)...head over (*kephalē hypēr*)"—here is an emphasis on order of rank, on superior position over against inferior position. Furthermore, Christ's high position and appointment confirm the point of the incomparably great power at work in behalf of believers (v. 19). Thus, "head over" clearly speaks of power, authority, rulership over things placed in subjection. The Ephesians 1:22 statement "head over everything" (NIV) or "head over all things" (RSV) depicts a ruling, authoritative headship.

Colossians 2:10. In his letter to the Colossians there is another reference by Paul to Christ's headship in relation to other powers. In Colossians 2:8 Paul warns against becoming prey to false teachings and false systems which come from very rudimentary sources rather than from Christ. Paul continues: "For in him [Christ] the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness of life in him, who is the head of all rule and authority" (Col. 2:9-10).

The phrase "head of all rule and authority" sounds very similar to the phrase in Ephesians, "head over all things." Two things are different, however. First, there is a different grammatical construction. Ephesians had the word "head" followed by the specific preposition "over" (*hypēr*) and the plural object, "all things" (*panta*). In Colossians "head" is followed simply by the genitive case and, although there are two objects, they are both singular: "all rule and authority: (*pasēs archēs kai exousias*). The idea of "head over" is not specific in the Colossian phrase as it is in the Ephesian one. The Colossian phrase could express a source headship; it is not of necessity an expression of rulership and supremacy.

The second difference is the context. The Ephesian context has very clear expressions indicating superior and inferior position. In Colossians the context is much more a placing of Christ alongside the rival powers momentarily to examine who it is through whom God is really working and who is really the bearer of power and life. Colossians powerfully affirms God's working through

Christ. In fact, in his recent working through Christ, God has publicly exposed the rival powers to humiliation (v. 15). Hence the statement, "In [Christ] the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness of life in him" (vv. 9-10a) is a strong affirmation of Christ as our source of life and fullness. When Paul adds immediately the thought of Christ being "the head of all rule and authority" (v. 10b), he may be thinking not so much of Christ's rulership over all the rival powers as of Christ's being the source of life and power for any and every instance of rule or authority. There is nothing to fear and nothing to be attracted to in any rival spiritual power or ruler. These rival powers all derive from the very Christ who is the source of our own fullness of life. The idea of *head* in the sense of "source" can find support in the context.

Whether *head* in the sense of "ruler" can find support in the near context depends largely on whether one reads verse 15 with Christ as the subject or with God as the subject. Here the history of interpretation reveals a very long exegetical debate which we shall not rehearse. Rather, we observe that for Colossians 2:10 a case can be made in either direction: *head* as "source" or *head* as "authoritative ruler." It will depend on which exegetical choices are made in the context.

In summary, Paul twice speaks of Christ's headship in relation to all things or other powers. In Ephesians 1:22 this headship clearly speaks of rulership over all things. In Colossians 2:10 the headship is not as clearly a headship of ruling; the more prominent idea may be head in the sense of source. Even if it is the latter, however, the idea of authority over "all rule and authority" cannot be entirely excluded.

3. Christ as Head of His Body, the Church; the Husband as Head of His Wife (Eph. 1:23; Col. 2:19; 1:18; Eph. 4:15; 5:23)

Five times Christ's headship is affirmed in the context of another metaphor, namely, that the church is his body. "Head of his body, the church" speaks of a different kind of relationship from that expressed by "head over all things."

Ephesians 1:23. Christ relates to his church differently from the way he relates to the spiritual powers in high places. Ephesians 1:22-23 says, "God...appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body..." (NIV). We have just reviewed the strong affirmation of authoritative headship found in the expression "head over everything." Now we note that this universal headship over everything is for the benefit of the church, "his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way" (NIV). If the church is Christ's fullness, Christ and his church belong inseparably together. As Herman Bavnick used to say, "We must never think of Christ apart from his people, nor of Christ's people apart from Christ." The words of verse 23, therefore, would seem to suggest that the primary sense in which Christ is here thought of as the head of the church is the organic one: Christ is the source of the church's life; he is organically one with the church which is his body. Christ, in other words, is the church's organic head.

Yet the other sense of headship, headship of rule, is not totally absent here. For surely the benefit of Christ's universal rulership ("head over everything") will not accrue to the church unless it shares in the privilege of being ruled by Christ and follows his guidance. Christ is surely the Lord of the church as well as the Ruler of the universe. And it is precisely this combination of thoughts which gives the church its security and its hope. Christ is therefore pictured in this passage not only as the church's Organic Head but also as her Ruling Head.

William Hendriksen, from whom the distinction between Organic Head and Ruling Head has been borrowed, puts it this way:

As head Christ causes his church to live and to grow (Col. 2:19; cf. Eph. 4:15, 16). He is its *Organic Head*. As head he also exercises authority over the church; in fact, over all things in the interest of the church (Eph. 1:20-23). He is its *Ruling Head*. It is doubtful whether either of these two ideas is ever completely absent when Christ is called head of the church, though sometimes one connotation and then again the other receives the greater emphasis, as the context indicates. And in such a passage as Ephesians 5:23, 24 both ideas (*growth and guidance*) are brought to the fore (*New Testament Commentary* on Col. 1:18).

Colossians 2:19. In the section on "Christ as Head over All Things" we mentioned Paul's warning to the Colossians not to follow false teachers (Col. 2:8). God is at work in Christ. These teachers pursue shadows and phantoms. They delight in false humility and the worship of angels. Their unspiritual minds puff them up with idle notions. In Christ, however, there is real substance (2:17). Paul makes clear why a false teacher of this sort cannot possibly present the truth: "He [the false teacher] has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow" (2:19, NIV).

The head here mentioned is obviously Christ, and the body of which he is the head must stand for the church. The person who has lost contact with Christ, the head of the church, cannot present true teaching to the members of the church. The church is here said to grow out of Christ, its head. The body which grows out of Christ is said to be "supported" (a more acceptable rendering of *epichōrēgoumenon* than the RSV's "nourished") and "held together" by its ligaments and sinews—an obvious reference to its unity. "Growing out of Christ" is a figurative expression indicating that Christ is the source of the church's life, growth, and unity. In this passage, therefore, the head metaphor is not primarily picturing the exercise of superior rank or authority over another, but rather the organic supplying of life, strength, and well-being to another. With Christ as your head you have life.

Colossians 1:18. In the letter to the Colossians there is another instance of Christ's being affirmed as "the head of the body, the church." This expression appears in the closely packed statement found in 1:15-20, a statement which is often called a Christological Hymn because of its rhythm and careful balancing of ideas over against each other. Verses 15-17 survey Christ's Godward direction and connection. Christ is the image of God, the visible expression and representation of God. Further, Christ is the firstborn of all creation, having priority and precedence over everything in the created cosmos. In fact, he is the means and the channel through whom all things were created; he therefore holds the position of supremacy over all created things.

Verses 18-20 look in the churchward direction. Verse 18 reads as follows: "He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent." Here the headship metaphor is in series with such concepts as beginning (*archē*), firstborn (*protokos*), and preeminence (or "having the supremacy," NIV; *prōtēitōn*). The series as a whole suggests favored position, privilege, attainment, and can naturally lead to ideas of strength, superiority, power, authority, or rulership.

Paul now goes on to note that all the fullness of God dwells in Christ, and that

through Christ God is reconciling everything to himself by way of Christ's cross. The thought of Christ's superior position is immediately focused on his service in bringing others into fellowship with God. As head, beginning, firstborn, he is applying the reconciliation won on the cross. He is doing this as "head of the body, the church"—a head in organic union with the body.

The thought of authority and rule, therefore, is clearly present in the headship metaphor used in this passage, though the understanding of Christ as the organic head of the church and as the source of its strength and unity is not absent. Note that Christ is here called "the first-born from the dead"—the expression "first-born" carries with it the implication of superior rank. Note also the concluding clause, "that in everything he might be preeminent" (or "might have the supremacy," NIV). As the risen Lord, Christ is here said to be supreme in authority over all creation, specifically over the church which is his body.

F. F. Bruce, in commenting on this passage, puts it this way:

This Christ, he [Paul] affirms, "is the head of the body, the church." Christ and His people, that is to say, are viewed together as a living unit; Christ is the head, exercising control and direction; believers are His body, individually His limbs and organs, under His control, obeying His direction, performing His work (*Commentary on Ephesians and Colossians*, Erdmanns, 1957, p. 201).

Ephesians 4:15. The statement in Ephesians 4:15-16 has much similarity to what we found in Colossians 2:10. Once again the focus is on the head as source and supplier for the organic growth of the body: "Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ; from him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" (Eph. 4:15-16, NIV). Through speaking the truth in love we who are members of Christ's church must grow up into a richer and fuller union with Christ who is our head. Christ is the head who supplies life abundantly to the body. Since the many members of the body all draw their life from a single source, there is a force working toward their unity. They must grow together, developing each part's strengths and potentials. The head-body metaphor is here used in the service of Paul's overall theme in Ephesians—a plea for unity. Whereas both Colossians 2:19 and Ephesians 4:16 picture the body as growing from Christ the head, Ephesians 4:15 adds the thought of our growing into him. Both figures strikingly portray the organic relationship between head and body. Headship here is organic headship, but not exclusively.

Ephesians 5:23. This passage, together with the preceding and following verses, reads as follows in the New International Version: "(22) Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. (23) For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. (24) Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything." In this passage Christ is explicitly called the head of the church. In addition, we note that this is the first instance we have looked at in which the husband is called the head of his wife. What, now, are the meanings of each of these headships?

Paul here tells wives to submit to their husbands as to the Lord. The word translated "submit to" (supplied from verse 21) is *hypotassomenoi*, which means, in the active voice, to rank under or to put into subjection; in the middle or

passive voice, which is used here, it means to be subject to or to submit oneself to. Wives are here directed to submit themselves to their husbands "as to the Lord"—that is, as part of their obedience to the Lord. Not only so, but there is an analogy between their obedience to Christ and their submitting themselves to their husbands: "Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything" (v. 24).

Let us first look at the second headship mentioned, the headship of Christ. Since the duty of the church is here described as that of being submissive to Christ, it is clear that the headship of Christ here expressed is primarily a headship of rule—a headship involving authority over others. To be sure, in verse 23 Christ is also called the Savior of the church, and in verse 26 Christ is further described as the one who loved the church and gave himself up for her. Christ, therefore, exercises his ruling headship over the church in a loving and self-sacrificing way. Christ's rule is beneficent and loving; but it is a rule nevertheless.

We now come to the question of the meaning of the headship of the husband over the wife. Paul explicitly speaks of an analogy between the headship of the husband and the headship of Christ: "For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church..." (v. 23). Since the headship of Christ as here described is primarily a headship of rule, we conclude that the headship of the husband, analogous to that of Christ, must also be a headship of rule, or a direction-setting kind of headship. That this is so is evident from the requirement that wives should submit to their husbands as to the Lord. Herman Ridderbos's comment on this passage is significant:

The question as to what is meant by "head" in these contexts [the very passages which have just been discussed under heading 3] admits of being answered in particular from the pericope of Ephesians 5:22ff... From the headship of the husband over the wife and of Christ over the church here first of all the subjection of the wife to the husband is inferred, just as the church is subject to Christ. Headship points therefore to a position of superiority and rulership (*heerschappij en zeggenschap*) (Paul, trans. by J. R. De Witt, p. 381).

The emphasis of this entire passage (vv. 22-33), however, is on the way this headship is to be carried out. This headship is to be exercised in the way that Christ exercises his headship over the church: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church..." (v. 25). As Paul continues to develop this analogy, he makes two points: first, husbands are to exercise their headship by loving their wives in a self-sacrificing way; and, second, husbands are to exercise their headship by loving their wives in an enabling way.

Paul develops the first of these two points in verses 25-27. Here he indicates that the headship he has in mind is to be seen in connection with Christ's activities as Savior of the church: "For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior" (v. 23). Paul, in fact, emphasizes this point in the words he goes on to address to husbands: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless" (vv. 25-27, NIV). Husbands, therefore, are to exercise their direction-setting headship over their wives in a loving way, following the pattern set by Christ. As Christ gave

himself for the church, so husbands should give themselves to and for their wives. As Christ's purpose with the church is to make her holy and radiant, so the husband should try to help his wife be a radiant Christian. The husband should exercise his headship over the wife not in a tyrannical or domineering kind of way, but in a self-sacrificing, loving way.

Paul now goes on to show that husbands ought to exercise their headship over their wives in an enabling way. He does this in verses 28-32. In these verses he shows us that the husband's headship should involve the same solicitous care of his wife which any head shows toward its own body: "Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body" (vv. 28-30). The thought here is that the husband should nourish and cherish his wife as a man nourishes and cherishes his own body. In this way, again, he will follow the pattern Christ has given us, for Christ does this for the church, which is his body. Paul is here speaking about an organic tie between head and body—a tie which is an important aspect of headship.

Lest the strong organic tie between head and body may still not have been caught, Paul goes on to say, quoting Genesis 2:24, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and will be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church" (vv. 31-32, NIV). Husband and wife are now "one flesh." Head and body are one life. Following Christ's example, therefore, the husband must cherish his wife, seek her best interests, seek her spiritual growth, seek to encourage her to exercise all her gifts in the service of the kingdom. This is the way the husband should exercise his headship.

For Christian wives of Paul's day the role of submitting to their husbands was not new. The whole of their culture had molded wives to conceive of no other role for themselves than this one. But the Christian gospel had done marvelous things for them and for their marriages. In a very real sense it had made all things new. Christian wives now had a new incentive or a new motivation: they were to submit to their husbands "as to the Lord" (v. 22). This is the way toward real life in Christ. Christ brings Christian wives to maturity in precisely this way. This is an exciting new venture. Christian wives here receive a new challenge for an old role.

In this passage husbands also receive a new challenge. When Paul says, "for the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church" (v. 23), he is saying that in Christian marriage the husband must fulfill a direction-setting role. But, as was said, the emphasis of this passage is on the way this role is to be carried out. The direction-setting aspect and the organic aspect of headship here come together. Husbands should exercise their headship self-sacrificially, giving themselves for their wives in a loving way, as Christ gave himself for the church. Husbands should strive to bring their wives to the full maturity of Christian living, as Christ gave himself to make the church a radiant church. Husbands should exercise their headship by nourishing and cherishing their wives—encouraging them to be everything God wants them to be. Headship in marriage is therefore self-giving service, after the model of Christ's self-giving service for us.

4. *Christ as Head of the Man; the Man as Head of the Woman* (1 Cor. 11:3, 8-9)

We come now to the last of the New Testament passages in which the word

head (*kephale*) is used in a metaphorical way: 1 Corinthians 11:1-16. The key verses here are 3 and 8-9. In the New International Version these verses read as follows: "(3) Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.... (8) For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; (9) neither was man created for woman, but woman for man."

In this passage Paul is discussing how men and women should pray and prophesy in public church meetings. There seems to have been a tendency on the part of Corinthian women to be disorderly. The disturbing matter does not seem to have been the question of whether women might pray or prophesy in the public assembly, but rather the question of how they were to be dressed when doing so. Women were praying and prophesying in church with uncovered heads—and this practice Paul criticizes as being disorderly. Women may pray and prophesy in church meetings, so Paul rules, but only with covered heads.

There is much difference of opinion about what is meant by the covering of the head. Some interpreters contend that the covering of the head means the wearing of a veil (though the word *veil* is not found in the passage). Others say, particularly on the basis of verse 15 ("if a woman has long hair, it is her glory. For long hair is given to her as a covering" [NIV]), that the recommended covering for women is long hair, properly arranged. Still others combine the two thoughts: long hair plus a veil. We shall not try to settle this question. What is important for us is not the precise practice recommended, but the ground adduced as the basis for this recommendation.

Verse 3 deals with a triple headship: "the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God." The question is, what does *headship* mean in the passage? Some hold that *head* here means source or origin. In the abstract this is possible, since source or origin is one of the meanings of *head* in the New Testament. But the question is: Does this meaning fit here? Is Christ the source of every man? One could say, of course, that Christ is the one through whom all things, including all men, were created (see chapter 8:6; also John 1:1 and Heb. 1:2). But this is not the same as saying that Christ is the source out of which all men have grown (compare, for example, the use of *head* as "source" in Colossians 2:19, where believers are urged to grow out of the head, and the similar use of *head* as "source" in Ephesians 4:15, where believers are enjoined to grow into the head). Nor is it correct to say that all men are part of the new organism of which Christ is the head in the sense of "source"—for this relationship holds within the fellowship of believers, but it is not true of "every man."

We look next at the third headship mentioned in verse 3: "the head of Christ is God." Is God the source of Christ? The Mickelssens say, Yes, quoting John 8:42, "I [Jesus] proceeded and came forth from God" (*loc. cit.*, p. 22). But Christ here refers to his Messianic ministry. He proceeded and came from God in the sense that God (the Father) sent him into the world to redeem his people from their sins. But this is not the same as saying that God the Father was the source of Christ. The Father was Christ's sender, not his source. If we think of source in the sense of origin, the idea that God the Father was the origin of Christ would suggest that Christ was a created being—a view which is totally contrary to Scripture.

If we think of *head* in the sense of "ruling head," however, the words just

discussed make perfectly good and perfectly biblical sense. Christ is indeed the head of all men in the sense of ruling over them; this holds even for non-Christians, since all men are under the rulership of Christ, whether they know it or not. God, or God the Father, is certainly the head of Christ in the sense of "ruling head," if we think of Christ as the Mediator whom the Father sent into the world. Christ, in fact, says many times that he has come into this world only to do the Father's will, and only to do the works which the Father has given him to do.

Since the first and the last headship mentioned in verse 3 are headships of rule, we conclude that the headship spoken of in the middle part of the verse, "and the head of the woman is man" is also a headship of rule, or a direction-setting headship. This is not inconsistent with Paul's teachings elsewhere, since, as we saw, in Ephesians 5:23—the only other New Testament passage where man is explicitly called the head of the woman (there the wife)—the headship described is also a headship of rule, or a direction-setting headship.

In verses 8 and 9 Paul shows that this direction-setting headship of man over woman is grounded in creation: "For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man." The word *created* in verse 9 specifically brings us back to the creation narrative found in Genesis 2. In our earlier study of Genesis 2 we found that the creation of man prior to woman implied a certain headship of the man, and that the woman's having been made a "helper fit" for man also implied a certain headship of the man over the woman. What was implied in Genesis 2, however, is explicitly stated in 1 Corinthians 11: "the head of the woman is man." And the reason given for this headship is precisely the facts about the creation of man and woman which we learned from Genesis 2. What this means is that this direction-setting headship of man over woman is not simply something associated with a bygone culture, but is permanent for all time, and is therefore still valid today. This headship is grounded in creation.

For Paul this headship of the man over the woman was the basis for the exhortation given in verses 4 to 7 about the covering of the head. Paul recognized that in the new era of the covenant in which he was living, after the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost Day, women had indeed been given new privileges and gifts. That they were able to pray and prophesy in church meetings was evidence of this. Apparently, however, some of the Corinthian women extended their newfound liberty too far. They were praying and prophesying with their heads uncovered. This, Paul saw, was a denial of the proper role relationships in the church. Hence Paul told these women that they should cover their heads as a recognition of the fact that they were under the headship of the men.

Least Paul's words about proper role relationships in the church be misunderstood, however, he quickly added verses 11 and 12, which show the equality and mutual interdependence of man and woman: "In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman" (NIV). These words were intended to keep men from abusing their headship over women. They suggest that men should look upon women as partners with them in the work of the kingdom. And yet these verses do not negate what was said earlier in the chapter about the headship of the man.

Does this section deal only with the relation of husbands and wives to each

other? There are several reasons for believing that the passage has to do not only with husbands and wives but also with men and women generally, whether married or not: (1) The passage deals with conduct in the worship service, and such a service would involve those who were unmarried as well as those who were married. (2) The references to "every man who prays or prophesies" (v. 4) and "every woman who prays or prophesies" (v. 5) suggest that more than married men and women are intended. (3) Verses 7-9 give the creational basis for the headship of the man; this creational basis, however, holds for the unmarried as well as the married. (4) In verses 13-14 Paul appeals to nature or "the nature of things" (NIV) to prove his point; nature, however, has to do not just with husbands and wives but with men and women in general.

What Paul has said in this section means that the headship of the man in the sense described above is to be evident in the worship service of the church. The specific way in which this headship was to be recognized in Corinth, namely, the covering of the head by women when they prayed or prophesied, was appropriate to the culture of that day. In the first century head coverings indicated that women were under the authority of men (see James B. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, p. 167). In our present society, however, head coverings for women do not convey that connotation. Though the application of the headship of the man may vary from culture to culture, the headship itself remains, because it is rooted in creation. The form may change, but the norm remains.

E. Other New Testament Passages

I Corinthians 14:33b-5

We go on to look at two important passages about the conduct of women in the church where the word *head* is not mentioned. The first of these is I Corinthians 14:33b to 35:

As in all the congregations of the saints, (34) women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. (35) If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church (NIV).

To understand this passage, we should first of all note the context. Chapter 14 begins with a discussion of the use of certain spiritual gifts in the church services, particularly the gifts of prophecy and glossolalia (speaking with tongues). In the first part of the chapter Paul points out that prophecy is superior to tongues-speaking, since through prophecy the church may be edified, whereas a tongues-speaker will edify the church only if his words are interpreted.

It becomes clear from verse 26 that in Paul's day church services were quite different from what they are today: "When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation" (NIV). Paul is concerned that the church service be an orderly one, so that the members of the church may be strengthened, and so that visiting unbelievers may be convicted of sin and moved to faith. Therefore he proceeds to give some rules to govern the way in which various members of the church may take part in the service. Tongues-speakers must speak one at a time, and then someone must interpret what they have said; if there is no interpreter, the tongues-speaker should keep quiet. Prophets should give their prophecies one at a

time, after which "the others should weigh carefully what is said" (v. 29, NIV). If, while a prophet is speaking, a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, they should not both speak at the same time, but the first speaker should stop and yield to the second. It is clear that Paul is concerned to maintain good order in the service, even though there will be many who take part in it.

Now follow the words quoted above, calling for women to remain silent in the churches. One of the problems associated with this passage is how to reconcile these words with what Paul has said in a previous chapter, I Corinthians 11:1-16. In the earlier chapter, it will be recalled, Paul permitted women to pray or prophesy in church services as long as they were properly dressed. Here, however, he seems to forbid women from doing any speaking in church services.

One solution offered by some interpreters is that I Corinthians 14:33b to 35 is not a genuine part of the original epistle, but was added by later editors. This interpretation, however, is wholly without evidence, and must therefore be rejected. Others suggest that in I Corinthians 11 Paul was referring to private gatherings of Christians, whereas in chapter 14 Paul was referring to official church services. Again we must reply that this is extremely unlikely, since there is nothing in I Corinthians 11:1-16 to suggest that Paul had in mind only private meetings of Christians.

It would appear, therefore, that in both of these chapters Paul is speaking about the official worship services of the church—services, it must be kept in mind, which were generally held in the homes of members rather than in public buildings. In these services Paul permitted women to pray and/or prophesy if they were properly attired, according to chapter 11. But in chapter 14 Paul says that women are not allowed to speak but must remain silent in the churches. This cannot mean total silence, in view of what was said in chapter 11. What is commanded, therefore, is only a limited or qualified silence.

From the general tenor of what Paul has been saying previously in this chapter, we may conclude that at least one of the reasons for this qualified silence of the women must be the maintaining of good order in the services of the church. But now we ask, why does Paul here ask the women to remain silent in the churches? Let us again try to visualize the situation Paul was describing. Many people were participating in the church services. Women were permitted to prophesy or to offer prayers, provided they were properly dressed. After prophets or teachers had spoken, the others present were to weigh carefully what had been said. This careful weighing (*diakrino*) would include, we may surmise, an attempt to understand and evaluate what had been said, and to apply it to daily life. In other words, after a prophet or teacher had spoken, there would be a discussion by the other members of the congregation of the content of the message given.

It is in this connection that Paul goes on to say, "Women should keep silence in the churches." In trying to understand what was forbidden, let us note what Paul says in verse 35: "If they [the women] want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home" (NIV). These words suggest that women were raising questions in the service. This must be tied in with what has just been said about the discussions which followed prophetic revelations or words of instruction, the purpose of which discussions was to "weigh carefully" what had just been said. Paul is here forbidding women from entering into such discussions. Apparently such conduct on the part of the women

in the congregation was considered disruptive of good order by Paul. Paul was not opposed to having women ask questions about what had been said in church, but he instructs women to ask these questions of their husbands at home.

Paul also says, "They [women] are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission (*hypotassethōsan*), as the Law says" (v. 34b). The Greek word *hypotassō* means to subject someone or to bring someone or something to subjection; in the passive voice it means to become subject or to be subjected. In the middle voice it means to subject oneself. The form in which the verb is used here is a present middle or passive imperative; the best translation therefore would seem to be, "let them subject themselves" or "let them be in subjection." Paul is enjoining the women not to take part in these discussions which follow the utterance of prophecy or teaching, but to subject themselves to others. Paul does not say to whom the women must subject themselves. One possibility would be, to their husbands; another possibility would be, to men in general, still another possibility would be, to those in authority in the church. Since those in authority in the church would be men, we could say that this subjection would be to men—probably to the men who would constitute the leadership of the church. Married women were told to address their questions to their husbands at home. Whom widows and single women were to address is not stated.

That Paul is not thinking only about the local situation in Corinth is evident from the introductory words, "As in all the congregations of the saints." This is evident also from the words, "as the Law says." This reference to the law would make Paul's words apply to all Christian congregations of that day. It is hard to determine exactly what Paul means by "the law." Some interpreters think that his reference is to the words of Genesis 3:16, where God is reported to have said to Eve after the fall, "he [your husband] will rule over you." Other interpreters suggest that the reference is to Genesis 2, which records the prior creation of the man and which calls the woman "a helper suitable for" man. Still others say that the words "the law" refer simply to the Old Testament in general, which teaches that men have a certain headship of authority over women. Whatever be the precise referent of the word *law* here (and it is difficult to be certain about this matter), two things are clear: (1) Paul thinks of this injunction as a very important one—so important that it has its roots in "the law," presumably found in the Old Testament; and (2) Paul intends what he says here to be a rule for all the Christian congregations of his day, not just for the Corinthian church.

It is also significant to note what Paul says in verse 37 of this chapter: "If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command" (NIV). What Paul has been saying in the previous verses, in other words, including the injunction that women should be silent in the churches, was not just his own advice, based on his own ideas, but rested on a command from Christ himself. The prohibition of verse 34, therefore, is not to be regarded lightly, as of little importance. The statement that women should remain silent in the churches is an injunction which is weighty, which has the Lord's own authority behind it.

What conclusion can be drawn from this passage about the question of headship? We must be very careful here: first, because the word *head* is not mentioned in the passage, and, second, because there is no precise parallel in the worship of the church today to what was going on in church services at that

time. We do not have today the kind of open worship service which Paul pictured in this chapter, in which various people made their contributions to the service, and in which the presentation of prophecy or teaching was followed by a discussion and evaluation of that prophecy or teaching by others in the church.

What we do learn here is that certain kinds of speaking in the church service were prohibited to women at that time, since they were asked to "be in submission" to others—presumably, to the leaders of the church. One reason why women were prohibited from such speaking in that day, we may surmise, was probably that such speaking involved making judgments about the presentations of certain men (possibly including their own husbands); such judgment making would amount to exercising authority over men in the church service. The injunction forbidding women from engaging in this kind of speaking in the church, therefore, is probably an implication of the headship concept. It suggests that Paul is here repeating the thought developed in I Corinthians 11:1-16, namely, that the headship of the man should be recognized in the worship services of the church.

I Timothy 2:11-15

This is the only passage in the New Testament which specifically deals with the teaching and/or ruling function of women in the church. It therefore has an important bearing on the question of headship, though the word *head* is not used in it.

Paul probably wrote I Timothy from Macedonia, in A. D. 64 or 65. Paul had previously left Timothy in Ephesus to supervise the church there and to deal with false teachers (cf. I Tim. 1:3). The church at Ephesus was troubled by false teachers who occupied themselves with myths and endless genealogies; desiring to be teachers of the law but not really understanding what they were teaching (I Tim. 1:3-7). The Ephesian Christians were also troubled by some who were departing from the faith, who forbade marriage and commanded people to abstain from certain foods (I Tim. 4:1-5). There is an extended treatment of the proper conduct of women in chapter 2:9-15.

It is important to note that what Paul says in chapter 2:11-15 about the possibility of having women teach has to do with teaching in the church. This is particularly evident from chapter 3:14 and 15: "I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth" (NIV). It should further be noted that verses 11-15 occur between 2:1-8 and 3:1-13, passages dealing with the instituted church, its worship and its organization. In fact, this section of I Timothy was often used as a guide for ancient church orders; the qualifications for office-bearers found in chapter 3 are still considered normative for churches today.

Paul begins chapter 2 by indicating the proper conduct of men in the household of God, particularly in the activity of prayer. He then gives directives about the proper conduct of women in the household of God: "The comments about the adornment of women have to do first of all with their conduct at worship (note the words "in like manner" [ASY; Greek, *hōsanōs*] in verse 9), though, of course, these injunctions apply outside of the church services as well. Paul then goes on to give specific instructions with respect to the involvement of women in the official teaching work of the church.

The text of I Timothy 2:11-15 follows, in the New International Version:

(11) A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. (12) I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent: (13) For Adam was formed first, then Eve. (14) And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. (15) But women will be kept safe [mg. : be saved] through childbirth, if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

Verse 11 reads as follows: "A woman should learn in quietness and full [lit. all] submission." The word rendered "quietness" (*hesuchia*) may mean quietness or rest as well as silence. It qualifies the way Paul says women should learn. We note that Paul is not opposed to having women learn. Since in those days learning was not regarded as the proper province of women, Paul's concession that women should be allowed to learn was already great gain. But Paul desires women to learn in quietness and "with all submissiveness" (RSV). The quietness enjoined here probably does not imply an absolute prohibition against all talking; the emphasis is rather on a certain attitude, manner, or approach. The word rendered "submission" or "submissiveness" is *hypotage*, the noun form of *hypotassō*, which is the verb used in I Corinthians 14:34. In both cases the concept of submission is applied to the conduct of women in the church: they are not allowed to speak in church but must be in submission (I Cor. 14); they are to learn in church in quietness and all submission (I Tim. 2).

As was the case in I Corinthians 14:34, so it is here: it is not said to whom women are to be submissive. One could say: to their husbands; that Paul does have married women in mind is evident from his reference to childbearing in verse 15. Yet to limit Paul's reference here to married women is probably not justified since he is speaking about conduct in the worship service and there might be single women in such a service as well as married ones. So the submission to which women are called might be to all men. Or it might be to those who are leaders in the church. Whichever interpretation we adopt, those to whom women are to be submissive would obviously be men. And so we could say that the principle of the headship of man over woman, which we have found to be taught or implied in other Scripture passages, is also implied here.

Verse 12 points to two things a woman is not permitted to do in the church service (namely, teach and have authority over a man), and one thing a woman is asked to do (to be quiet or silent). "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent." The word for "teach" is *didaskō*. There is, of course, a sense in which all Christians are to teach each other—compare Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom..." (NIV). Obviously, Paul is not prohibiting women from exercising this kind of teaching. Another type of teaching which is open to women is that referred to in Titus 2:4-5, "Then they [the older women] can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands..." (NIV). In the verse preceding this passage, the older women are told to be "teachers of that which is good" (*kathodidaskeulous*). This kind of teaching by women, too, is clearly not prohibited by Paul.

What type of teaching, then, does Paul say women may not do? Some have suggested: false teaching. It is indeed clear from the rest of the epistle that much false teaching is going on at Ephesus. Timothy, in fact, has been specifically told that one of his main tasks at Ephesus is to "command certain men [or persons, RSV] not to teach false doctrines any longer" (I Tim. 1:3, (NIV). But

there is no indication in 2:12 that the teaching Paul forbids women to engage in is only false teaching; he simply says, "I do not permit a woman to teach."

It must be remembered that by the time the Pastoral Epistles (to which I Timothy belongs) were written, the official teaching function of the church had come to be associated with certain persons. Paul, for example, calls himself "a teacher of the Gentiles" in this very epistle (I Tim. 2:7). Colossians 1:7 speaks of the fact that the addressees of the Epistle learned about God's grace from Epaphras: Timothy's special gift seems to have been that of teaching (see I Tim. 4:11; 6:2b; II Tim. 2:2). It would appear, therefore, that Paul is forbidding to women particularly the kind of teaching he has assigned to men like Timothy and Epaphras: the official teaching of the church. Such teaching, Paul is saying here, is to be done, not by women, but only by qualified men.

This thought is strengthened by the next phrase, "or to have authority over a man." It should be noted that "teaching" and "having authority" are closely linked together. What Paul here prohibits, in other words, is the kind of teaching which involves the exercise of authority over men.

The Greek word translated "have authority" is *authentein*; it occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, nor does it occur in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament which was made in the third century B.C.). It is therefore impossible to be dogmatic about the precise meaning of the word. A few studies have been made of this word. One rather common understanding of it is that it means "to tyrannize" or "to domineer." On this basis, what Paul forbids women to do is to domineer over men, to exercise authority in a harsh or tyrannical way—implying that it would not be wrong for women to exercise a positive, nondomineering authority over men. We grant that there may well have been some domineering women in Ephesus at this time. But if Paul meant only to forbid women from exercising a domineering kind of authority, he certainly could have used a word or expression which clearly and indubitably means "domineer"—for example, *katakyrieuontes* in I Peter 5:3; "not lording it over those entrusted to you." Further, if this ruling was intended to correct people who were using authority wrongly, it should have been stated in a way which would be applicable to men as well as to women. The following reference to the prior creation of Adam would suggest that the prohibition of verse 12 is directed to women as such, rather than to certain women who happen to have been using authority in a tyrannical way.

Although, for the reasons given, we cannot be totally certain about the meaning of this word, it would seem reasonable to assume, on the basis of studies made by various scholars (note particularly a fifteen-page study of the word made by Professor George W. Knight III of Covenant Seminary, which can be found in the first issue of *New Testament Studies* in 1984), that *authentein* is best understood as meaning simply "to have authority over." Paul must then be understood to be prohibiting women from exercising the type of official teaching in the church which places them in a specific kind of authority over men—that is, the authority to be the official teachers of the church.

Contemporary notions of education can be very misleading, as we attempt to understand the meaning of the word *teaching* in the New Testament. Today *teaching* is often understood as a mere transfer of information or skills. In contrast to this, early Christian teaching, built on Jewish understanding, saw itself as an activity involving personal direction and authority. The teacher did not just give his views. He presented what he expected the student to accept.

Moreover, teaching occurred within a relationship in which the teacher had authority over the student. Students were expected to follow the teaching given—which, for the most part, was a way of life. Further, in the early church teaching was viewed as given not so much by the individual teacher but by the teacher as the representative of the body in whose name he taught. In other words, "...the scripture views teaching primarily as a governing function, a function performed by elders, masters, and others with positions of government" (Stephen B. Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ*, p. 196).

The word here used for man, *anēr*, can mean either man or husband. If Paul was thinking only about the husbands of the women he was addressing, he could have used a possessive adjective like *her* ("to have authority over *her* man or *her* husband"). The fact that he simply says, "to have authority over a man" (*andros* without the article) suggests that, though Paul may have been thinking primarily about husbands, he is designating all the men of the congregation (including single men) or any man in the congregation.

As we go on to consider verses 13 and 14, we note that, as was the case in I Corinthians 11 ("for man did not come from woman but woman from man"), so here Paul grounds his prohibition in the facts of creation: "For Adam was formed first, then Eve" (v. 13). As we saw in our discussion of Genesis 2, Adam's having been created before Eve implies a kind of direction-setting headship of the man over the woman. To this Paul now appeals. It is not right for a woman to have authority over a man in church, he is saying, since such authority violates the headship of the man over the woman.

Paul now adds a second ground: the circumstances of man's fall into sin. "And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner" (v. 14). To understand the meaning of the clause "Adam was not the one deceived," we must go back to Genesis 3:13, where Eve is quoted as saying, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate" (NIV). In the Greek translation of the Old Testament with which Paul would have been familiar, the Septuagint, the word *deceitēd* in this passage is translated by a form of *apataō*, the same verb that is used in the first part of I Timothy 2:14. So the words, "the woman was deceived," are simply an echo of the Genesis narrative. Eve fell prey to the serpent's deception and, by following it, became a sinner, thereafter leading her husband into sin. Paul's point here is not to exonerate Adam—elsewhere in his writings he makes it quite clear that Adam bears his full share of the blame for man's fall (e.g., Rom. 5:12, 15, 17, 18, 19). But he seems to be using the Genesis 3 narrative here as indicating what can happen when the proper roles of man and woman are reversed. The man should have been the teacher of the woman, and should have taught her correctly. Instead, the woman became the teacher of the man, with disastrous results. She, having been deceived by Satan through the serpent, led man into sin. This, then, is Paul's second ground for forbidding women to teach in the church.

The fact that Paul grounds the injunctions of verses 11 and 12 on the biblical data about creation and the fall makes it clear that these instructions were not just intended for the Ephesian church at that time but are binding for the church of all time. There were indeed problems in Ephesus which gave rise to the need for these injunctions. Women in Ephesus may well have been involved in some of the false teachings Paul condemns elsewhere in this epistle; they certainly seemed to be pressing for illegitimate freedoms. But if Paul were only intending to correct a local error, would he have based these injunctions

on the biblical revelation about man's creation and fall? When Paul draws upon biblical teaching about the way man was created and the biblical narrative about the manner in which man fell, he is indicating that the principles involved in the prohibition of official teaching by women are still to be observed by the church today.

Now follow the somewhat mysterious words of verse 15: "But women will be saved [following the marginal reading of the NIV] through childbirth [or bearing children, RSV], if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety." Interpretations of this difficult passage go in various directions. The NIV text (in distinction from the margin) renders the Greek word *sōthēsantai*, a form of *sōzō*, by "kept safe," suggesting that the promise is that women will not die in childbirth. But in the three other places where this word is used in I Timothy the meaning is clearly "soteriological salvation," or salvation in the usual biblical sense (1:15; 2:4; and 4:16). Some see here an allusion to Genesis 3:15, and therefore a reference to the bringing forth of the promised Messiah—the Savior of both men and women. The thought would then be: "saved by the bearing of a child." But this cannot be the right interpretation, since the text continues in the plural: "if they continue in faith." Neither can the words mean that no woman can be saved apart from the bearing of children. This would leave no salvation-hope for childless women. This view is all the more unlikely because Paul elsewhere commends singleness as a positive choice for members of the Christian community (I Cor. 7).

Our exegesis of this passage sees these words as directing women to their proper place and calling in life. Women, so Paul says, must not seek to be the official teachers of the church, since that role is not open to them. Instead, they should seek (except in cases where singleness has been unavoidably or deliberately chosen) to be mothers in the church rather than teachers of the church. In contrast to the false teachers mentioned in 4:3, who forbid marriage, Paul exalts marriage and childbearing as God-honoring. The words "they will be saved through childbirth" do not suggest that their salvation is merited by a good work; these words are addressed to women who are already Christians, who are already enjoying salvation by grace through faith ("if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety"). The word *through* in the expression "will be saved through childbirth" means "in the way of." What Paul is saying here, in other words, is that women will find happiness and blessedness in their Christian life as they fulfill their God-appointed role of being faithful mothers, bringing children into the world to the glory of God, and continuing in the faith, love, and holiness which they have. Though there will be exceptions, this is the normal role for women, the normal way in which they are to bring rich blessings to others and to themselves.

In summary, Paul's forbidding women from being the official teachers of the church in I Timothy 2 is another implication of the headship of the man over the woman. Since such teaching involves having doctrinal and ethical authority over men, and since the man is the head of the woman, a woman ought not to be the official teacher of the church. This does not exclude women from many types of teaching which are permissible, to be sure. But this prohibition would seem to exclude the kind of teaching which is done officially, for the entire congregation, by appointed office-bearers of the church.

I Peter 3:1-7

Peter says some significant things about the proper role of Christian women

in marriage in the first six verses of I Peter 3. It should be noted that in the preceding chapter Peter was speaking about the proper attitude of slaves toward masters (vv. 18-25): slaves are to submit themselves to their masters.

Chapter 3 begins with these words:

(1) Likewise you wives, be submissive to your husbands, so that some, though they do not obey the word, may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, (2) when they see your reverent and chaste behavior.

The word rendered "be submissive" is *hypotassomenai*, from *hypotassó*, which means to subject or submit oneself to someone. This injunction does not imply inferior worth on the part of wives, but it does teach that wives are to play a different role in marriage than their husbands. Though the word *head* is not used in this passage, it is clear that the husband is here understood to be the head of the family and the head of the wife.

The reason here given for this charge to wives is that by means of such submissiveness unbelieving husbands, observing the exemplary behavior of their wives, may perhaps be brought to conversion. This statement does not imply that in giving this injunction Peter was thinking only about wives who had unbelieving husbands. But it does clearly state that wives are to be submissive even to unbelieving husbands—that the principle of the headship of the husband, in other words, is to be recognized even in such marriages.

Peter goes on to charge wives to adorn themselves primarily, not with jewelry or fine clothing, but with "the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit." By way of motivation he adds,

(5) So once the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves and were submissive to their husbands, (6) as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are now her children if you do right and let nothing terrify you.

Peter thus appeals to the example of godly women in Old Testament times, both as regards adornment and submissiveness to their husbands. Sarah is particularly singled out in this respect; it is said that she "obeyed Abraham, calling him lord." The reference is to Genesis 18:12, where Sarah is reported to have said, "After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?" (ASV). The word translated "lord" in I Peter 3:6, *kyrios*, designates a person with authority, who is to be treated with respect. In this case the respect involved obedience. Sarah's obedience to her husband is here cited as an outstanding Old Testament example of the way Christian wives should relate to their husbands. There is here no suggestion that such obedience on the part of wives is culturally conditioned; surely Sarah's example is still normative for women today—note what is explicitly stated in the latter part of verse 6. The headship of the husband in marriage, as here described, is therefore one involving authority and requiring obedience (though obviously obedience would not be required if a husband ordered his wife to do something clearly contrary to the will of God).

In verse 7 Peter goes on to address a word to husbands:

Likewise you husbands, live considerably with your wives, bestowing honor on the woman as the weaker sex, since you are joint heirs of the grace of life, in order that your prayers may not be hindered.

Husbands are here told to "live considerably" with their wives (literally, "according to knowledge"). Why should husbands do this? Because, so Peter

goes on to say, "you [and your wives] are joint heirs of the grace of life." This is a most important statement. In those days a Jewish wife was not normally an heir, since the inheritance went through the male line. But here Peter says that in a Christian marriage husband and wife are *joint heirs* of every spiritual blessing; they have total spiritual equality.

Summing up, the husband is the head of the wife and the wife should therefore be submissive and obedient to him. But this difference in role by no means takes away the spiritual equality of husband and wife; they are "joint heirs of the grace of life."

The headship of the husband is here described in terms of mutual fellowship and spiritual equality. Though headship does involve authority, it is never *mere* authority. Headship is here pictured in terms of loving consideration, spiritual concern, mutual devotion to God, and fellowship in prayer.

Galatians 3:28

Galatians 3:28 is often quoted as proof that in the New Testament the barrier between men and women based exclusively on sex difference has been removed, and that therefore no office in the church should now be closed to women. Since this text has been extensively discussed in previous synodical reports on women in ecclesiastical office (*Acts of Synod 1975*, pp. 580-82; *Acts of Synod 1978*, pp. 509-13), our treatment of this passage can be brief.

The main issue at stake in Galatians 3 is the role of the law in relation to faith. A secondary theme is that both Jew and Gentile must come to God on the basis of faith. Galatians 3:28 must be read within this framework. Verse 22 states that all people have been consigned to sin, so that all persons, both Jews and Gentiles, need to be saved by faith. Since this is so, all people come to God on equal footing, their race, freedom or lack of freedom, or sex having nothing to do with the way in which they are to be saved. Hence Paul says in verse 28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." With respect to the obtaining of salvation by faith, therefore, there is no difference between male and female. Men and women are all one in Jesus Christ (along with Jews and Gentiles, slaves and freemen)—that is, one insofar as the obtaining of salvation through faith is concerned. In the family of Christ Jews are not superior to Gentiles, free people are not superior to slaves, and men are not superior to women; all are one in Christ.

The fact that Paul here says that men and women are one in Christ, however, does not take away the role differences between men and women which have been established in creation. Neither does this text remove New Testament instructions on the relationships between men and women. Galatians 3:28, therefore, does not take away the headship of the man over the woman which we have found to be expressed and implied in scriptural teaching and practice.

It can, however, at the same time be acknowledged that spiritual oneness in Christ does have social implications for the present. This was exactly the subject of Paul's controversy with Peter recorded in the previous chapter (Gal. 2:11-14). Now that both Jews and Gentiles are one in Christ, one may no longer observe the traditional Jewish practice of separating from Gentiles when eating. Paul was very conscious of the fact that oneness in Christ had changed Jew-Gentile relationships. He insisted that this oneness be reflected in practice.

Paul also showed a sensitivity to the practical implications of the gospel for the slave-master relationship—a relationship which Scripture never estab-

lished or recommended. In writing to Philemon Paul hoped out loud that Philemon would receive his former slave Onesimus back forever, "no longer as a slave but more than a slave, as a beloved brother" (v. 16). The entire tone of the letter sounds forth a subtle plea for Onesimus's freedom. In view of Roman sensitivities about the importance of slavery to the social structure of that day, one can well understand why Paul might remain quite subtle about proposing changes in this area. Paul's eagerness to evangelize slaveholders or his expectation of the near return of Christ might explain why he did not more vigorously pursue the social implications of oneness in Christ in the slave-free area.

Paul further saw social implications of the new oneness in Christ for male-female relationships. It is noteworthy that women in the early church were taking on some roles prominent enough to be mentioned in Paul's letters. What were these roles? We turn now to a review of the work of women associated with Paul's ministry.

III. ADDITIONAL MATERIAL ON THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

A. Women Associated with Paul's Work

"The women should keep silence in the churches" (I Cor. 14:34), "I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent" (I Tim. 2:12). Statements of this sort by Paul have been determinative for the church as it has sought to find the role of women in the church's ministry. There is also evidence, however, that Paul gave women a more significant role in the church than such statements by themselves would seem to warrant. That evidence has to do with titles or expressions which he used to describe or address certain women.

1. *Diakonoi*

In Romans 16:1 Phoebe is called "a *diakonoi* of the church which is at Cenchrea." We ask first what the word *diakonoi* means in this passage. *Diakonoi* is the common Greek word for servant (John 2:5, 9). This term is used to describe Christ as a servant (Rom. 15:8); the ruler as a servant (Rom. 13:4); and believers as servants of Christ (John 12:26). The leaders of the church, following Christ's example, are designated servants or ministers by means of this same Greek word (Matt. 20:26; I Cor. 3:5; Col. 1:7, 23, 25; I Tim. 4:6, and the like). In these passages people are called servants or ministers of Christ, of God, and of the church. The word *diakonoi* is also applied to certain office-bearers of the church who serve the church in specific ways (Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:8, 12); in these passages the word is translated *deacons*, in distinction from other office-bearers called *bishops* (or *overseers*, NIV).

Now the question arises: In what sense is the term *diakonoi* used in connection with Phoebe? Since Paul has ruled women out of the teaching-ruling offices, one must translate *diakonoi* here as something other than *minister*. In places where *diakonoi* does seem to designate a special office, and where the word is usually translated *deacon*, it is applied to men but not to women (women are distinguished from deacons in I Timothy 3:11). Hence most translators do not render *diakonoi* as applied to Phoebe with the word "minister" or "deacon"; a number of translators, however, call Phoebe a "deaconess" (since there was no feminine form of *diakonoi* at this time, the word could have this meaning). Though Phoebe, then, was probably not a *minister* or *deacon* in the

official sense of these terms, she did serve the church at Cenchrea in a very significant way.

2. *Prostatis*

In Romans 16:2 Phoebe is called "a helper [*prostatis*] of many and of myself as well." Some have argued that the word *prostatis* means that she was a ruler who had some kind of oversight over the church. It is true that the masculine form of this word (*prostatis*) means "one who stands before, front-rank man...leader, chief" (Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed., p. 1526); but the feminine form of the word which is used here means "protectress, patroness, helper" (Arndt and Gingrich, *Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 726). So those who argue that Phoebe exercised ruling functions in the church at Cenchrea do so on the basis of the masculine form of *prostatis*, which is not the form used in the text. Paul K. Jewett understands the term correctly when he writes, "In this passage *prostatis*... should hardly be taken to mean that Phoebe was a woman 'ruler.' Rather the meaning would seem to be that she was one who cared for the affairs of others by aiding them with her resources" (*Man as Male and Female*, p. 170, n. 140).

3. *Kopiōō*

In Romans 16:6 we read about Mary who "worked very hard for you." This *hara* word is expressed by the verb *kopiōō*, "to toil, labor, work hard." Paul uses this word to describe not only his own manual labor in supporting himself, but also to describe his activity in teaching and preaching. He also uses the word in this sense to describe the labors of others (I Tim. 5:17; I Thess. 5:12). There is no evidence, however, to show that Mary engaged in the work of preaching, or that she exercised rule over the church.

4. *Synergos*

This term means "fellow worker." Paul called upon Christians to be subject to "every fellow worker [*synergoniti*] and laborer" (I Cor. 16:16). It is important to note that Paul includes women as his fellow workers. Euodia and Syntyche are included among Paul's fellow workers (*synergon*; Phil. 4:2, 3). Prisca and Aquila are called "my fellow workers (*synergos*) in Christ Jesus" in Romans 16:3. Several things are said about Prisca which are significant. She and her husband are always named together, and her name is often mentioned first. Both, as we saw, are called Paul's fellow workers. And both of them took Apollōs aside and explained to him "the way of God more accurately" (Acts 18:26). Full weight must be given to what is said about Prisca, especially to whatever part she had in the personal and private ministry which she and Aquila exercised toward Apollōs. But this personal and private ministry with her husband does not necessarily negate the teaching of the New Testament which excludes a woman from the public ministry of teaching and ruling in the church (I Tim. 2:12).

The New Testament does not provide a detailed picture of how men and women workers functioned together. They seem to have worked together in teams. However, New Testament accounts of gospel work ought not to be read as if they were descriptions of what is happening in the contemporary situation. We have no reason for believing that the women who were gospel workers preached to crowds in public, in the manner of some contemporary female evangelists.

The evidence from the century following the time of the apostles (the second century A.D.) would seem to indicate that the role of women in the missionary

work of the church was distinctly different from that of men. Clement of Alexandria (c. A.D. 155 to c. 220) describes the work of the apostles and of the women who helped them as follows:

The apostles, giving themselves without respite to the work of evangelism, as befitted their ministry, took with them women, not as wives but as sisters, to share in their ministry to women living at home: by their agency the teaching of the Lord reached the women's quarters without arousing suspicion (*Stromata*, III, 6, 53, quoted in Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ*, p. 116).

By "women's quarters" Clement referred to the women's quarters in various houses. Clement's understanding was that these women workers evangelized and cared for other women, in places where these women lived.

Taken together, the Scripture passages about women associated with Paul's ministry tell us that these women worked hard in important ways, which Paul recognized with thanks to God. There is no clear evidence as to what their services included, and we cannot use what is said about them as compelling proof for admitting women to church offices today. What is clear is that the women about whom Paul wrote were deeply involved in significant ways in the ministry of the gospel.

B. *Spiritual Gifts and Church Office*

The question is often raised whether the phenomenon of spiritual gifts does not shed some light on the role of women in the church. Recent scholarship and church discussion have given considerable attention to the phenomenon of spiritual gifts. Much of the discussion has centered around the relationship of gifts and office. Can the two be harmonized? Or is there a basic antithesis between a charismatic form of leadership and service over against an institutional and official form of leadership and service? The problem becomes real when a church officer shows little charisma—little evidence of spiritual giftedness and empowerment—while some members of the congregation not in office show considerable charisma.

Does a system of church offices tend to bind or thwart the free working of the Holy Spirit and his gifts in the congregation? This has frequently been proposed in recent times. Reformed thinkers do not agree that this is so. They propose that gifts lead to office. Gifts are the necessary qualification for office. But the phenomenon of gifts is broader than office. All Christians possess spiritual gifts. They must be led to discover, develop, and use them. Every gift need not lead to office. Gifts may be exercised in many ways other than office. The church and its officers must find ways to encourage the use of spiritual gifts. The church must not quench the Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19); it must, however, responsibly test the spirits to see whether they are from God (1 John 4:1). Such are the directions of the recent Reformed discussion of spiritual gifts and office.

What about spiritual gifts and *women in office*? Here the Reformed community has not engaged in the same measure of reflection and discussion. A few observations may be offered.

It does not appear that spiritual gifts as such are sex-specific—some feminine, some masculine. Paul speaks of a variety of gifts. He gives no hint that some carry the label "for men only." In fact, it appears that even as there is no distinction between male and female as we stand before God in Christ (Gal. 3:28), so there is no distinction between male and female as Christ sends his

Spirit with gifts. The prophet Joel foresaw the leveling of this distinction:

And it shall come to pass afterward,
that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men shall see visions.

Even upon the menservants and maidservants
in those days, I will pour out my spirit (2:28-29).

This prophecy predicts the fulfillment of Moses' wish in Numbers 11:29: "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!"

Peter recognized on the Day of Pentecost that the time foreseen in Joel's prophecy had arrived: "This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16). Women as well as men, young as well as old, servants along with their masters and mistresses—all were empowered to prophesy. The age of the "prophethood of all believers" had dawned. It is no wonder that women were soon prophesying along with men in the Corinthian congregation (1 Cor. 11:4-5).

And Paul would encourage all believers, women as well as men, to desire and develop the gift of prophecy (1 Cor. 14:1, 39). Small wonder also that Paul used women in such significant ways in his mission work. If the gift of prophecy appeared in men and women alike, undoubtedly other spiritual gifts did as well.

Does the possession of a spiritual gift mean that it ought to be used? There can be no answer to that question but "yes." Paul spoke very clearly on this matter to the Romans: "Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them" (12:6). He proceeded to mention the gifts of prophecy, service, teaching, exhorting (or encouraging, NIV), contributing, giving aid (or leading, NIV), and showing mercy (vv. 6-8). All of these are to be pursued with energy and diligence. If women have been given gifts of teaching, exhorting, and leading, Paul leaves them little choice but to teach, exhort, and lead.

Does the possession of a spiritual gift and the use of it call for recognition from one's fellow believers? This question also appears to have no other answer than "yes." Herman Ridderbos notes, "It is in the nature of certain *charismata* that they have not merely an incidental, but a continual significance, and therefore of themselves might lay claim to continuing and regular recognition (for which reason the *charismata*, too, are not only denoted as powers, etc., but also as persons; cf. 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:8, 11)" (*Paul*, p. 445). The last point is significant. God did not simply give gifts to people. He gave certain gifted people to the church. Ephesians 4:11 says just that: he gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. When people manifest a gift and use it, they ought to be recognized. In fact, there is even reason for subjection to them in their gifted service: "I urge you to be subject to such men [as the household of Stephanas, who were the first converts in Achaia and devoted themselves to the service of the saints] and to every fellow worker and laborer" (1 Cor. 16:16). The presence of spiritual gifts calls for recognition, response, and subjection on the part of the Christian community.

Does the possession and use of appropriate spiritual gifts call for recognition by way of appointment and ordination to church office? More simply, if you have the gifts, ought you to have the office? Now the answer cannot be a simple

"yes." Obviously there are other considerations beyond the possession of appropriate gifts. What other responsibilities does the gifted person already have? How many others possess these gifts and are available for service in an official way? What are the particular needs of the congregation? What is the particular mission of the congregation to the community around it? And in regard to gifted women, are there scriptural and social considerations that would make it inappropriate for them to be given official status?

The phenomenon of spiritual gifts does not solve the problem of whether women may hold church office. Nor is the issue whether women are gifted. Woman may be as gifted as men—sometimes more so. For church office the issue lies in whether and in what ways women are to be subject to men and whether and in what ways men may be subjected to women. To that issue the phenomenon of spiritual gifts does not speak.

C. *Headship and Society*

Our mandate calls us to examine the relevance of headship not only for the life of the institutional church, but for such other areas of life as business, education, and government as well. We have concluded that the biblical teaching about headship as set forth in our report has relevance for every area, across the length and breadth of life. Headship is a principle that calls for acknowledgement and recognition in such areas as business, education and politics as well as in the life and structure of the institutional church.

One of the reasons why the matter of women in ecclesiastical office has been a persistent item on the agenda of the church is the fact of the woman's changing role and place in almost every area of life outside of the instituted church. Women have attained to very significant leadership positions in business, education, government, the judiciary, the professions, as well as other areas of life. This being so, the question was naturally pressed home as to why women should be barred from holding office in the church. This exclusion has been perceived by many members of the church as lacking sufficient rationale, indeed, as being a matter of *injustice*. To teach that women may hold any position open to them in such areas as business, education, and government but that when it comes to the life of the church they may not hold ecclesiastical office indeed appears to be a double standard.

Some defend this double standard by drawing a sharp line of division between the church and all the other areas of life. What the Bible teaches, so they say, holds for the church but it does not hold for the rest of life. The church represents the life and the community of the redeemed. The church is the sphere of redemption. In the church the biblical teaching of headship must apply. Beyond the pale of the church, however, biblical teaching does not apply—or even if it does apply, we are in no position to press the Bible's claims.

We discern in this reasoning a confusion of distinctions. The word *church* is ambiguous. It can be used to indicate a unique societal institution distinct in task and purpose from all other societal institutions. In this sense the church is not a business; it is not a school or educational institution; it is not a political party or government. The church is that institution whose task may be identified with the ministry of God's Word and the sacraments. To fulfill this task, the institutional church usually holds worship services, provides catechism instruction, has a council or consistory, and maintains a building to facilitate its activities. It is to church in this sense that the question of women in eccle-

siastical office pertains. Surely it is clear, however, that church understood in this sense does not encompass or exhaust the whole life of the believer—not, for that matter, even the greatest part of the believer's life. The believer's life incorporates all other areas of activity as well, such as family fellowship, work, business, entertainment, education, politics, and so on. It is completely against the Reformed genius of understanding the Bible and the nature of the Christian life to draw the dividing line between faith and unbelief, obedience and disobedience, the Christian and the "world" in terms of the church as an institution on the one hand and all the remaining areas of life and human endeavor on the other.

There is another way of understanding church. Church can be understood as embracing the whole life of the *redeemed community*, the *people of God*. The apostle Peter, for instance, so understands it when he describes the followers of Christ as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" (1 Peter 2:9). When the church is understood as God's people, as encompassing the whole life of God's people, including their involvement in such areas as labor, politics, education, and business, the demarcation, the dividing line, the antithesis indeed runs between *church* and *world*. When the church is understood as such a life-embracing reality, as the new humanity called to new life in Christ, the directives and injunctions of the gospel are indeed given primarily to the church. We must hasten to point out, however, that the gospel which is good for the church is good for the world of unbelieved too! This is precisely why the church is called to bear witness to Christ, to be the leaven of God's kingdom in the world.

The whole point is that we fracture the gospel, we rupture the integrity, the unity, of the life of the believer and the believing community, if we restrict the call to obedience—the directives of the gospel—to life in the institutional church as we know it today. The gospel is to hold sway, and is to shape the believer's loving and thankful response to God, across the entire length and breadth of life. It is to be applied to the institutional church, to be sure, but also to the believer's life as that comes to expression in such areas as business, industry, and politics. Our study of the biblical meaning of headship has shown headship to be a relevant structural principle not only for the relationship of husband and wife, but more generally for the ordering of *male-female* relationships in all areas of life. Therefore headship has application for structuring the life of the institutional church as well as for all other societal relationships, including such areas as business, education, and politics.

The objection might still be raised that, while the Scriptures clearly indicate the relevance of headship for marriage and the (instituted) church, they say little about the relevance of headship for any of the other areas of life. Thus, to "extend" the headship principle to all other areas of life seems largely based on a questionable argument from silence. Two comments are in order: First, the Scriptures are not completely silent on the matter. Leadership in the nation of Israel devolved upon the men. This was true in cultic affairs—the priesthood; it was true for those who served as community leaders and judges—the "elders in the gate"; it was true for the highest "political" office—the kingship.

Second, the New Testament makes no notable proclamations about the proper functioning of male and female roles in education, business, or politics. Why? Because in these areas there was no contest. Not that the biblical headship principle had no relevance in those areas, but the structures of the

prevailing society were such that male headship was the uncontested order of the day. (No doubt in a society which was a stranger to the gospel, male headship often took on insensitive, if not domineering and tyrannical forms.) It was precisely in the context of the institutional church life of the new Christian community that the liberating power of the gospel caused the issue of male-female roles and relations to surface first. Paul redresses a misdirected emancipation trend by the dual appeal to what "nature teaches" (that is, to what was the commonly and culturally accepted male-female order of the day) and to what "the law says" (that is, to what the Old Testament says).

It may be noted with some regret that the church in recent times has not proclaimed very clear biblical directives for structuring life in those areas which lie outside the boundaries of the institutional church. We think in our case particularly of the matter at hand: the structuring of male-female relationships in such areas as business, education, and politics. In the absence of any clear directives, Christian men and women have pretty much followed along with the prevailing winds of social and structural change. As has been said before, women—even Christian women—have attained to the highest echelons of authority and leadership in many areas outside of the institutional church. And then to deny them such positions in the life of the instituted church has correctly been perceived by many as inconsistent and unjust.

The church must speak to this issue. It is our conviction that the Scriptures teach the relevance of headship for the whole of life. The church must teach and proclaim it as such. That, of course, immediately raises innumerable questions of application in such areas as education, business, politics, and so on. How can the biblical kind of male headship and a full helping role for women be applied for Christians in society as they carry out the "have dominion" mandate?

A Christian *married* woman seeks her place in society with the help and approval of her husband because her responsibility to him as her head is primary among her earthly relationships. Scripture places a high priority on her marital and homemaking role (e.g., Titus 2:4-5; 1 Tim. 5:4, 10, 14) in contrast to much disparaging of these important responsibilities today. This means that *in addition to* but not *in place of* her homemaking role the married woman with her husband's blessing can do other things. The woman of Proverbs 31 functioned this way, out of her home as headquarters, for the good of her family, and with her husband's blessing (Prov. 31:10-12, 15, 27-29).

Single women formerly had the security and guidance of the men in their extended families. Although the freedom, education, and recognition of single women have changed enormously over the centuries in the Western world, we still should be urging Christian fathers and brothers to be more concerned for assisting the single women—unmarried, widowed, divorced—in their own families. And we should think through how the church as extended family of Christ can offer to single women more support and help as they search out and take their places in various areas of life.

Scripture states clearly that in marriage headship belongs to the husband. In the church, headship is assigned to ministers, elders, and evangelists. But Scripture does not clearly spell out where headship resides in the endless varieties of societal structures. Where does it lie in schools and institutions of different sizes and complexities, in national and international companies with branches and divisions, in the many levels of political structures? The issue is

probably not so much whether there are any men over whom a woman has responsibility. The point is that the woman should render her service under and within the basic and direction-setting leadership of the organization. Her attitude is to be one of welcoming and enhancing male leadership, rather than an attitude of competing with it.

How is this to be applied in practical particulars? For one thing, it cannot be applied by seeking to impose it on people who do not accept Scripture as determinative for their lives. Application of headship and "helpship" in society is the result of Christian conversion and commitment to the Word, which much of society does not share, and which we need to model for them. Even some Christians are finding the concept of headship so far out of line from prevailing thought and practice as to make it unacceptable to them.

For those of us who believe Scripture teaches headship in all areas, the practical applications to society are not easy to spell out. They are not easy even for marriage and the church, where the structure is more clearly delineated. We make certain inferences and deductions from biblical material. We affirm the norm and "with fear and trembling" shape the form. We have been doing this even with the clearest of biblical norms—witness, for example, our struggle over how to apply the sixth commandment, "thou shalt not kill," to such significant issues as war and capital punishment.

And as we do this for headship in society, let us reaffirm that the truth of the gospel has never been likely to win a popular opinion contest. But a biblical principle is not annulled because through neglect a given community lacks clarity and consensus in terms of applications. The situation with respect to the "headship" teaching found in the Bible is not as desperate as its detractors affirm or imply. To those who accept the headship principle as a valid biblical teaching with relevance for life today, some applications will readily suggest themselves. No doubt, considerable reflection and discussion will need to take place before anything close to a consensus can be expected for applying this teaching to the various areas and enterprises of life. A small committee such as ours cannot do this for the wide array and complexity of society.

The answer is not to ridicule or deny the relevance of the biblical teaching, but for Christians as individuals, married couples, and in church community to work at faithful application in the assurance and confidence of the Holy Spirit's leading. Such is the call and character of the whole of the Christian life in distinction from the life of the world.

IV. A SUMMARIZING STATEMENT ON HEADSHIP

Let us now summarize what we have learned from the Scriptures about the meaning of headship. From the Old Testament we have learned that, though both man and woman were created in the image of God, and though both were given dominion over the earth, Adam was created before Eve. Since firstness entails responsibility and authority, as demonstrated in the concept of the firstborn, man therefore has a certain authority over woman.

Woman was created to be man's "fitting helper." This fact does not mean that woman is inferior to man, but it does imply that woman was created for man, and not man for woman. When Adam proceeded to name the woman, he revealed that he was in a position of authority over her—since the act of naming was the prerogative of someone in authority over the person named. From Genesis 2, therefore, we learn that Adam was first and preeminent with

respect to woman, and that therefore his was the position of authority and leadership.

After the fall, God first called on the man to give an account of what had taken place. God here dealt with the man as the spokesman for both himself and the woman; the man was acting in a representative capacity. At this point again the leadership role of the man was evident.

From the last part of God's judgment upon the woman, "and he [your husband] shall rule over you" (Gen. 3:16), we learn that the leadership role of the husband over the wife which had been present from the beginning will continue after the fall. However, because of the fall this leadership role will tend to degenerate into an oppressive, sometimes tyrannical or domineering, kind of leadership. In the redemptive process the sinful distortion of this role is to be taken away, but the leadership role itself is to be retained—purified and sanctified by grace.

In the rest of the Old Testament the leadership role of the man is recognized in various ways. Generally the military leaders, judges, kings, and prophets of Israel were men; the priests and elders were always men. Miriam, Deborah, Athaliah, and Huldah, in our understanding, constitute exceptions, and therefore do not set aside the norm.

Synod asked us to "examine the meaning and scope of headship in the Bible...." Though the term *headship* is not found in the Bible, the word *head* is used, both in the Old and the New Testament. The Old Testament word for head is *rosh*, whereas the New Testament word is *kephalē*. *Rosh* is often used in the Old Testament to denote the chief, the foremost person, or the leader. Though in extra-biblical Greek the word *kephalē* does not usually (but see Markus Barth material above) mean "one possessing authority" or "one with superior rank," when this word is used in the New Testament it does carry with it the idea of authority. The precise meaning of *kephalē*, however, must always be determined by the context.

In the New Testament passages where the term *kephalē* is used metaphorically, it is applied both to man in relation to woman and to Christ. When the term is applied to Christ, it may mean (1) head as a position of prominence ("head of the corner"); (2) head as ruler over other spiritual powers, over the church, and over every man; (3) head as the source of life and strength. Another way of stating this third meaning is this: head in the organic sense (head as part of the body and as one with the body). On the basis of the meaning of the term *head* in connection with Christ, therefore, we may distinguish between a ruling headship and an organic headship. Headship in both senses applies to Christ.

Twice in the New Testament the head metaphor is used of man in relation to woman: in Ephesians 5:23 and in 1 Corinthians 11:3. In Ephesians 5:23 the husband is said to be the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. Since the church is here asked to be submissive to or to subject herself to Christ, it is obvious that the headship of Christ here expressed is primarily a headship of rule—a headship involving authority. The headship of the husband, therefore, analogous to the headship of Christ, must also be a headship of rule, or a direction-setting kind of headship. That this is so is evident from the requirement that wives should submit to their husbands as to the Lord.

The emphasis in this entire passage (vv. 22-33), however, is on the way in which the husband's headship is to be carried out. In Christian marriage this

headship is to be exercised lovingly and self-sacrificially, after the example of Christ. The husband should give himself to his wife as Christ gave himself to the church. The husband should seek his wife's spiritual growth, and encourage her to exercise all her gifts in the service of God's kingdom.

In 1 Corinthians 11:3 Paul says: "...the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man [or the man], and the head of Christ is God...." (NIV). Since the first and the last headships mentioned here are headships of rule (Christ is the head of every man in the sense of ruling over him; God is the head of Christ in the sense of ruling over Christ as Mediator), we conclude that the headship of the man over the woman spoken of here is also a headship of rule, or a direction-setting headship. This headship is not simply something associated with a bygone culture, but is still valid today, since it is grounded in creation ("for man did not come from woman but woman from man, neither was man created for woman, but woman for man," vv. 8-9).

From 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35 ("women should remain silent in the churches" [NIV]) we learned that the headship of the man should be recognized in the worship services of the church. Certain kinds of speaking in the church service were prohibited to women, since such speaking involved making judgments about the presentations of certain men, and since such judgment-making would amount to exercising authority over man. That Paul was not just thinking about the local situation in Corinth is evident from the context.

That the headship of the man should be recognized in the worship of the church is also taught in 1 Timothy 2:11-15. Women are here enjoined to "learn in quietness and full submission" (NIV). Though we are not told to whom women are to be submissive, we may presume that it is to the leaders of the church. According to verse 12 a woman is not permitted "to teach or to have authority over a man." These words apply primarily to the worship service of the church. Though not all types of teaching are forbidden to women, what Paul here forbids is teaching which involves the exercise of authority over men—such instruction as was done by the official teachers of the church. Because Paul grounds this prohibition in the biblical data about creation and the fall (vv. 13-14), it is clear that this injunction was not only for the Ephesian church at that time but is binding for the church of all time.

From 1 Peter 3:1-7 we learned that the different roles of husband and wife in marriage do not take away the spiritual equality of husband and wife; they are "joint heirs of the grace of life" (v. 7). Though the headship of the husband involves authority, this authority is to be exercised with a view to promoting loving consideration, spiritual concern, mutual devotion to God, and fellowship in prayer.

Certain women associated with Paul were deeply involved in significant ways in the ministry of the gospel. Yet what these women did does not negate what the rest of the New Testament tells us about the types of official functioning in the church in which women should not engage. The fact that women are given many spiritual gifts does not by itself solve the problem of whether women may hold church office or not.

The church must proclaim the relevance of the headship of the man also in areas of life other than marriage and the church. Our study of the biblical meaning of headship has shown headship to be a relevant structural principle which has implications for the ordering of male-female relationships in all areas of life.

By way of conclusion, we have seen that a principle of male headship was inherent in creation, was damaged in the fall, and must be reclaimed through redemption in the areas of marriage, church, and society. For marriage this means that the husband should exercise a direction-setting role, which is to be carried out in a loving, self-sacrificial manner in the way of service rather than of lordship. For the wife this means that she should be the husband's "suitable helper," assisting him, complementing him, encouraging him, and voluntarily accepting his leadership. The headship of the man should also be recognized in the administration and worship services of the church—men are to exercise direction-setting leadership in the church and women are to serve as "suitable helpers" to the men (though this does not exclude every kind of leadership on the part of women). Women should be encouraged to use their gifts in the church, but not in such a way as to violate the headship role of the men. In society in general the headship of the man should be recognized as well: men are to fill a direction-setting role. In short, male headship does not mean domineering or tyrannizing, but the exercise of self-giving leadership and direction-setting in all areas of life.

V. PREPARATORY TO RECOMMENDATIONS

We now come to one of the crucial aspects of the problem for which synod asked our advice. In the light of the headship principle, as developed from the Scripture passages dealt with in our report, women ought not to exercise the kind of teaching or ruling authority which would determine the course for the faith and practice of the believing community as a whole (see previous discussion of 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-15). This would imply that the offices of minister, elder, and evangelist ought not to be opened to women. We do find instances in the New Testament, however, where women did the type of work which we now associate with the office of deacon, as we shall see in a moment.

Are there also instances in the New Testament where women did some of the work which we now associate with the office of minister and elder? The lines of demarcation between church offices as they function among us today are not always so clearly discernible in the New Testament. The lines are fluid; there is overlap. However, we note the following:

The daughters of Philip prophesied (Acts 21:9). Such prophesying is in keeping with the promise of Joel, said by Peter to be fulfilled at Pentecost (Acts 2:17). Priscilla was involved in a teaching ministry when, together with her husband, Aquila, she "expounded to him [Apollos] the way of God more accurately" (Acts 18:26). In Titus 2:3-4 Paul bids the older women "to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children."

It is clear from the instances here referred to that women were doing some of the work we now associate with elders. This does not come as a complete surprise. It is in keeping with our understanding of the woman as man's fitting helper. Certain women with appropriate gifts may very properly be set aside by the church to assist the elders in doing their work. Since women can work more effectively than men in many situations, it would be advantageous for elders to be able to call on women for assistance. These women would not replace elders in the consistory; in fact, they would not serve in the consistory. They would be commissioned by the congregation to assist the elders in their work, under their direction, and they would give an account of their work to the elders. But

now the question arises, to what ordained office(s) in the church may women be admitted? The committee wrestled with this problem for a long time. It considered and discussed four different options:

- (1) Women as deacons and as members of the consistory.
- (2) Women as deacons but not as members of the consistory.
- (3) Women in an ordained office of their own but not as members of the consistory.
- (4) Women not in ordained office but commissioned to assist in the work of all the offices.

After considerable discussion the committee decided to accept Option 1, "women as deacons and as members of the consistory." We now proceed to give some of the reasons why this option was chosen.

On the basis of its exegesis of the relevant Scripture passages, the committee has concluded that the headship principle forbids women from holding the offices of minister, elder, or evangelist. But the committee has found no indication in the New Testament that the type of activity associated with the office of deacon is forbidden to women.

It will, in fact, not be difficult to show that in New Testament times women did indeed engage in the kind of work which is today associated with the diaconal office: for example, the administration of mercy toward those in need, and the serving of the distressed with counsel and assistance. The instance of Phoebe is often mentioned: "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deaconess [or servant, NIV, Greek, *diakonos*] of the church at Cenchrea" (Rom. 16:1). The same Greek word here used to describe Phoebe (*diakonos*) is used in Philippians 1:1 and 1 Timothy 3:8 to describe office-bearers in the church parallel to bishops (or elders). So the word may mean that Phoebe exercised the office of deaconess at Cenchrea, at least this possibility cannot be excluded. But we cannot be certain about this: the word *diakonos* may simply mean "servant" without implying a kind of ecclesiastical office.

In 1 Timothy 3:11 Paul speaks about certain women in the congregation at Ephesus: "The women likewise must be serious, no slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things." These words are preceded and followed by a series of statements about the requirements for deacons (*diakonoi*). The Greek word translated "the women" is *gunaikas*, from *gunē*, which may mean either woman or wife. If Paul intended to speak about the wives of the deacons, he would presumably have used the pronoun *heir* in front of *gunaikas*. "Their wives must be serious," etc. Further, if the verse were intended to refer to the wives of deacons, one would have expected to find a parallel mention of the wives of elders earlier in the chapter, where the qualifications of elders (or bishops) are discussed. But there is no such mention. Though, again, we cannot be absolutely certain, the more likely interpretation is that the "women" in 1 Timothy 3:11 were a group of women who had specific duties in the early church—duties which presumably supplemented those of the deacons.

There are other indications in the New Testament that women did work comparable to that done by deacons today. Jesus himself permitted women to "minister to him" (Mark 15:41; Matt. 27:55) and to "provide for" him and the twelve "out of their means" (Luke 8:1-3). There is certainly a parallel here to work done today by deacons. In Acts 9:36 we read about the disciple at Joppa named Tabitha or Dorcas, who was said to be "full of good works and acts of

charity," and who was particularly remembered for the "robes and other clothing" which she had made for others. Though we do not read about her having filled an office in the church, the kind of work she did, for which she was highly commended, would certainly be in line with the kind of work done today by deacons.

In I Timothy 5:9-10 mention is made of widows who may be placed on a certain list: "No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds" (NIV). These widows were apparently to be "enrolled" (ASV, RSV; Greek, *katalogesthai*) as members of a certain group. It has been suggested that this was simply a list of widows who were eligible for receiving support from the church. This is highly unlikely, however, since the matter of support for widows has been touched upon in verse 3 and will again be touched upon in verse 16. Besides, why should support be given only to widows who are over sixty years old? What Paul is speaking of here is a list of widows who were to perform certain services which would be helpful to the members of the congregation. Though we are probably not warranted to think of a specific ecclesiastical office here, it seems clear that this was a group of widows who could be called upon to perform acts of mercy and charity. When we observe the kinds of good deeds for which these widows were noted, we see that they were analogous to the work done today by deacons: showing hospitality, "washing the feet of the saints" (that is, serving others in love and humility, being willing to do menial tasks for people in need), and helping those in trouble. Though we are not told exactly what kind of work these widows were expected to do, we may presume that it would be similar to the kinds of good works for which they were already known.

Supporting this interpretation of I Timothy 5:9-10 are the commentaries of Calvin, C. Bounia, H. Ridderbos, and W. Hendriksen. Hendriksen, in fact, adds the following comment:

There is sufficient evidence to show that in the early church such a body of widows, with definite functions actually existed. Thus Tertullian (possibly about the year 204), referring definitely to I Tim. 3:9 [should be 5:9]...states that the task of these women was, "that their experienced training in all the affections may have rendered them capable of readily assisting all others with counsel and comfort" (*On the Veiling of Virgins*, IX) (*Commentary on I Timothy*, p. 173).

We have seen, therefore, that women did indeed perform duties in the church analogous to those carried out today by deacons. Apparently, too, in some cases at least, women performed such duties at the request of the church (as in the case of the enrolled widows mentioned in I Timothy 5).

The committee is convinced that admitting women to the office of deacon does not involve a violation of the headship principle. It should be noted that previous synodical committees which dealt with the question of women in ecclesiastical office, in their majority reports, were of the conviction that to have women serve as deacons would not violate the principle of male headship. It should also be observed that both the majority and the larger minority of the committee reporting to the Synod of 1981 favored the admission of women to the office of deacon. It should further be recognized that women have served as

deacons in Reformed churches in the past: see the decisions of the Convent of Wezel of 1568 on this matter (*Acts of Synod 1981*, p. 509).

The committee therefore recommends that the synod allow consistories to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon, provided that their work is distinguished from that of the elders. The duties of these women deacons would be the same as those of male deacons:

The task of the deacons is to administer Christian mercy toward those who are in need, first of all toward those of the household of faith, but also toward the needy in general. In executing this task, they shall diligently collect, administer, and distribute monies and other gifts, and shall serve the distressed with counsel and assistance (Church Order, Article 25, a; see the rest of the article for a list of related tasks).

Before proceeding to our recommendations, we should face what may perhaps prove to be the biggest obstacle in the way of adopting the proposal to ordain women deacons: namely, the role women deacons would play as members of the consistory. Those who oppose the ordination of women as deacons could very well advance considerations like the following: (a) In larger consistories, women would then be members of the general consistory and would thus have a part in the general government of the church; (b) in smaller consistories, women deacons could then be permitted to function as elders (see *Acts of Synod 1938*, p. 81).

What shall we say about this? Would the presence of women as members of the general consistory in the case of larger churches, or as members of the undifferentiated consistory in the case of smaller churches, constitute a violation of the headship principle?

We consider first the situation in larger consistories. According to Article 35, a of the present Church Order, all office-bearers are members of the consistory, and the consistory is responsible for the general government of the church. Article 35 continues as follows:

b. Where the number of elders is at least four, a distinction may be made between the general consistory, to which all office-bearers belong, and the restricted consistory, in which the deacons do not participate.

c. When such a distinction is made, the supervision and discipline of the congregation shall be vested in the restricted consistory. The work of Christian mercy shall be the task of the deacons, who shall render account of their work to the general consistory. All other matters belong to the general consistory.

In larger consistories, therefore, women deacons, if there were such, would usually be meeting separately with the male deacons for the purpose of doing their diaconal work. Women deacons would, however, also be meeting with all the other office-bearers as members of the general consistory. Would this violate the headship principle?

Your committee does not think so. It must be remembered, first of all, that these women would be members of the general consistory as deacons; their primary task, therefore, would be the work of Christian mercy as described in the Church Order. Matters pertaining to the supervision and discipline of the congregation would be the responsibility of the elders, and would be handled in separate meetings of the elders, not in meetings of the general consistory. Women deacons would, therefore, not be doing the work of elders even though they would be members of the general consistory.

It seems clear to your committee that the term *consistory* as used in the Church Order does not always intend to include the minister(s), the elders, and the deacons, but may sometimes mean only the minister(s) and the elders. For example, in Articles 78, 81, 83, 84, 85, 86, and 87 the word *consistory* is used in connection with the disciplinary work of the church (cf., e.g., Art. 78, b, "the exercise of admonition and discipline by the consistory..."). But Article 24, a assigns the work of admonition and discipline specifically to the minister(s) and the elders. It would seem obvious, therefore, that the Church Order does not intend to assign the work of church discipline to deacons in the above-mentioned articles pertaining to discipline, even though these articles assign that work to "the consistory."

In other words, when the Church Order uses the word *consistory*, care must be taken to understand the word in the light of the division of duties described in Articles 24, 25, and 35 between the minister(s) and elders on the one hand and the deacons on the other.

The committee therefore recommends that the understanding of the duties of deacons, including women deacons, when deacons are part of the general consistory, should be governed by the division of functions described in Articles 24, 25, and 35 of the Church Order. Each consistory must, in other words, use its own good judgment in deciding which matters could be handled by the general consistory (minister, elders, and deacons), and which should be assigned either to the elders or to the deacons—since deacons should not become involved in elder functions. Your committee, however, recommends that such matters as worship, discipline, education, and evangelism shall belong to the domain of the restricted consistory—that is, of the minister(s) and the elders.

What kind of matters would be taken up by the general consistory, to be discussed by the minister(s), elders, and deacons together? *Budget matters* and *building matters* would certainly be included. It would be advantageous to have the input of women on both matters. (It will be remembered that approval of both budget and building matters would be given by the entire congregation which, in most cases, would include the female members.) *Nominations for office* would also be prepared by the general consistory. It would certainly be advantageous to have women take part in the nominating process. In fact, already at the present time women, as members of the congregation, may direct the consistory's attention to suitable nominees for office (Church Order, Art. 4, b). Other matters which would come before the general consistory would include *mutual censure* and *church visiting*. The former means mutual counsel and advice with respect to office, whereas the latter would involve the asking of questions and the giving of advice. Neither the giving nor the receiving of advice is a headship matter. The committee concludes that none of the activities mentioned above would involve women deacons who might be present at general consistory meetings in a violation of the headship principle.

We go on now to consider what would be the role of women deacons in smaller churches with smaller consistories. In consistories where the number of elders is three or less, it will be recalled, the distinction between the general and the restricted consistory would not be made. It would, incidentally, also be possible for this situation to prevail in larger consistories—note the word *may* in Church Order Article 35, b, quoted above. In such consistories women deacons would not meet separately as part of the diaconate, but would always be

meeting with the elders and the minister(s) as members of the consistory. Would their meeting with the elders in such instances constitute a violation of the headship principle?

In churches where the deacons do regularly meet with the elders, the deacons would, of course, do the work of the diaconate. In addition, they would take part in discussions and decisions involving such general matters as were mentioned above under the work of the general consistory. In neither case would such activities involve a violation of the headship principle on the part of women deacons who might be members of such consistories.

But now there is a further complication. In 1938 the synod passed a recommendation to the effect that when in small churches deacons are "added to the consistory" (the phrase is taken from Article 37 of the pre-1965 Church Order, and reflects the time when the diaconate was separate from the consistory), they "are warranted in performing presbyterial functions." A second sentence of the recommendation puts it this way: in such consistories "deacons may function as elders" (*Acts of Synod 1938*, p. 81).

Though this decision was passed before the 1965 Church Order, which made deacons part of the consistory, was adopted, the ruling would still hold for consistories where deacons do not meet separately from the elders. In such consistories women deacons would still be deacons; their primary task would still be the diaconal one. But as long as the decision of 1938 remains in effect in its present form, women deacons in such consistories could be permitted to function as elders. Such functioning, the majority of your committee believes, would violate the headship principle.

In order to avoid this difficulty, therefore, we propose that the Synod of 1984 adopt the following resolution: "that synod declare that in consistories where the distinction between the general and the restricted consistory is not made, women deacons may not function as elders." If this resolution is adopted, women deacons could continue to meet with the elders and other deacons in such consistories, but their work as members of such consistories would not violate the headship principle.

The recommendations which follow are those of the majority of the committee. The recommendations of the two minorities will be found in the two minority reports which will follow the majority report.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the privilege of the floor at synod be given to the following: the chairman, Rev. John De Kruyter; the reporter, Dr. Anthony Hoekema; and representatives of the minority positions.

2. That synod declare that "the headship principle," which means that the man should exercise primary leadership and direction-setting in the home, in the church, and in society in general, is a creational norm recognized in both the Old and the New Testament.

3. That synod declare that God gave woman to be man's fitting helper for the whole of human life, and that she should render her service and exercise her gifts in a way which acknowledges the headship of the man.

4. That synod declare that the headship of the husband in marriage involves a direction-setting role, which is to be exercised in a loving, self-sacrificial way, after the pattern of Christ's headship over the church.

5. That synod declare that the headship of the man in the church implies that women should not be admitted to the offices of minister, elder, or evangelist.
6. That synod declare that the headship principle does not prohibit women from serving in the office of deacon.

Grounds:

- a. The office of deacon does not involve the kind of authority over men which is prohibited in the New Testament.
 - b. The New Testament contains many instances of women who did the kind of work presently associated with the office of deacon.
 7. That synod reaffirm the decision of the Synod of 1978: "That consistories be allowed to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon, provided that their work is distinguished from that of elders" (*Acts of Synod 1978*, p. 104).
 8. That synod declare that such matters as worship, discipline, education, and evangelism belong to the domain of the elders.
 9. That synod declare that in consistories where the distinction between the general and the restricted consistory is not made, women deacons may not function as elders.
 10. That synod ratify the amended form of Article 3 of the Church Order which was adopted by the Synod of 1978, with the addition of the word "evangelist" in section a:
- Article 3
- a. Confessing male members of the church who meet the biblical requirements are eligible for the offices of minister, elder, [and evangelist].
 - b. All confessing members of the church who meet the biblical requirements are eligible for the office of deacon.
 - c. Only those who have been officially called and ordained or installed shall hold and exercise office in the church (*Acts of Synod 1978*, p. 105).
11. That synod declare that the decision as to whether women should be ordained as deacons in any specific congregation be left to the judgment of each local consistory.
12. That synod urge the churches to acknowledge the woman's role as man's fitting helper in the church by appointing qualified women as "assistants in ministry" (not members of the consistory) so that they might complement the pastoral work of the elders and the ministers.
13. That synod refer this report for information to the churches which are in ecclesiastical fellowship with the Christian Reformed Church, and to the churches which belong to the Reformed Ecumenical Synod.
14. That synod discharge the committee.

The Committee on Headship in the Bible

John A. De Kruyter, chairman
 Anthony A. Hoekema, reporter
 Wayne Kobes
 Gordon H. Pols

VII. MINORITY REPORT I

I am in hearty agreement with the majority report as it presents its biblical

and historical material. I differ from it only in the conclusions it draws from the material. In my judgment, the teaching of Scripture and the majority report exposition of it support Option 4, "women not in ordained office but commissioned to assist in the work of all the offices," rather than Option 1, "women as deacons and as members of the consistory." Thus the significant difference between the majority report and this minority report is the issue of the ordination of women to the office of deacon and as members of the consistory. I support Recommendation 1 through 4 of the Majority Report, as well as Recommendation 12 which, in recommending women as assistants to elders and ministers, implements a part of Option 4.

There are three reasons which compel me to write a minority report defending Option 4, "women not in ordained office but commissioned to assist in the work of all the offices."

1. The first reason why I defend Option 4 rests on what I conclude from Scripture. I agree with the strong exposition in the majority report of the role and nature of male headship as a creational norm recognized in both the Old and New Testaments, with the man exercising primary leadership and direction-setting and the woman assisting him as a fitting helper for the whole of human life. In applying this teaching of headship, I do not find clear teaching or example in Scripture which allows women to hold any of the ordained offices of the church.

The majority report discusses Scripture passages thoroughly. I only pinpoint some of the examples and teachings cited. Against the backdrop of the creational norm and the need to reclaim it after the fall, we note that the priests of the Old Testament were male in distinction from the practice in various cultures around Israel. In the freedom of the gospel which Christ brought, we have examples of women helping significantly in various kinds of work in the church. Conspicuous are Phoebe of Cenchreae (Rom. 16:1-2) whom Paul called a servant (deaconess?) and "a helper of many and of myself as well"; Priscilla (Acts 18:26) who with her husband "expounded to him [Apollos] the word of God more accurately"; Philip's "four unmarried daughters, who prophesied" (Acts 21:9); the "any woman who prays and prophesies with her head unveiled" instruction (1 Cor. 11:5), followed by the creation reasoning of verses 7-12; Dorcas (Acts 9:36), "full of good works and acts of charity"; the older women asked to teach and train the younger women (Titus 2:3-4); and the older widows (1 Tim. 5:9-10) who could be "enrolled" on the basis of their age, godly life, and good deeds to their families, the saints, and the distressed. The passage on widows speaks about financial provision for them (verses 4, 8, 16), and is often interpreted as also reflecting a specific assignment in the church, probably in keeping with the good deeds for which they were known. All these give evidence of significantly increased participation by women in the various ministries of the New Testament church.

But the apostles and their first associates, the seven (often called deacons, though the word as a noun is not used [Acts 6:1-6])—these all were men. The teaching about qualifications for office of elder and deacon is in masculine form (1 Tim. 3:1-13), linked in verses 4 and 12 to the headship men are to exercise in their families. We wonder about the meaning of verse 11 which, literally interpreting three Greek words, says, "Woman/wives likewise worthy-of-respect." But we have no clear guidance about what this means and cannot say more than Scripture says. In writing to Titus, Paul again lists qualifications for

male elders (Titus 1:5-9) as he emphasizes sound doctrine. Does he omit qualifications for deacons because sound doctrine is not their primary responsibility, or for another reason? We do not know.

I do not see how we can say more from the New Testament than that men served as ordained office-bearers and women helped significantly in all the ministries of the church. This is consistent with the creational norm of headship and the Genesis passages thoroughly discussed in the Majority Report.

One argument advanced for admitting women to the ordained office of deacon is that women in the New Testament did the kinds of work carried out by deacons today. But we should note that these kinds of work did not result in ordination for women in the New Testament church of which they were a part. These kinds of work did not result in the ordination of women as deacons throughout the long history of the church either, as Report 32 of the 1981 Acts of Synod describes well. The New Testament pattern of male office-bearers has continued almost without exception, with women assisting through helping orders or as deaconesses at various times.

Calvin, in establishing "two distinct grades" of deacons, made a clear separation between administering deacons who were men and the women who did the actual care of the poor, after the example of the enrolled widows in I Timothy 5 (*Institutes* IV, 3, 9). The 1568 Convent of Wezel, noting Calvin's pattern, provided for women deacons and, like Calvin, allowed no deacons in the consistory. The Wezel position on deacons was reversed three years later in Emden and then more officially in the Church Order written by the 1574 Synod of Dordrecht. We have not kept the distinctions made by Calvin and Wezel when today we propose women as full deacons and as members of the consistory.

In this century, particularly since the 1920s, the Christian Reformed Church has been emphasizing the unity and special nature of all three ordained offices. Deacons have become increasingly involved in the governing of the church where the principle of male headship is reflected. This authority of deacons is an added reason, I think, why we cannot argue for women deacons today on the basis of the kinds of helping work women did in the New Testament church. In fact, it is the issue of ruling authority which keeps us from arguing also for women pastors and elders on the basis of teaching-prophesying kinds of work done by women in the New Testament.

2. The second reason for recommending Option 4, "women not in ordained office but commissioned to assist in the work of all the offices," arises from the Christian Reformed Church Order by which the life of the church is regulated.

The Church Order of 1965, now in practice for eighteen years, reflects a twentieth-century theological explanation of church offices which emphasizes the inherent unity of the three offices and which gives deacons full place in the consistory with ministers and elders. One result has been that the work of elders and deacons is not clearly distinguished in the articles of the Church Order.

The Synod of 1978, in its decision to recommend women deacons, added the words "provided that their work is distinguished from that of elders." Recommendation 7 of the 1984 majority report reaffirms the 1978 recommendation about women deacons and adds the same proviso.

It is difficult to see how this proviso, that the work of deacons be distinguished from that of elders, can be carried out effectively. Our current

Church Order does not delineate the offices of elder and deacon in consistent fashion. Articles 24 and 25 of the Church Order separate the general work of elders from that of deacons. But Article 35 blurs the distinction by stating that in every church "a consistory composed of the office-bearers" (including both elders and deacons) "is responsible for the general government of the church." This term, *consistory*, is used more than sixty times in the rest of the Church Order. It is to the consistory, without further delineation, that the following work of the church is assigned (the numbers refer to articles in the Church Order):

nominations for and installation of office-bearers (4), nominating and calling a pastor (12), releasing a pastor (16, 17), supporting ministers (15), authority of consistory (27, 34), general government of the church (35, a), evangelism and missions (73, 74), worship services (52, 53), sacraments: baptism (55, 56), Lord's Supper (59, 60), profession of faith (59, a), catechetical instruction (64), transfer of membership (66), instruction and admonition to marry in the Lord (69), encouraging Christian education (71), promoting and supervising societies and youth organizations (72), admonition and discipline (78, 81, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, and in 80 "the church" is responsible), suspension of a minister (90), suspension of an office-bearer (91). The supervision of a pastor is assigned to "his calling church" (13).

Which of these tasks are inherently the work of elders? The Church Order gives us no guidance. In how many churches are some (many?) of these tasks carried on by the consistory of elders and deacons together, as the Church Order wording allows? Where these tasks are done by elders and deacons together, it is impossible to distinguish the work of deacons from the work of elders.

The particular work of elders is described in the 1965 Church Order as follows:

general task description (24), definition of general and restricted consistory (35), presiding at meetings in minister's absence (36, a), delegate to classes and synod (40 and 45), pastoral care and family visiting (65), church visitors to other congregations (42), assisting in catechetical instruction "appointed by the consistory" (64, b). In Article 12 the assistance of elders is alluded to in the description of the work of a minister.

The Church Order also does not make it mandatory for churches to have a restricted consistory through which elders carry out their work separately. The wording of Article 35 is "a distinction may be made" [italics mine]. In smaller churches synod has made provision for deacons to serve as elders when needed.

No doubt individual churches have implemented the 1965 Church Order in a variety of ways in the past eighteen years. The general trend seems to be toward more work being done by the consistory of elders and deacons together, with a smaller role for elders only. This is in line with the wording of the 1965 Church Order.

On the basis of this Church Order I do not see how it is possible to ordain women as deacons and members of the consistory "provided that their work is distinguished from that of elders." Is it feasible to ask each consistory to sort out the blurred distinctions of all the "consistory" work listed in the Church Order, under the general guidance that "such matters as worship, discipline, educa-

tion, and evangelism belong to the domain of the elders" (Majority Report Recommendation 8)? Are we asking deacons to reduce their present involvement in the work of the church so that women may serve in the consistory? If women deacons are not to serve as elders in churches that do not have a restricted consistory, how would this be practically applied in a consistory meeting as the office-bearers together would be working through the agenda? And could a church not choose to observe the actual *working* of the Church Order and be technically in compliance with it, and yet do all its work through the consistory?

We have made a strong case for the ruling headship of elders and ministers, but we have not protected it when we recommend that women deacons serve in the consistory, since the present Church Order does not clearly distinguish between the work of elders and deacons, and since the current trend is to do more and more governing of the church by the elders and deacons together.

3. The third reason why I defend Option 4, "women not in ordained office but commissioned to assist in the work of all the offices," stresses the last part of this option. The first two reasons spoke against ordaining women as deacons and members of the consistory. This last reason addresses the need for us as a denomination to develop a recognized, structured way to welcome women as helpers in all the ministries of the church.

The reason for the assertion that women should give such help is the scriptural teaching that God intends women to be of significant help to men in every part of life. Man and woman belong together in the relationships and work of God's world, carrying out the "have dominion" mandate of Genesis 1. Together they reflect the image of God and carry out their roles. Headship does not exist in a vacuum but in a relationship, and the helping part of that relationship is just as important as the headship one. Thus, implicit in the creational norm of male headship is the woman's role of fitting helper in all the work and ministries of the church. There is no area in the church in which the help of women is inappropriate, and God calls us to imitate, develop, and implement this participation.

We as a denomination have not taken much initiative to do this. We have watched while a few churches chose deaconesses to assist in the work of varying, a time-honored practice over the centuries. We have discussed, with varying degrees of charity, whether women may serve in the ordained offices, and have appointed a series of synodical study committees to tell us what Scripture says about different aspects of this subject. The committees have not been unanimous in their conclusions and recommendations. Sadly, this committee is not unanimous either, though we have worked hard and with a growing bond of respect for one another.

Meanwhile, it seems to me that we can develop and implement a specific way for women to serve in the church. This will not be enough for some. Perhaps it will be too much for others. But it will be a way for the denomination to recognize that God intended women to be of significant help in all the ministries of the church. I hope that for many of us such a plan would be consistent with what we believe Scripture teaches about male headship of the right kind and about a full helping role for women.

Practically, Option 4 means that qualified women should be nominated and elected for terms of service as "assistants in ministry" to all the ordained office-bearers of the church. The work of these women would include helping in such

ministries as education, evangelism, worship, care of members, mercy, and benevolence.

These "assistants in ministry" would not be members of the consistory, but would meet regularly with their ordained counterparts to report, consult, recommend, evaluate, and plan. These women could ask or could be asked to be present at a consistory meeting. They would have special assignments for working with women, though not only with them. The denomination should provide guidelines for this ministry, a form for commissioning, and other helpful materials.

Recommendation 12 of the majority report proposes that churches should appoint qualified women as "assistants in ministry" to work with the elders and ministers. I propose that qualified women should be chosen as "assistants in ministry" to work with all the ordained office-bearers of the church, on the basis of the body of the majority report, and on the basis of the scriptural and church-government reasons given above.

RECOMMENDATION

That synod urge the churches to acknowledge woman's role as man's fitting helper in the church by establishing a position of "assistants in ministry" (not an ordained office) whereby qualified women can assist the ordained office-bearers in all the ministries of the church.

Grounds:

1. This is consistent with scriptural teaching about male headship as a creational norm, and about the woman's role as man's fitting helper for the whole of human life.
2. This is a clear and consistent way of implementing the helping role of women under our present Church Order and practice.
3. This provides an organized, recognized way in which women may use their gifts more effectively than before in all the ministries of the church.
Thea B. Van Halsema (Mrs. Dick L.)

VIII. MINORITY REPORT II

OUTLINE

- A. *Introduction*
- B. *Exegetical Studies*
 1. The Early Chapters of Genesis
 2. The Rest of the Old Testament
 3. The New Testament "Head" Passages
 - a. General Comments
 - b. Ephesians 5:22-23
 - c. I Corinthians 11:3
 4. Other New Testament Passages
 - a. I Corinthians 14:33b-35
 - b. I Timothy 2:11-15
- C. Women Associated with Paul's Work
- D. *The Overall Direction of the Bible on Male-Female Relations Summary*
- E. Recommendations

A. Introduction

Fourteen years ago the Christian Reformed Church began in a formal way to examine the practice of excluding women from the offices of the church. This present committee is now the fifth committee appointed to examine this issue. Two members of this committee have found themselves back at the beginning, back where the first study committee had already arrived. That committee concluded as its first recommendation: "The practice of excluding women from ecclesiastical office cannot conclusively be defended on biblical grounds" (*Acts of Synod 1973*, p. 588). More than ten years of continued struggle for clarity on this issue have now intervened. The present study committee was charged to examine what light "headship in the Bible" shed on the question. The majority of the committee has found that "the headship principle" does indeed shed light: "The headship of the man in the church implies that women should not be admitted to the offices of minister, elder, or evangelist" (Recommendation 5). We, a minority, must dissent. We do not find "headship" to be that biblical ground which makes defensible the exclusion of women from ecclesiastical office.

The majority of the committee has affirmed this primary conclusion: "The headship principle, which means that the man should exercise primary leadership and direction-setting in the home, in the church, and in society in general, is a creational norm recognized in both the Old and the New Testament" (Recommendation 2). Such a statement is open to a variety of emphases and interpretations. Much depends on what is meant by the qualifier word *primary*. Apparently women may legitimately engage in leadership and direction-setting, but this must not assume the role or stature of *primary* leadership and direction-setting. Where is the line of distinction? It is not easy to detect. The majority report has not sought to give specific guidance on locating the line in the marital relationship. Neither has it given much specific help to Christians as they function in larger societal relationships. But for relationships in the church the line of distinction has been detected. It intersects the office structure. The office of deacon does not require application of the creational norm of male headship; the offices of elder, minister, and evangelist do.

Here we demur. We are not confident that when the Bible uses the term *head* in regard to a man, this is conveying a biblical *principle*. We become less confident when this "headship principle" is accorded the stature of a *creational norm*. We are moved to express dissent when the proposed application of "the headship principle" is interpreted to exclude all women, regardless of their training, maturity, spiritual giftedness, and potential usefulness to the Christian community and mission, from the church offices of elder, minister, and evangelist.

The entire committee worked together long and hard in its examination, study, and discussion of many Scripture passages and of the way the biblical message regarding the roles and relations of the sexes is to be understood. The majority of the committee find their exegetical choices and way of understanding the overall thrust of Scripture pointing toward "the headship principle." We, a minority, judge that in some crucial instances there is validity to some other exegetical options. We also find ourselves differing from the majority in our understanding of the Bible's total message and thrust regarding sex roles and relationships.

We turn first to a review of our alternative exegetical choices.

B. Exegetical Studies

1. The Early Chapters of Genesis

The majority report gives an excellent summary of the revelation of the first chapter of Genesis regarding the man and the woman. The two stand in conjunction with each other, on a par. Both image God. Together they receive the mandate to be fruitful, multiply, subdue, and have dominion. In this chapter there are no indications of differing sex roles.

It is the second chapter of Genesis that has regularly been seen as providing some specific indications of the differing roles of the two sexes. In this account the man and the woman are created at different times and there are some initial indications, from the man's side at least, of the relationship between them.

In the Genesis 2 account God created the man from the dust of the earth, infused him with God's own living breath, and placed him in a garden specifically prepared for him. The garden was well-watered and well-planned. It filled Adam's senses with pleasure and it met his need for food. He was its caretaker. God, however, was still in charge. Limits were placed on Adam's domain. The whole garden was for his use except one designated tree. Adam had been provided with a fascinating and bountiful environment in which to begin his life as God's creature.

Something, however, was lacking. Adam was alone and this was not good. He must have companionship of the sort that would fulfill his need for sociability, creativity, and productivity. He could not be a whole and full human being in this state of aloneness. God proceeds to form the animals, and they are indeed companions of sorts. They are formed from the ground, like Adam, and, as they are presented to him, his intellectual powers go to work, recognizing them, sorting them out, and giving them names. But they do not form the type of companionship which is Adam's real need. God goes to work again, this time creating a companion from a part of Adam himself. As Adam wakes up in the presence of this new creature, he breaks forth in a joyful cry of fulfillment: He is no longer alone. He has a true companion.

The narrator proceeds immediately to comment on the strong drive that leads a man to seek this deep level of companionship. Natural ties to father and mother give way. The companionship for which the man reaches out cannot be met in its fullness even in his attachment to his parents. In marriage the man finds his companion in the profoundest sense—they become "one flesh." Their naked sexual distinctiveness is no barrier between them. In their union as husband and wife the two find full freedom, comfort, and satisfaction. The Lord has created a most fascinating and enriching potential for fullness of life for his favored creatures—humankind.

What may we learn from this account about the distinctive roles of the two sexes? The primary clue would appear to lie in the phrase "a helper fit for him" (Heb.:

‘ezer kengado). The animals failed to measure up, but the woman succeeded in filling this role gloriously. The Hebrew word *‘ezer*, "help" or "helper," expresses a positive relationship. Someone is in need (like Adam in his aloneness) and the other comes and meets that need. With the two of them life moves on, the job gets done, and the person who stood in need while he was alone finds himself able to function and able to live in a full sense. The concept *‘ezer* indicates one who brings help, aid, assistance, one who acts beneficially for the other. It is found twenty-one times in the Old Testament.

The predominant use of *'ezer* is of God as a help to human beings (sixteen times). A sampling of God's helping activities can be found in Psalm 146: God "made the heaven and earth.... keeps faith for ever, ... sets the prisoners free, ... opens the eyes of the blind, ... lifts up those who are bowed down, ... watches over the sojourners, ... upholds the widow and the fatherless," etc. Small wonder that the psalmist exclaims, "Happy is he whose help (*'ezer*) is the God of Jacob" (v. 5). God as help is God the creator, protector, and redeemer at work in behalf of his people (Ex. 18:4; Ps. 20:2; 115:9, 10, 11; 121:1-2; 124:8, *et al.*).

Men are also referred to as helpers (three times: Isa. 30:5; Ezek. 12:14; Dan. 11:34). However, in each of these instances, man as helper is found to be insufficient or ineffective. Compared to God, men frequently fail to furnish the kind of help really needed.

The other two instances of *'ezer* are in Genesis 2. Verse 20 by implication refers to the animals: "for the man there was not found a helper fit for him." The deficiency in the animals is probably not at the point of their being an *'ezer* as such—animals can be very useful and beneficial to man. Rather they were not "fit for him." They could not meet Adam's real need for companionship. In the creation of the woman God accomplishes his purpose of making "a helper fit for him" (vs. 18). In the woman the needed help is found.

The concept *'ezer* gives no indication of a lesser position or subservient role. It does not indicate which one is in charge or who is taking the lead. God as helper is obviously in charge. Animals as helpers would obviously not be in charge. Fellowmen as helpers might or might not be in charge. It is obvious that many kings and warriors who came to the help of others (the verbal form of *'ezer*) took no subservient positions. What about the woman as *'ezer* to the man? The role of an *'ezer* for the woman does not indicate that the man is necessarily in charge. It gives no indication whether either of them is in charge, or whether perhaps they meet as equals and as partners in action. It does not speak to the issue of being in charge or being in the position of a follower. This point must be emphasized, for the English word *helper* very readily brings associations of apprentice, errand boy, maid, the one who follows the orders and does all kinds of monotonous, or detailed, or distasteful, or less important tasks under the direction and orders of another. The concept of *'ezer* does not carry these associations. In the context of Genesis 2 the woman's help is in the area of the man's need for a companion: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper...." Helper does not indicate that she is subordinate. It indicates that she meets his need.

What about the remainder of the phrase—"fit for him?" Does that give some clues as to the relative roles of the man and the woman? The Hebrew word *kenegdô* expresses the idea of being "over against," "face to face," or "in front of." It is a Hebrew way of expressing comparison, correspondence, similarity, the one fitting the other. The man needs a help corresponding to him, or, as the Brown, Driver, Briggs *Lexicon* puts it, "a help... equal and adequate to himself." Here was precisely the failure of the animals: they were not on the level of the man, suitable to overcome his aloneness. And this was precisely Adam's excitement in first meeting the woman: "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh!" He had found an adequate counterpart and his aloneness had been overcome. There is no hint in the phrase *kenegdô* of a ranking of one above the other; the whole indication is that of being on a par. They meet on the same level. It is the picture of mutuality, equality, partnership. They are

counterparts of each other, alongside each other.

What about the man's being created first? Does this give to the man some kind of status or stature not shared by the woman? He is of course older than woman. And during the time that he lived alone in the garden he had significant experiences. He also has received significant information and instruction from the Lord about what he is to do in the garden and about the tree that is forbidden to his use. So the man will naturally be in the position of leader and teacher when the woman arrives. But is there more to his position of firstness than just this natural relationship of the woman's learning from the man's broader experience? Is he in charge of her in a way that she is not in charge of him? Is he to remain in charge? Is it the prerogative of the male, as being created first, to be in charge of the female? None of this is obvious from these Genesis creation accounts.

An appeal has often been made to the institution of the *firstborn* in order to show the significance which the Bible places on firstness. In Old Testament times the practice of according to the firstborn son the position of principal heir appears generally to have been followed in Israel and the surrounding nations. The firstborn was accorded a preeminence with respect to the others who followed. To be firstborn carried authority, rank, status, and inheritance implications. The father's firstborn son was considered "the first issue of his strength" (Deut. 21:17). In the absence of the father the firstborn son assumed a position of authority in the family (Gen. 24:55, 60). He ranked highest after the father. The firstborn inherited twice as much as every other son (Deut. 21:15-17). Among kings the right of the firstborn implied the succession to his father's rule (II Chron. 21:1-3). The high rank of the firstborn led to the metaphorical use of the term for Israel as God's firstborn son (Ex. 4:22; Ps. 89:27).

However, the position of firstborn carried no sure and automatic significance in Israel. God frequently disregarded it, giving special privileges and leadership to Seth, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Ephraim, Moses, David, Solomon—none of whom was a firstborn son or even the eldest living son. When Jacob gave his farewell blessing to his sons, he acknowledged Reuben as firstborn, but denied him the preeminence of the firstborn, giving it to Judah instead (Gen. 49:3-4, 8). In his earlier days Jacob himself had used devious means to obtain the firstborn privileges for himself (Gen. 25:29-34 and 27). Jacob again ignored the firstborn institution by crossing his arms in blessing Joseph's sons, thus giving the younger the principal blessing (Gen. 48:13-22). David chose Solomon over his elder sons (I Kings 1:33-35; I Chron. 23:1). In the monarchy the right of the firstborn indeed implied the succession to his father's rule, as II Chronicles 21:1-3 shows, but it is interesting that this very passage goes on to point out that the firstborn Jehoram, once having gained control, liquidated all his brothers (v. 4). Apparently even in Judah, where the covenant with David was determinative of kingship, Jehoram could not depend on the firstborn institution to offer him security. Was there, then, a divine principle or a creation ordinance at work in this institution of the firstborn? It would be hard to make a clear case for that in view of the Old Testament record.

Firstness was indeed important in Old Testament society. However, the institution of the firstborn does not appear to be a divinely ordained or divinely revealed arrangement for human society. Rather, it appears to be a general societal practice among ancient peoples—a practice to which God often adjusted and which his people generally observed. But God took liberties with it.

The book of Genesis is a grand testimony to the sovereignty of God's election precisely because God so freely deviated from expected and established human practice. His ways are not our ways. Jacob and David joined God in not feeling bound to primogeniture. Christians also have felt free to give up the firstborn arrangement in many of the societies in which they have lived. The societal practice of the firstborn is hardly sufficient evidence to verify that God, in creating the man first, intended to make him the person in charge and in authority over the woman.

Hence, Adam's firstness naturally made him the leader and the teacher of the woman in the garden. But it certainly is not clear that the man's firstness would make it inappropriate for the woman ever to be the man's teacher or ever to be in a position of leadership or authority over him. The woman might well gain the man's stage of maturity and could conceivably even have experiences and revelations which would make her an appropriate teacher and leader. To conclude from the fact of the man's having been created first that he is in a position of authority over the woman does not appear to be a necessary conclusion from the Old Testament accounts. (What Paul meant by appealing to man's firstness will be discussed in connection with the Pauline passages.)

The argument is often proposed, however, that Adam showed an awareness of being in charge already in his first act after the woman's creation. This argument claims that upon meeting her, he names her. Scholars have observed that naming among ancient peoples was "an exercise of sovereignty, of command" (von Rad). When Adam called her "Woman," Adam showed his position of authority over her, even as he had shown his position of authority in naming the animals. Therefore the conclusion may be drawn, it is argued, that Adam clearly sensed that he was in charge.

Is such a reading of the man's excited enthusiasm for his new companion a fair reading of the account? We acknowledge that name-giving meant more in ancient society than it usually does today. We acknowledge also that the ancients saw in name-giving "an exercise of sovereignty." We raise the question, however, whether these were always and inevitably the implications of giving a name. When the women of Bethlehem named Ruth's baby "Obed," did they mean to express sovereignty over the child? The whole context focuses on the joy that Naomi has in her (Ruth 4:17). The women are absorbed in rejoicing with Naomi as they name the baby. When Hagar called the name of God "Thou art the God of seeing" (from which a prominent well derived its name), was she assuming sovereignty over God? Israel would hardly have recorded the story of her act of name-giving if it had had such implications. On the contrary, Hagar's name-giving was a joyful exclamation of faith and confidence in the God who had just revealed his presence. Her response is to call him by a new name. Adam's calling his new companion "Woman" is in the same vein, a joyful recognition of what God has accomplished. The account says that "the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman [*ishshah*]" (Gen. 2:22). God's creative skill determined that she should be *ishshah*. When she is brought to the man, he recognizes what God had made, and excitedly exclaims that at last he has a true counterpart: "bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh." He recognizes that she is the same as himself, only feminine. He expresses that by making a wordplay on what he is—*ish*, man: "She shall be called *ishshah*, because she is taken out of *ish*." The exclamation shows joy and excitement; it shows the man's powers of immediate recognition and intel-

ligence. God had formed her as an *ishshah*; Adam recognized her as an *ishshah*. It is debatable whether one can conclude that Adam's exclamation is an evidence of his sense of having authority over his wife in sovereignly naming her. This act by the man does not appear to be an important clue to establishing the role of the sexes in their created purity.

Genesis 3 records the fall of Adam and Eve into sin. In this incident Eve took a leading role and Adam was the willing follower. Some have found in this supposed switching of the sex roles a factor contributing to the fall.

Appeal can be made to God's words to the man: "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree ..." (Gen. 3:17). The line of thought is that Adam was wrong on two counts, listening to his wife and eating of the tree. However, God later tells Abraham, "Listen to whatever Sarah tells you..." (Gen. 21:12, NIV—the Hebrew wording is similar in the two passages). It would be hazardous to derive general rules from either of these instances of wives telling their husbands what to do. The content of what is said, not the fact that a wife is saying it, is the important point. It is very tenuous to conclude that Adam was blameable for the simple fact of following the advice of a wife.

It can still be argued, on the other hand, that after the fall it is the man who is called to account. Does this fact not indicate that God has placed man in the position of primary responsibility? The man is the one who is to represent the human pair. The majority report has appealed to this line of argumentation.

Once again we do well to look carefully at the account. The story pictures God in a highly anthropomorphic way. He comes walking in the garden in the cool of the day seeking the fellowship of his human creatures. But they are not to be found. Hence God calls to the man, "Where are you?" Adam and Eve come forth from their hiding, and because of Adam's strange behavior in hiding from the Lord and his embarrassed confession about his nakedness, the Lord asks straightforwardly whether Adam has eaten from the forbidden tree. Adam is being addressed not so much as the responsible party of the human pair who must give an account of what has taken place, but as the Lord's first companion in the garden who is now acting so suspiciously. In terms of the anthropomorphic account the Lord did not yet know what had taken place when he called to the man, "Where are you?" We ought not to read into the question ideas about Adam's particular responsibility and accountability for the actions of the human pair; the Lord, walking in the garden, was simply calling, "Where are you?" The Lord continues talking to the man until Adam points to the woman as the culprit. Then God immediately switches his questioning to her. Adam's being questioned first after the fall is no clear sign that in the created order men were to be the responsible parties in charge of women.

In Genesis 3:16 we finally have a clear statement about the man's rulership over the woman. In this passage we have a part of God's sentence or judgment upon the woman after her fall into sin: "He [your husband] shall rule over you." The straightforward statement about male rulership is spoken in the context of the fallen relationship.

The majority committee report has pointed out that with the fall not all relationships changed. In fact, the account of God's judgment and sentence upon the human pair assumes that some of the pre-fall relationships will continue. Childbearing is not new, for the original couple were to "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth" (Gen. 1:28). Working the soil and growing food

was not new, for Adam was placed in the garden of Eden "to till it and keep it" (Gen. 2:15). Thus the man's ruling of the woman need not be new either. God in pronouncing his sentence has graciously maintained and reaffirmed the basic creation order. The man is to continue in the ruling position.

Such an interpretation is a possible one. In regard to childbearing and the growing of food the original arrangements are indeed maintained, although now in distorted, corrupted form. This is made clear in both cases by the Hebrew word *'issabôn*, "pain, toil, suffering": "in pain you shall bring forth children...in toil you shall eat of it [the ground] all the days of your life" (vv. 16-17). The majority report, in finding male rulership a continuance of the created order, comments immediately upon how this rulership will degenerate and become threatening to women after the fall. In other words, it assumes that the *'issabôn*-idea of pain and suffering is to be understood in connection with the statement about ruling as well as childbearing and working the soil. Ruling will now cause pain and suffering for the woman. Ruling will degenerate into tyranny and become a domineering type of ruling rather than the benevolent and loving ruling of the original order. The woman is placed under this sentence. Thus the statement, "he shall rule over you," maintains the created roles but also carries overtones of the pathetic lot of the woman in her fallen condition. The statement about ruling is a part of the sentence upon her.

Such reading of "he shall rule over you" is complex. It calls for a quick switch from good rule to threatening domineering rule right within the one word *rule*. Does the single word *rule* in this sentence really carry the content of both the created order and the fallen order?

There is a simpler, and in our estimation a better, way of understanding the statement about man's rulership. Radical changes have happened in God's good creation. Thorns and thistles appear to be something new now that sin has come. Man's return to the dust from which he was taken sounds like a new situation for the man. The man's rulership over the woman can also be read as a new, radical change. It is a statement of the sad consequences of the fallen, sinful state. It describes that fallen state. It does not prescribe God's will for people living in the fallen state, so that husbands must insist on their right to rule. (We do not treat the pains of childbirth or thorns and thistles in our gardens as things to be maintained by divine will!) Neither does the statement about the husband's ruling prescribe God's will for the ideal created and redeemed order. The relationship where the man is automatically the ruler and the woman the ruled is a picture of the creation disturbed and fallen.

The early chapters of Genesis have delivered to us no firm indications, or clues to a role for the man which puts him in charge. The clues which are often proposed were found highly tenuous and debatable. On the other hand, the first chapter of Genesis views the man and the woman alongside each other without role differentiation, and the second chapter of Genesis appoints the woman to be the true counterpart of man, the companion that has overcome his aloneness. The man is not constituted always to be in charge and the woman always to be a follower. It appears rather that they were created as true partners, to live in mutual leadership and fulfillment of each other. Created this way, perhaps they may hope that the created state will someday be restored.

2. The Rest of the Old Testament

As the biblical account moves on from the fall, the male segment of humanity

is clearly more prominent than the female segment. No daughters of Adam and Eve ever enter the account beyond the mentioning that there were some (Gen. 5:4). The story proceeds in terms of events involving the men. In fact, this attention to the man was even in evidence in the Genesis 2 creation story. There is no mention of the woman's needs, of her reaction to the man, or of how she was to find fulfillment. We cautioned in our previous section against concluding that the attention given to the male was indicative that he was in charge. But there can be no denying that throughout the Bible the primary focus is on the man.

There can also be no denying that after the fall the man is not only the most prominent but also clearly the dominant one. The man is in charge. He rules. As the majority report has pointed out, this is true throughout the structures of society—of judges, military leaders, monarchs, prophets, priests, and elders. The Old Testament used the word *head* for some of these men in positions of leadership and authority. There were heads of houses (families), heads of clans, heads over the people. There is a form of "headship" practiced in the Old Testament. It is the headship of the ruler over his subjects. He is head of both males and females. This Old Testament headship is not the headship of the man over the woman, but the headship of the office-holder over those under him. In a male-dominated society the officers will naturally be men. Is there any way of determining from the clear pattern and practice of the Old Testament male-dominated societal life whether male-domination is a God-willed, God-ordained, God-revealed pattern and practice? In short, is male domination really a creation structure, or is it only a human societal pattern? Or again, is the patriarchal pattern of society the will of God for all human society in all times?

Here is where the admittedly few exceptions in the Old Testament become important. The majority report calls these "exceptions to the rule." Do they mean by "the rule" the going practice, or the God-ordained norm? Undoubtedly the latter. But exceptions to the God-ordained norm are not to be lightly waved aside. One expects some obvious reason, or an explanation, or a sense of dreadful uneasiness or wariness in view of an obvious departure from God's ways. On the contrary, the Old Testament shows only natural and willing acceptance of the leadership of these women in Israel. Miriam, the prophetess, is in trouble when she challenges Moses' superior authority (Num. 12), but otherwise her leadership is pictured without apology, and later God can remind Israel that she was one of the three whom he had sent to lead at the exodus (Mic. 6:4). Deborah is a prophetess and a judge. "She used to sit under the palm of Deborah... and the people of Israel came up to her for judgment" (Judg. 4:5). Again there is no apology in the account for so radical a departure from a supposed creation structure and no sense of hesitancy or embarrassment on Israel's part in accepting her. The book of the law is found in the temple and its threatening words need authentication. King Josiah instructs: "Go, inquire of the LORD for me.... So Hilkiah the priest... went to Huldah the prophetess.... And she said to them, Thus says the LORD..." (II Kings 22:13-15). King and priest seek the word from a woman. There is no embarrassment or sense of humiliation, but only a sense of urgency to hear the authoritative word from a recognized source. The incident is all the more striking if the prophet Jeremiah was indeed on the scene in those days, as the standard chronologies propose.

Is it clear, then, that the Old Testament demonstrates that only men are to be in positions of leadership, at least, *primary* leadership? Is there more primary leadership than Deborah's judging Israel and commanding military generals, and Huldah's instructing kings and priests? These women were a departure from the usual patterns of their society. They strongly suggest that other patterns are possible in God's good purposes with his people.

3. The New Testament "Head" Passages

a. General Comments

The majority report appropriately alerts us to the fact that what concerns us is not the head as part of human or animal anatomy, but the word *head* used as a metaphor. Metaphorical usage assumes a similarity and analogy. We must seek to detect the implied similarity. In what sense is Christ, or a husband, or a man similar to a head? The word studies in the majority report have surveyed the variety of usages in ancient Hebrew and Greek cultures and especially within the Scriptures. These word studies showed that there is not a clear and direct line from that widespread Hebrew use of *head* for a tribal or family leader to the New Testament "head" passages. The predominant choice when translating the Old Testament Scripture passages into Greek was to use the Greek word for ruler (*archōn*) rather than the Greek word for head (*kephalē*). This raised the question of whether it was entirely natural to hear the idea of ruling leader in the Greek word *kephalē*. There has been much scholarly discussion of this point. The majority report has presented much careful exegetical study of the "head" passages in the New Testament, seeking to detect the focus of the head-idea in each passage. We can express wholehearted agreement with much of the committee's work here.

It has sometimes been denied that the word *head* in the New Testament ever refers to a person in his exercise of rulership and authority. Such a proposal cannot stand. A clear instance of head in a ruling sense is Ephesians 1:22, where Paul says that God made Christ "head over all things." The context has clear expressions indicating the superior position of Christ and the inferior position of all else. The preposition "over" brings out the ruling stance. Colossians 2:10 may be referring to the same kind of headship. The language is slightly different. Christ is here called "head of all rule and authority." The indications of superior and inferior position are not as prominent, and Christ is not said to be "head over," but "head of." An alternative meaning for this passage could be head in the sense of fountainhead, source, or origin—they all came from him. But, over against voices who too sweepingly declare that notions of rulership and authority are strange to the Greek concept of *kephalē*, at least the Ephesians 1:22 expression of "head over" presents contrary evidence. In the New Testament *head* can refer to an authoritative ruling position. In passing, it should be noted that the "all things" over whom Christ is the head summarize all the powers which rival Christ's rule (cf. v. 21).

There is another prominent focus to the *head* metaphor in the New Testament. Paul sometimes combined the *head* metaphor with the *body* metaphor, one of his favorite representations of the church. In two passages (Col. 2:19 and Eph. 4:15) Paul was very specific about the head-body relationship he had in mind. The body draws its life and energy from the head.

From this source of supply the body is nourished and enabled to grow. It receives its energies, its cohesiveness, its ability to act with effectiveness from the life it draws from the head. Headship here is an organic type of headship. The head is the source and supplier of life through organic processes.

Hence, we have detected two types of headship in the New Testament. Broadly speaking, they follow the distinction between how a head relates to its own body (organic headship), and how a head relates to other bodies and things outside itself (ruling headship). This distinction is important to notice.

At this point some difficult questions arise. Are these two types of headship mutually exclusive, so that if one is present, the other will not be? Or is the very opposite the case, namely, that the two facets, ruler and organic supplier, are always both present in varying degrees in each instance of the head metaphor? Does ruling headship imply the organic relationship? This would hardly seem to be true of Christ's ruling headship over the powers—they are definitely not connected to him in a bodily fashion. Ruling headship, thus, does not necessarily imply organic headship. Does organic headship, on the other hand, imply the stance and activity of ruling? When Christ is pictured as the head supplying energy and nourishment to his body, the church, do we have a picture of Christ as ruler? Or are the ideas subtly different? In regard to Christ the idea of rulership is never far away, for the basic Christian confession is that Christ is Lord—a confession of rulership. But is headship an alternate synonymous expression for lordship? Popular usage tends to equate the two. Did Paul really mean headship to be understood thus? And if the ideas of headship and lordship seem to lie so close together in regard to Christ, are they also closely associated when Paul calls the husband head of the wife? There has surely been a tendency to hear overtones of the husband's lordship over his wife in the term *head*. Is there any way through this maze of difficult questions and subtle points? We can only plead for extra careful listening to Paul, intent on catching his point and resistant to the temptation to extend Paul's *head* metaphor beyond the point he made with it. We proceed to the two passages where the *head* metaphor is used of a man in relation to a woman, asking what point Paul intended to make.

b. Ephesians 5:22-23

In Ephesians 5:22-23 we meet for the third time in this letter Paul's use of the *head* metaphor. The first one had clearly been ruling headship—Christ is "head over all things" (Eph. 1:22). The second one had clearly been Christ's organic headship—"...grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body...makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself" (Eph. 4:15-16). What is the focus of the third time "head" is used—Ephesians 5:22-23? This passage is important to our present study, for here the *head* metaphor speaks not only of Christ but of men, or, more specifically, of husbands. "Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her..." (Eph. 5:22-25). The majority report has proposed that the basic explanation of the head-

ship idea here is to be found in the command to the woman to be subject. It concludes that headship in this passage is clearly and primarily ruling headship. The material in the passage that alludes to an organic type of headship is seen as showing the way in which the basic ruling is to be done. Ruling is to be done in a loving and self-sacrificing way. The majority points out that this is clearly the pattern of Christ's headship, so we may be confident that this is the pattern which Paul has in mind for the husband as well. This understanding of the passage is widespread and of long standing. But it may be questioned whether it has caught Paul's thrust with entire clarity. Two matters call for further probing: (1) what is subjection in this passage, and (2) what is headship in this passage?

(1) Paul calls wives to subjection in this passage. It is important to note, however, that this call immediately follows a general call for all Christians to be subject to each other. The two are so closely tied together that in the Greek Paul did not even repeat the specific command for the wives. It reads literally: "Subject yourselves to one another in reverence of Christ, wives to your own husbands..." (5:21-22). In other words, wives are the first specific instance Paul gives of the way all Christians are to live in subordinating themselves to each other. Subjection is not a uniquely female stance any more than the command he gives to husbands to love is a uniquely male stance. Both are expressions of appropriate ways for Christians to subject themselves to each other.

Mutual and reciprocal subjection is at the very heart of the new thing that has happened in Christ. Paul alludes to it several times: "Outdo one another in showing honor" (Rom. 12:10); "In humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil. 2:3-4); "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Eph. 5:21). Christians are being called to break with the whole system of rankings that loom so large in ordinary societal relationships. They are asked to cease all their careful calculations as to who owes them honor and deference and to whom they, in turn, are obligated to show honor and deference. The Christian stance is to show honor and deference to all, without distinction, willingly, and with enthusiasm. It recognizes that the claims of others upon one surpass the claims that one owes to himself or herself. It is the difference between self-giving and self-seeking, between being directed toward others and being directed toward self. Mutual subjection describes the attitude of willingly giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, acknowledging others' claims to one's time and attention, being a helper. As Markus Barth says in his commentary on Ephesians, "It [subjection] is a demonstration of that total humility, gentleness, mutual bearing, love, unity, peace' which in [Eph.] 4:1-3 were described as the constitutive works not of miserable slaves and bootlickers but of the free children of God, of persons in high standing, even of princes" (p. 710). Christ called it "self-denial."

In learning something about headship from Paul's use of the term *subjection*, we must pay careful attention to how Paul is using that term. He had used the word once before in Ephesians, then also in connection with the idea of headship: God subjected (*hypotassó*—active voice) the principalities, powers and all things under Christ's feet and made him head over all things (Eph. 1:22). This subjection was really subjugation. It happened quite re-

gardless of their will in the matter—in fact, since they were hostile powers, it happened against their will. The headship of that passage is clearly ruling, authoritative headship, an exerting of one's rights over others. However, the expression here in 5:21 makes a significant change. Subjection is expressed with the same word (*hypotassó*), but now in the Greek middle voice: subject yourselves, each one doing his own subjecting. It is not one of rank subjecting others, but of those without rank subjecting themselves. And here in Ephesians 5 it is to be mutual and reciprocal subjection: "to one another." All rankings and orderings are being disregarded. A ruling, authoritative headship does not fit well into a system of mutual subjection.

(2) What kind of headship is pictured for Christ and for the husband in Ephesians 5:22? Paul defines it very specifically: "The husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior." The English translations fail to convey the exact parallelism of the phrases here used of Christ. The Greek order reads literally:

The Christ	head	of the church
He	savior	of the body.

Paul could hardly indicate more clearly that the headship he has in mind is to be seen in Christ's activities as Savior.

Paul emphasizes the fact that he has Christ's saving activities in mind in the words he immediately addresses to husbands: "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25b-27). The headship here pictured is the solicitous care which a head shows to its own body. Paul makes that specific: "For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body" (vv. 29-30). And lest the strong organic ties between head and body still have not been caught, Paul quotes Scripture: "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is a profound one, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church" (vv. 31-32). Christ has, as it were, given up his individual identity; he now finds his identity in the church. Christ and the church are "one flesh." Head and body are one life.

The headship of Christ in this passage is emphatically organic headship. The body aligns itself to the head as naturally and as inevitably as any body finds and draws its life from its head. "The church is subject to Christ" (v. 24). His headship is life-giving; her submission is life-drawing—they are one flesh. It is this vivid metaphor of Christ's organic headship of the church, his body, which Paul finds to be the model for husband-headship.

For Christian wives of Paul's day the role of submission was nothing new. The whole of their culture had molded them to conceive of no other role for themselves. But now Christianity has come and everything has become new. Christ's presence has brought a qualitatively new dimension to all relationships. Christian wives find that their marriages also have become new. There is a new incentive and a new motivation: they are to submit to their husbands "as to the Lord" (v. 22). It is true that they are to be subject "in

everything" to their husbands (v. 24). But in the new life in Christ even a total subjection does not threaten a wife's dignity or diminish her potentialities. She keeps her identity, her integrity as a person, her prerogatives. She rules her husband's body, even as he rules hers (1 Cor. 7:4).

Paul can conceive of fascinating possibilities of mutuality within the relationship of subjection. Wives will find life, real life, by way of submission to their husbands. Christ is bringing them to maturity in him in precisely this way. It's an exciting new venture. Wives receive a new challenge because there is new content for them in a very old role.

It is the husband that receives the more striking challenge, however. He is called "head." What is the meaning of such a designation? Paul sees the husband's position in the marriage as analogous to Christ's relation to his church. Christ is the head of his church, his body. The husband is the head of his wife, his body. The body designation for the wife and the church focuses the meaning of *head*. The organic relationship is in view here. *Head* is a position of power. But the head uses its power not to exert itself over its body, but to make itself available so that the body can draw life. The husband is not to find his model as head in Christ's headship over all things (namely, the rivaling powers) but in Christ's headship *for the church*. Ephesians 1:22-23 had said that Christ was "head over all things for the church, which is his body." Ephesians 4:15 had further focused the relationship of Christ and his church and called Christians "to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom [comes]... bodily growth." Hence husbands are not being told, "Make Christ's headship over the rival powers your model; subject your wives to yourselves; assert your headship." Rather Paul says to husbands and wives: "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ... Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her... In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies" (vv. 21, 25, 28 [NIV]). Husband-headship is using one's power to supply nourishment, sustenance, growth, life to one's body. It is the picture not of dominance but of empowerment. It is not taking charge and asserting self, but investing one's self in the other, enabling the other to come to the maturity which Christ is now making possible. Headship in marriage is self-giving service on the model of Christ's self-giving service of us. The goal is to bring forth a radiant wife something like Christ's radiant church (v. 27).

Christ is the model for husband-headship—Christ in his self-giving, saving, life-supplying role. In the position of head there is power, not just latent power available to be tapped, but working power, power going forth to accomplish a goal. Does this not suggest authoritative and ruling dimensions even for organic headship? Yes, but Christ remains the model. Remember his words to the disciples:

You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be the slave of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:42-45).

The exertion of power must come through service. The Christian husband

as head exerts his power not by imposing it regardless of the wife's person and integrity but only by way of the head-body union of life-giving and life-drawing harmony. The head exerts power so that the body may be empowered. Wives will be led into the radiant splendor of Christian maturity by way of the husband's self-giving headship.

This minority dissents from the majority's use of this passage to restrict the roles open to married women in society and the church. It would seem that when the kind of organic headship pictured here is functioning well, the Christian husband would be leading his wife to the kind of maturity where the roles open to him as a Christian in society and the church might effectively be shared by her as well. The husband's headship is not with an eye to restricting her activities and range of service; his headship is for the purpose of enabling and qualifying her for full participation in the whole gamut of Christian activities. His headship opens up her opportunities. It gives no hint that he may do things she may not do.

c. I Corinthians 11:3

In I Corinthians 11:3 there is a threefold statement of headship: "the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God" (NIV). Why does Paul introduce the new subject to which he is turning in this Corinthian letter with this recitation of threefold headship?

The answer probably lies in the problem he wishes to discuss. Something has gone awry in the Corinthian church with the way people are appearing in church. The head is the focal center of the problem. We live so far from the ancient situation that it is difficult for us to detect whether it is a matter of hairstyle, or of a head covering, or perhaps both. We also cannot detect whether men and women were equally involved in the problem or not. It sounds as if the women may have been the primary offenders. Whatever it was, shameful liberties were being taken. In expressing his disapproval Paul stated it evenhandedly. Men's heads ought not to look like women's and women's heads ought not to look like men's. At the primary point for public recognition, the head, there must be clear sexual identity.

Paul had learned that in Corinth there were some tendencies to blur the lines between the sexes. He found such conduct highly shameful. He wished to bring out the shame with all due force. He begins by mentioning the three metaphorical heads: Christ of man, man of woman, and God of Christ. Then he remarks immediately that inappropriate attire of one's head shames one's head. Catch Paul's double meaning here: it is a shame to one's own physical head, but it is also a shame to one's other head, the metaphorical head to which each one of us is related. Paul engages in a wordplay to heighten the point of the shame. Men ought to look like men, and women ought to look like women. Otherwise, double shame!

In what sense is the metaphorical head to be understood? Paul's line of reasoning in this whole discussion is far from clear. But in verse 8 he gives the following reason to back the position he has taken: "for man is not from woman but woman from man. And man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man" [literal translation]. Man's being the source from which the woman was created and the fact that she was made to be his counterpart are reasons for keeping an immediately identifiable difference between them. Since Paul makes a specific point of the man's being the source or point of origin for the woman, this sounds like the clue to how he was here

using the term *head*. Such a notion of headship is still found in such words as "headwaters" and "fountainhead." *Head* is here being used to express the relation of source, the point of origin.

The majority report has rejected the notion of a source headship for this passage. To them it does not make sense to say that Christ is the source of every man. However, their discussion of the matter confuses source headship with organic headship. It is true that every man is not in a bodily relationship with Christ, drawing his life, energy, and nourishment from Christ as source (organic headship). But every man as an instance of the male human being can find his male origination at the point of the creation of the first man. He came from that living breath of the creating Christ. Christ is his source, his head. The authors of the majority report find it even more unacceptable to think of God as the source of Christ. They comment, "If we think of source in the sense of origin, the idea that God the Father was the origin of Christ would suggest that Christ was a created being—a view which is totally contrary to Scripture." This appears to the minority to be an overstatement. Colossians 1:15 can speak of Christ as "the first-born of all creation." In the very letter we are dealing with, I Corinthians, Paul had made it specific that Christ is to be identified with "the wisdom of God" (1:24, 30). This identification for Christ is commonly understood as Paul linking Christ to the Wisdom figure of the later parts of the Old Testament. Wisdom speaks thus in Proverbs 8:22: "The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old." That the Messiah figure, Christ, finds his point of origin in God somewhat analogous to the man's finding his point of origin in Christ the creator, and the woman her point of origin in the man does not appear to us to be "totally contrary to Scripture." We of the minority read Paul's threefold headship in I Corinthians 11:3 as alluding primarily to source, point of origin. This is the interpretation of such commentators as C. K. Barrett, F. F. Bruce, and J. Murphy-O'Connor. Paul gave the clue that he was thinking of source headship when he made a point of the woman's being "from man" and not *vice versa* (v. 8).

Does the reference to headship in this passage carry any further content beyond source or origin? The history of the use of *head* as metaphor shows how natural is the development from being first chronologically to being first in importance, privilege, prerogative, jurisdiction and authority. The firstborn becomes head of the family legally and socially. The elders become the rulers. The Greek word *archē* means "beginning," but then develops the meanings, "sovereignty, dominion." Does Paul's statement "the head of the woman is man" speak of a ruling headship as well as a source headship?

Many simply assume that it does. Many have argued that it does. In terms of this passage they argue that the veil is an evidence of man's authority over the woman and an evidence of her subjection to the man (vv. 5, 6, 10). The problem with this argument is that it is not at all clear that Paul is speaking of a veil in this passage. The man's rulership over the woman has sometimes been seen in the fact that the woman is called "the glory of the man" (v. 7) and in the fact that she was created *for (dia)* him and not *vice versa* (v. 9). The thought about the man being God's glory and the woman being the man's glory (v. 7) is not at all clear to modern interpreters; it may allude to some late Jewish or rabbinic ways of speaking. The thought of the woman being made for the man clearly alludes to the Genesis 2 account of the man's aloneness

and how that aloneness was overcome by the creation of the woman. He lived in a stage of insufficiency awaiting the creation of a counterpart; she was modeled to fit him and his need. But this does not necessarily mean that she was made his subordinate and servant. Paul is simply emphasizing that the sexual distinctiveness of male and female derives from the very process of their creation. He needs to make this point as evidence against the tendency in Corinth to abandon unique female or male identity in how they dressed.

The idea of the man's authority over the woman is sometimes derived from the use of the word "authority" (*exousia*) in verse 10 (NIV). (This verse is a most difficult verse to understand.) The difficulty with finding the man's authority over the woman expressed here is that it is by no means clear that the authority referred to is the man's authority. It could be referring to the authority the woman has, as a woman in Christ, observing proper decorum, to pray and prophesy in the public assembly. If the idea of man being the ruling head of the woman is present in this passage, it is present in a highly ambiguous form. On the other hand, the idea of man being the source from which woman comes is present specifically and unambiguously in v. 8.

What does Paul do with the idea of headship in this I Corinthians 11 passage? Not very much beyond the wordplay calculated to increase the sense of shame at inappropriate headress. In reasoning about the difference between men and women as to appropriate headress, he does return to the idea of the woman being from the man (man's source headship—v. 8). But even this principle is not one which can stand without some qualification: "Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of some nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God" (vv. 11-12). Here is a reaffirmation that woman is from (*ek*) man, but now there is the significant addition that all men presently have come through (by way of *dia*) woman. To this he adds a final thought: in tracing sources (as expressed in the preposition "from," *ek*), remember that God is the source of all. Headship for the man, even in the sense of source, does not appear to be a thought Paul wishes to press. He then goes on to argue further about differing hairstyles by appealing to a sense of propriety, to nature or custom, and to established practice in the churches (vv. 13-16).

This I Corinthian 11 passage contains one of the two places in the New Testament where metaphorical headship is applied to man. The other instance (Eph. 5:23) is clearly speaking of the husband-wife relationship. Here in I Corinthians 11, however, the relationship appears to be the unlimited man-woman (or male-female) relationship. Man is head of woman. This derives from the fact that in creation the woman was created from the man. The sexes are distinct. The word from Jesus that in heaven there will neither be marrying nor giving in marriage (Mark 12:25 and parallels) is not to be understood as a doing away with sexual distinctiveness here and now. Neither is any statement like "in Christ there is not male and female" (Gal. 3:28). Males must remain males, and females must remain females. And Paul is enforcing this basic created distinction by insisting that the distinction be immediately apparent and acknowledged by each person in his or her appropriate headress and hairstyle.

There is, then, biblical warrant for speaking of man as head of woman.

But may one go further with this Pauline statement of male headship than Paul did? He clarified that it was source-headship and insisted that there be distinct habits of dress for men and women. Remarkably, he proposed no distinction of activity, role, or place in the congregation. Both men and women might pray and prophesy when properly attired. Paul is not making a point about a role for women in the congregation which is clearly distinct from men. There is no trace of a more limited role for women than for men in this passage. Paul's point is the distinction of appearance.

4. Other New Testament Passages

a. I Corinthians 14:33b-35

In reading through I Corinthians, one is surprised in the fourteenth chapter to come upon the prohibition of women speaking in church. We are not prepared for it. The eleventh chapter had so clearly implied that when women were properly attired, they, as well as the men, might pray and prophesy. Now we hear that they must be silent.

The members of the majority have given a good discussion of this passage and of the problems in understanding it. They have proposed a likely solution. They find that the prohibition is not against all kinds of speaking. Such an interpretation would not fit with the praying and prophesying permitted in chapter 11. It also does not fit with the immediate context, which is urging Christians, one and all, to seek the best gifts, "especially that you may prophesy" (see 12:31; 14:1 and 39). The majority report finds a clue to what Paul was forbidding in the advice he gave for the women in v. 35: "If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their husbands at home" (NIV). The report explains:

These words suggest that women were raising questions in the service. This must be tied in with what has just been said about the discussions which followed prophetic revelations or words of instruction, the purpose of which discussions was to "weigh carefully" what had just been said. Paul is here forbidding women from entering into such discussions. Apparently such conduct on the part of the women in the congregation was considered disruptive of good order by Paul.

Such an understanding of the passage makes sense out of Paul's words here as well as out of what he had said earlier.

The majority report goes on to link this understanding of the situation to the idea of headship.

What we do learn here is that certain kinds of speaking in the church service were prohibited to women at that time, since they were asked to "be in submission" to others—presumably, to the leaders of the church. One reason why women were prohibited from such speaking in that day, we may surmise, was probably that such speaking involved making judgments about the presentations of certain men (possibly including their own husbands); such judgment-making would amount to exercising authority over men in the church service. The injunction forbidding women from engaging in this kind of speaking in the church, therefore, is probably an implication of the headship concept.

This is one way of interpreting the materials. The majority is quite tentative in its presentation—note the qualifiers: "presumably," "we may sur-

mise," "probably," "possibly." They confess, in effect, what very many commentators confess: we cannot be exactly sure what Paul is prohibiting because we are not sufficiently clear on the Corinthian situation and the problem.

Do we learn something about headship from this passage? The term *head* is not used here. The headship notion must be derived from the statements about submission for the women. But it is not clear to whom they are to be submissive. Is it to their husbands? to all men? to the church officers? to the good order of the worship service? to the general edification of the Christian community? Precisely what kind of headship notion is to be learned from this passage?

The situation to which Paul is speaking is the very disorderly worship service. In rapid succession Paul calls three groups to silence (the Greek word *sigōē* is used for each): the tongue-speakers (vv. 27-28), the prophets (vv. 29-32), the women (v. 34). He twice points to a role of submission (*hypotassō*): for the spirits of the prophets (v. 32: "The spirits of prophets are subject to prophets") and for the women (v. 34). In the former reference Paul probably means that each prophet is master of his own spirit even when his spirit is being inspired by the Holy Spirit to prophesy. To propose such a subjection is bold indeed, for it borders on placing the Holy Spirit in subjection. One dares think it only in connection with Paul's immediate addition: "For God is not a God of confusion but of peace" (v. 33). For the sake of orderliness and general edification prophetic spirits can be and are submissive. Then comes the call to women to be submissive. The context is clearly the need for order in the worship services.

Paul is concerned that the worship services be edifying (v. 26). He is also concerned about the impression the worship service makes on visitors: "If . . . the whole church assemblies and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad?" (v. 23). Women's questioning during the worship service was apparently not very edifying. This need cause no surprise. The Jewish synagogue had religiously excluded women's participation in the communal discussions. And from no less an authority than Aristotle we learn how Greeks viewed women's participation: according to him the deliberative part of woman's soul is without authority and needs ruling by males (*Política*, 1260a). In Greek society the virtuous faithful married woman was for the most part secluded and untaught. Neither Greek nor Jewish cultures had prepared women for participation in intellectual pursuits or religious discussions.

Paul says further that it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. Greek and Jewish customs were not comfortable with women participating intellectually in mixed groups. Christian practice was still having to find its way with the new status accorded to women. Remember the problem of proper attire when praying and prophesying (chap. 11). One could call forth a sense of shame in women for departing from the customary role assigned them by their culture.

Paul also called upon the law as a witness to women's role of submission (v. 34). No specific law assigns women such a role—unless one adopts the reading of Genesis 3:16 that makes it a law. Interpreters have puzzled extensively over Paul's appeal to the law here—it sounds so untypical of Paul. Some have found in it a clue for proposing that this whole passage

about women is the work of a later interpolator. Others propose that Paul is quoting a Corinthian proposal here, to which he finally answers, "What! Did the word of God originate with you?" (v. 36). We shall not trace the host of proposals this enigmatic appeal to the law has brought forth. We propose that Paul may be alluding to the picture of woman's role in the whole of the Mosaic legislation. Under the law structure women had always functioned in subordinate roles.

Finally, Paul affirms that his advice is "a command of the Lord" (v. 37). What specifically is the Lord commanding? It would be so clear, precise, and easy of application to understand the Lord commanding once and for all time: women are not to speak in church. But such a command is at odds with what Paul permitted, for they were allowed to pray and prophesy (11:5). Also, Paul has just been urging the Corinthians to seek the gift of prophecy more than the gift of tongues (14:1, 39). Does he really mean to exclude women from seeking these gifts? A categorical prohibition against women speaking would finally thwart women's coming to full participation in the life and worship of the Christian community. Rather we understand the Lord's (and Paul's) command to be: "Women, in circumstances where your conduct adds to the disruption of the worship service or threatens to bring stigma upon the gospel, adjust your behavior in appropriate ways for the sake of the edification of your fellow Christians and for the sake of the good name of the gospel among unbelievers." Such a command cannot be as precisely applied as the simple "Women, be silent." But it acknowledges women's maturity in Christ and it calls women to Christian self-giving for others and for Christ's sake in appropriate situations. The command does not imply that with every situation and in all cultures silence (even when limited to some particular type) is the inevitable or ordained stance for women.

Do we learn something about a headship principle for all times from this passage? The submission here called for is an appropriate way to attempt to restore order to this disruptive situation in the church service. It is not clear that this same pattern of submission must be maintained in all worship situations at all times. There could conceivably be worship situations where women's intellectual participation would be edifying to the worshipping congregation. Paul was concerned with disrupted worship in Corinth. To find an eternal male headship principle operative in this passage is a very debatable conclusion.

b. I Timothy 2:11-15

The majority report has found in this passage some light on how headship speaks to the question of women in church office. It concludes:

Paul's forbidding women from being the official teachers of the church in I Timothy 2 is another implication of the headship of the man over the woman. Since such teaching involves having doctrinal and ethical authority over men, and since man is the head of the woman, a woman ought not to be the official teacher of the church.... This prohibition would seem to exclude the kind of teaching which is done officially for the entire congregation, by appointed office-bearers of the church.

We, a minority of the committee, are not persuaded that this is the only, nor even the necessary, conclusion of this passage. Our reservations lie in

two areas: (1) whether the prohibition can be limited to the formal church situation—it appears to apply to all of Christian conduct, and (2) whether the prohibition specifically applies to all ages and all cultures. The majority found a rule for all ages, but a rule speaking only to a very limited area of life—church office. We suspect that Paul meant his rule for far broader application in Christian communal life, but may not have been legislating for all times and ages. In short, was it a narrow prohibition for all times, or a broad prohibition for that time?

Perhaps we ought to pause here for a moment and ask whether the Bible, or, more specifically, the New Testament, has commands or prohibitions which do not specifically apply to all times and all societies. A moment's thought reminds us that most churches do not practice the holy kiss greeting in spite of Paul's commanding it four times (Rom. 16:16; I Cor. 16:20; II Cor. 13:12; I Thess. 5:26) and Peter's commanding it once (I Pet. 5:14). We have developed different forms of greeting each other. We teach our children to fold their hands in prayer in spite of Paul's command (for men, at least) to lift them in the air (I Tim. 2:8). Jesus washed his disciples' feet and then said specifically, "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you" (John 13:14-15). But few Christians practice this command. Women now cut their hair in spite of I Corinthians 11:15, and they appear at worship without a covering for their heads in spite of I Corinthians 11:5. In fact, women now wear gold, pearls, and expensive dresses quite contrary to Paul's command (I Tim. 2:9). And as far as "fixing their hair" or "getting it done"—the very thing Paul was talking about in his words "not with braided hair" (I Tim. 2:9)—few women would feel comfortable today appearing for worship without having done it. "Times have changed," we say. Exactly so. This is particularly true of matters which are not moral in themselves but which mean varying things in varying societal and cultural circumstances. A hardto said something in first-century Ephesus which was inappropriate for Christian women's behavior. In the twentieth-century western world it no longer conveys an inappropriate message.

Might the same thing be true of women's teaching men? Might it even be true of women's addressing men with some authority in church? This is the question for which we are seeking light. The Bible does not answer this kind of question directly. Paul did not say, "Greet one another with a holy kiss while that is appropriate." On some of these matters of Christian conduct we must seek to make sound and sensitive Christian judgments beyond the specific guidance of the Scriptures. We nonetheless appeal for the Holy Spirit's guidance.

What was Paul trying to say to the first-century Christians in Ephesus by his statement to Timothy that he was not permitting a woman "to teach or to have authority over men?" To answer this, we must seek to learn what we can about the circumstances and problems of the Christian community in Ephesus.

By the time of Paul's letter to Timothy, the Christian church was in a precarious relationship to the world around it. The governing authorities often got the impression that this new Christian faith and community was a subversive movement. New religious movements have never been well-

comed by the established order. Day by day the threat of suspicion, persecution, and outright banning of the movement loomed large. Paul began the chapter we are presently considering (I Tim. 2) by calling for a most open display of progovernment commitment: "I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and all who are in high places." It was important that both local and imperial leaders learn what a wholesome influence was at work for them in the realm. They could then afford to be kindly disposed or at least tolerant toward this new faith. Christians were seeking the favor of their God for the government.

Paul was concerned for the church. "Pray [for the rulers]," he says, "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way" (v. 2). He was not just seeking the church's comfort and security. He was eager to build bridges. Let rapport be established with the governmental rulers, so that we can avoid being the victims of their suspicions and fears. These people could be the next Christian converts. After all, God desires that all men be saved. Furthermore, there is only one God, and the mediator to God is for Gentiles as well as Jews. Gentiles are included in God's rule and salvation. Paul recalled that his special appointment was to be a preacher, apostle, and teacher of the Gentiles. The Ephesian Christian community was to seek to open doors for the gospel and to keep them open by their attractive, winsome, and circumspect Christian behavior.

Paul continues, "I desire then [Greek: *oun*, "therefore," "to this end"] that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger and quarreling" (v. 8). "Also [I desire] that women should adorn themselves modestly and sensibly in seemly apparel, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly attire but by good deeds, as befits women who profess religion" (vv. 9-10). Paul was urging women to acceptable behavior. They must live in those ways which will not shock or provoke, or alarm their neighbors and especially the authorities. The restrictions placed upon women are set in the context of winning a favorable impression from the broader community so that Christians may live in peace and the mission of the church may be fostered.

Paul has issued a call for prayers, for concern for the salvation of the Gentiles, and for circumspect Christian behavior (I Tim. 2:1-10). There is nothing in this call that suggests that Paul was thinking only of prayers and Christian behavior in the official church worship service. Rather, the prayers, mission concern, and appropriate behavior were to be practiced in the whole of their lives as Christians.

The next chapter makes exactly this point by indicating how broadly Paul's instructions were to be applied. After outlining the appropriate qualifications for a bishop and for deacons, Paul states: "I am writing these instructions to you so that...you may know how to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth" (3:14-15). Paul obviously is not speaking about behavior in a certain building called the church, God's house. Nor is he speaking of the church in the limited institutional sense in which we use the term. He is speaking about the new Israel. Gentiles are not being added to the old Israel—they do not have to become Jews to be part of God's people. Gentiles are being added to the new Israel, Christ's church. The church must be thought of as broadly as Israel—it is the society of God's new people in Christ. It encompasses all

facets of Christian life and activity. Any Christian activity is church activity as Paul is here speaking. The church is the whole of Christian life. The bishop and the deacons function in the whole of Christian communal life, rather than being limited to some formal "ecclesiastical" area as defined in later times. Paul is not operating with that distinction made later in history between the ecclesiastical organization and other areas of Christian life. Christian life for him is church life. The Christian's whole existence now is "in the household of God." So whatever restrictions Paul places on women's behavior here apply to their whole life as Christians and to every area of Christian communal living. We cannot restrict the prohibitions to the limited sphere that we call "church."

By the time of Paul's letters to Timothy in Ephesus and to Titus in Crete some alarming developments were surfacing in Paul's mission churches. The Christian faith had never had an easy time in Ephesus. According to Acts 19 the Artemis cult with its center in the temple at Ephesus was a very vital religious force in Paul's day. In fact, Demetrius, the Ephesian silversmith, claimed that "all Asia and the world" worshiped Artemis (Acts 19:27), and Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen were bent on keeping it that way. After they had incited a riot against the Christians that the town clerk finally got the mob under control by assuring them that the Christians were "neither sacrilegious nor blasphemers of our goddess" (19:37). The Ephesian and Asian converts to Christianity were in a precarious position as they sought to disengage themselves from the local and national religion. There was every temptation to hang on to some of the old beliefs and ways, rather than to make an outright disavowal and to break with them. Some of the converts undoubtedly brought along into their new faith old ideas in which they had been reared.

The French commentator C. Spicq suspects that at several places in the Pastoral Epistles Paul may have been reaching to ideas or expressions typical of the Artemis cult. In regard to the hymn which Paul recites in I Timothy 3:16, Spicq comments: "Very soon the Christian hymn writers were substituting Christian acclamations for those to Diana [Artemis], and the theology of the gospel for that of the sacrilegious cult" (*Les Epitres Pastorales*, p. 108). There are probably many nuances in the Pastoral Epistles which we fail to catch because of our inability to hear the words against the background of the Artemis cult and other religious notions of the day. We do know, however, that different doctrines, myths, endless genealogies, and speculations were circulating in the Christian community (I Tim. 1:3ff.). Paul speaks of deceitful spirits, doctrines of demons, pretensions of liars, the forbidding of marriage (4:1ff.), Paul's final plea in his first letter to Timothy is to "avoid the godless chatter and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge *Ignōsis*" (6:20). Certain persons must be charged not to teach their "different doctrines" (1:3). The subordinate people, empty talkers, and deceivers must be silenced and sharply rebuked (Titus 1:10-13). By the time of the second letter to Timothy Paul saw people going after teachers that "suit their own likings," so that the people turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths (II Tim. 4:3-4). It is clear that strange ideas were circulating under the guise of the Christian faith.

It is clear also that women were caught up in this wayward teaching. It affected them and sometimes victimized them. But they may well have been

willing participants in the deviant views and even a means by which heresy was spreading. Paul writes that there are "those who make their way into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and swayed by various impulses, who will listen to anybody and can never arrive at a knowledge of the truth" (II Tim. 3:6-7). He found younger widows to be particularly open to temptation: "When they grow wanton against Christ they desire to marry... Besides that, they learn to be idlers, gadding about from house to house, and not only idlers but gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not" (I Tim. 5:11, 13). The new role of prominence and active participation in the affairs of the community which Christianity had made possible for women was not an unmixed blessing. Even as women had showed a particular responsiveness to the original preaching of the gospel in the synagogues (cf. Acts 17:4, 12), they were now again responding to newer and deviant teachings. We have seen that Paul had to rein in some overly enthusiastic women in Corinth who were giving up customary feminine attire for the worship service (I Cor. 11:5f.) or being too disruptive in the church discussions (I Cor. 14:33ff.). Now in Ephesus too women's conduct was threatening the good name of the church in the Gentile community and the peace, welfare, and orthodoxy of the Christian community. In such a situation Paul found it necessary to call the women to exercise restraint and to submit to the regular leadership of the Christian community.

Twentieth-century Western ears hear a severe restraint placed on women in Paul's words, "Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness" (I Tim. 2:11). The restraining note is there, but there is also the note of opportunity and new privilege. There is a note of liberation in "let a woman learn." This was not woman's traditional role, especially not in Judaism. Sons of the covenant had marvelous opportunities for education in the schools of the synagogues. There were no similar provisions for the public education of daughters of the covenant. Boys had their "Bar Mitzvah" and entered upon a lifetime of law study and religious discussion. Girls at about the same age became brides and entered a lifetime of childbearing and household tasks. Girls had been taught what they needed to know about the law at home and it was not considered necessary that they learn to read or study the law. In general, the same pattern was typical of Greek women in Hellenistic times. They entered marriage, were secluded in the home, were untaught, and were not participants in public affairs.

The Christian church would be opening marvelous new opportunities for women. Whereas earlier only an exceptional situation had allowed a woman to learn or to rise to a position of prominence, in the Christian church learning would be for all. When Paul stipulated that the woman's learning must be done "in silence with all submissiveness," he was not imposing a ban on speaking. Paul was calling for quiet, orderly conduct. There must be the same kind of quietness for the study and discussion sessions that Paul desired for the whole life of the community—"that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life" (2:2)—*tesychia*, "quiet," used as an adjective here and as a noun in verses 11 and 12). New learners, introduced to learning late in life, must learn that there is much to learn before their contributions to the discussion can be very helpful. Nonetheless, women were now to be learners along with the men.

When Paul says, "I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent" (v. 12), the majority report interprets that to be a permanent prohibition on women from the kind of teaching that involves having doctrinal and ethical authority over men. In view of the setting just sketched, this need not be the only way to hear these words. Paul's command can be the entirely appropriate and necessary command for *that situation and time*. Several reasons could have called for such action. Women in general were not well-educated or long-experienced in religious matters. Some of them came from pagan backgrounds, with pagan ideas that had to be unlearned and pagan practices that had to be disavowed. Heresy was a growing threat and women with their more limited backgrounds were peculiarly vulnerable to heretical trends. The surrounding secular community, especially what we have come to call "the Establishment," was becoming increasingly wary of this socially revolutionary movement and the new roles these Christians were permitting women to assume. Paul's command was an effort to help the church with the things that threatened her from within and without at this particular point in her history.

The majority report argues that the command cannot be limited to a certain time and situation because the injunctions about women are grounded by Paul in the biblical data about creation and the fall. The majority hears an appeal to a "headship principle" here. This is a possible interpretation. But are we really confident that we understand what Paul is doing here? In rapid succession he appeals to Adam's firstness (v. 13), Eve's being deceived (v. 14), and woman's being saved through childbearing (v. 15). The last thing mentioned has always been a most puzzling thought and throughout history has brought forth a multitude of attempted explanations. The middle thought that "Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor" has seldom been pressed, for to press it lightens Adam's role and responsibility for sin's entrance into the world. Furthermore, pressing it suggests that when Adam sinned, he did so with no confusion or deception, but in full awareness of what he was doing—hardly a recommendation for why he should be the teacher and authority rather than the woman! The first thought also is not a very clear rationale for forbidding women's teaching and having authority over men. Is there something about priority that inevitably establishes the direction of authority? We may suspect that some things are going on in this passage which are not immediately clear to us later twentieth-century readers.

Paul has told us that myths and false teachings were circulating in the name of the Christian faith in Ephesus. Is Paul reacting to some of these myths? We have noted the vitality of the Artemis cult. Artemis was a savior-goddess to her devotees in times of trouble and danger. The verb *save* (Greek: *sozo*) used in 2:15 ("saved through childbearing") is used of Artemis' saving activities. Artemis was also known as the protector of pregnant women. Paul assured women that they would be "kept safe through childbirth" (NIV) in the way of Christian piety (2:15). This might have been Paul's way of assuring women that as Christians they no longer needed the protection of Artemis or other traditional deities as they faced the crisis of childbirth.

A myth about women's mediatorial powers may also lie back of some of Paul's language in I Timothy 2. In ancient religions it was a common phe-

nomenon to find a woman or a feminine principle as the most effective mediator before the deities. Even late Judaism had *Wisdom*, a feminine concept, as God's constant companion. Christianity all too soon would itself develop a cult of Mary as the way to the heart of the Lord. Were myths already developing which promoted the woman's role as mediator to the Christian's God? Such a phenomenon would offer an explanation for what interpreters have so long puzzled over, namely, why in introducing his instruction to the women Paul stated so emphatically that the one mediator between God and man was the *man* (*anthrōpos*) Jesus Christ (v. 5).

Paul warns about "what is falsely called knowledge (*gnōsis*)" (I Tim. 6:20). We know that Gnosticism began to do what late Judaism had done—elaborately embellish the stories of Adam and Eve. In Gnosticism Eve was even seen as the one who gave life to Adam. He lay lifeless without a soul until she said, "Adam, live!" Furthermore, from the serpent Eve received a secret knowledge which was the very opposite of a fall—it was enlightenment—the *gnōsis* of good and evil. Gnostic myths proclaimed Eve as the bearer of both life and light to Adam. If any such kinds of myths were already present in the early forms of "gnosticism" circulating in Ephesus during Paul's time, then Paul's arguments suddenly take on quite a different sound. Paul goes back to the biblical record. Adam was created first; Eve in no sense gave him life! And Eve was anything but an instrument of light to him—she was grossly deceived and led him into darkness. Nonetheless, it is not necessary for women to grasp for exalted roles or favored treatment. Even in their most dangerous hour of childbirth, they will be kept safe in the humble ways of faith and Christian piety. Much sense can be made of I Timothy 2 through hearing Paul reacting to myths possibly circulating in Ephesus.

There is still another way of interpreting Paul's references to the creation and the fall. He was neither correcting myths nor clinging to creation ordinances. He was simply observing the likeness between the Garden of Eden situation and the Ephesian situation. In both instances we have an experienced person and a novice. Adam was the older one in the garden and the one to whom the prohibition about the tree had been directly communicated. When Eve, the later arrival, got caught up in deep religious issues, she got confused and was too easily deceived. She might better have remained in the role of learner and follower for a while longer. So too with the women in Ephesus. They were not being assigned the role of perpetual learners, never able to teach. Women were being accorded the new privilege of learning and they were urged to learn. They were being charged not to teach until they had the requisite learning and experience. Furthermore, to assume the position of teaching and having authority over men was seen as too provocative and threatening to the societal structures of the day. Paul could not permit it, given the Ephesian situation. His words "I permit no woman to teach" need not mean "women will never be permitted to teach"; the statement could mean only "I am not now permitting them to teach." Perhaps we greatly over-read Paul when we hear from him broad theological and sociological principles in his words about Adam being created first.

There are, thus, ways of interpreting the I Timothy 2 passage which avoid having to draw the fine lines around the prohibition placed on women which the majority found necessary. They understood it to apply only to

"the official teaching of the church," or "the kind of teaching which involves the exercise of authority over men." The other interpretations here offered allow the prohibitions of women's teaching and having authority to have the same broad application that is usually seen for the other regulations for women in this paragraph. The instructions on proper dress, ornamentation, and good deeds are usually applied to the whole of life within the Christian community, and outside it as well. It is also commonly recognized that some of these restrictions have changed with changing culture. Women now wear gold and curl their hair. May they perhaps also teach men and assume positions of authority? The particular circumstances that made prohibitions in these areas appropriate for ancient Ephesus do not necessarily obtain for all times.

A weighty recommendation for reading the prohibitions of I Timothy 2 as not being applicable universally and for all time is Paul's own practice. He does not appear constantly to have enforced women's silence and to have prevented their teaching or being in leadership positions. Paul used women in his ministry in important ways. We turn to a survey of how women were associated with Paul's work.

5. Women Associated with Paul's Work

Every Christian knows Paul's statements about women keeping silent. They have been programmatic for determining the role of women in the church's ministry. What is not so widely realized is that there is another side to Paul. Paul used women in his work of ministry. Personal greetings and passing comments in his letters indicate this. In particular, note should be taken of the fact that Paul addresses and designates certain women by the same titles or expressions which he uses to address male associates in ministry. We shall look into several of these titles or descriptions of women's work.

a. *Diakonos*

Diakonos is a foundational word for Christianity. It basically expresses the idea of *service*. In our English Bible it is, however, variously translated as "servant," "minister," "deacon." In its broadest sense the word in either verb or noun form can be used to describe the life of every follower of Jesus. Every Christian is a *diakonos*—a servant. Nonetheless, it is also frequently used to describe the work of a follower of Jesus in a more focused or specialized way—if you will, in a more "official" way. Only the context can determine this. Our interest is particularly with the use of this word in what appears to be this more specialized or "official" way.

Paul applies this word to himself in this focused or specialized way. He is a *diakonos* of the gospel (Eph. 3:7; Col. 1:23), a *diakonos* through whom the Christians in Corinth had come to faith (I Cor. 3:5), a *diakonos* of the new covenant (II Cor. 3:6), a *diakonos* of Christ (II Cor. 11:23), a *diakonos* of God (II Cor. 6:4), a *diakonos* of the church (Col. 1:25). As a *diakonos* his task was to preach, to proclaim, to "present...the word of God in its fullness" (Col. 1:25; see also Eph. 3:7-8; Col. 1:23). As a *diakonos* he could also gather funds for the poor of the Jerusalem church (II Cor. 8:4; 9:1, 12f.). The quick interchange of *apostolos* (translated "apostle") and *diakonos* (translated "servant") in II Corinthians 11:13-15 suggests that Paul considered these two Greek terms as broadly synonymous.

It is important for our purposes to note that *diakonos* is precisely the term

Paul used for several of his associates. In I Corinthians 3:5 Apollos is so designated. In Colossians 4:7 and Ephesians 6:21 Ty-chicus is called a faithful *diakonos*. In Colossians 1:7 Epaphras is called a faithful *diakonos* through whom the Colossians learned the gospel. Timothy is perhaps the best-known name in this list (cf. I Tim. 4:6; II Tim. 4:5). What calls for attention in each of these instances is that *diakonos* and *diakonia* are clearly a service which is rendered in the area of preaching, teaching, encouraging, exhorting, evangelizing. In this light it is perhaps not to be considered as surprising that of the seven appointed in Acts 6 to the special *diakonia* of "serving tables," two—Stephen and Philip—are subsequently seen as involved in teaching and preaching the Word as well.

In Romans 16:1 "our sister Phoebe" is called by Paul a *diakonos*. In view of Paul's use of this term for himself and for a number of his associates in direct connection with their service of preaching, teaching, and evangelizing, can there be good ground for excluding all such work from Phoebe's ministry in the church of Cenchræe?

b. *Prostatitis*

Prostatitis has the basic meaning of *helper*, but of *helper* in the sense of being a *defender*, a *guardian*. In its verbal form this word is used of church leaders (I Thess. 5:12; Rom. 12:8). In I Timothy 5:17 it expresses the ruling which elders do. It is a word which, when applied to males, would certainly be interpreted as referring to leaders in the church whose work is to care for the congregation. Now Paul designates Phoebe in Romans 16:2 by the feminine form of the word, *prostatitis*. Would this not suggest some leadership role or function for "our sister Phoebe" in the church of Cenchræe?

c. *Kopiain*

Kopiain, the verb, and *kopos*, the noun, express the thought of hard work, toil, labor. Paul uses this word to describe not only his own manual labor in self-support, but also—in fact, primarily—his own activity in teaching, preaching, and evangelizing (Col. 1:28–29; Gal. 4:11; Phil. 2:16). In this latter sense he also used it of other church leaders (I Tim. 5:17; I Thess. 5:12; I Cor. 16:16). These passages make clear as well that because of their labor these leaders carried a given authority to which the Christians whom they served were expected to submit. "The household of Stephanus ... have devoted themselves to the service [*diakoniam*] of the saints; I urge you to be subject to such men and to every fellow worker and laborer [*kopioniti*] (I Cor. 16:15–16).

In Romans 16:12 Paul greets Tryphaena, Tryphosa, and Persis. Of these women he says that they were "workers in the Lord [*kopiāsas en kyriōi*]." It is not clear what their work may have been, but if the names had been male, the tendency would be to think of gospel workers. When Paul greets Mary (Rom. 16:6), his terminology is slightly different. He says she "has worked hard among [or for] you [*kekopiāsen eis hymas*]." This is precisely the phrase Paul used of his own authoritative evangelizing of the Galatians (Gal. 4:11). Murray in his commentary suggests that the Roman church's organization could have been largely due to Mary's influence. It clearly sounds as if Mary was among the leaders in the church at Rome.

d. *Synergos*

Literally *synergos* means "working together with." In the Bible it is only used as a substantive, meaning "helper" or "fellow-worker." In Paul the

word always designates a worker or group of workers distinguished from the general group of believers. Paul uses the word to describe Apollos (I Cor. 3:9), Titus (I Cor. 8:23), Urbanus (Rom. 16:9), Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25), Clement (Phil. 4:3), Aristarchus, Mark and Jesus Justus (Col. 4:10–11), Philemon (Philemon v. 1), and Demas and Luke (Philemon v. 24). Timothy is perhaps the most prominent of Paul's fellow-workers (Rom. 16:21; I Thess. 3:2). We recognize each of these as preachers, teachers, evangelists, and co-workers in the promotion of the gospel alongside of Paul. Collectively they form a team of church leaders.

For our concern in this report it is important to note that Paul includes women when he makes mention of his fellow-workers. Euodia and Syntyche are numbered in their ranks. "They have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow-workers, whose names are in the book of life" (Phil. 4:3). The famous husband-wife team of Prisca and Aquila, who expounded the Word more fully to Apollos, and probably to others, are also called Paul's fellow-workers. Of the six times this couple is mentioned in the New Testament (Acts 18:2, 18, 26; Rom. 16:3; I Cor. 16:19; II Tim. 4:19), Prisca's (or Priscilla's) name is mentioned first four times. This suggests a greater prominence for her than for her husband in their joint ministry work. It appears that she took the lead in their teaching activity.

Paul called Christians to be subject to "every fellow worker [*synergounti*] and laborer" (I Cor. 16:16). The subjection he expected is *hypotissō* subjection. It is the subjection appropriate for wives to their husbands (Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18; Titus 2:5; I Pet. 3:1, 5); for slaves to their masters (Tit. 2:9; I Pet. 2:18); for young men to their elders (I Pet. 5:5–5 NIV); for prophets to the prophets (I Cor. 14:32); for women in the disorderly Corinthian worship service (I Cor. 14:34); and generally, for Christians to each other (Eph. 5:21). Christians were to be subject "to every fellow worker and laborer" (I Cor. 16:16), and in some places there were women among Paul's fellow-workers and laborers. Paul did not find it inappropriate for women to be in a position of public leadership in the church community. He was not apologetic about these women among his fellow-workers. He praised them and their work warmly. They gave real service and effective leadership.

In view of the important titles and terms used by Paul for women and their work in the churches he established, it does not appear that Paul himself always enforced women's silence and always saw to it that they never taught or had authority over men. There are hints, however, that Paul was sensitive to cultural differences in the various communities where he worked. Roman culture was far more open to women functioning freely and openly in society than was Greek culture. Hence it is no surprise to find quite a list of prominent women to be greeted in Paul's letter to the church in Rome. Philippi was a Roman colony and was largely inhabited by Roman citizens; it is here that we meet Paul's fellow-workers, Euodia and Syntyche, as well as the prominent tradeswoman Lydia. In Corinth and Ephesus, both very Greek cities, where considerable stigma was attached to women's free and open participation in society, Paul called the women to submission and silence. Galatia, on the other hand, was a less thoroughly Greco-roman area than the Aegean coastal cities of Asia Minor like Ephesus or even Colossae. Paul, in writing about the new oneness in Christ to Corinth (I Cor. 12:13) and

to Colossae (Col. 3:11), pointed out that barriers between Jew and Greek and between slave and free have been overcome. In writing to Galatia (Gal. 3:28) he added a third item: also the barrier between male and female. The Galatian territory had had a long history of prominence and public ministrations of women. This aspect of Christ's salvation could be urged in Galatia.

Paul was sensitive to cultural differences in the prominence he gave to women and the role he urged them to follow as new Christians. His policy of being "a Jew to the Jew, a Greek to the Greek" (cf. I Cor. 9:20ff.) and his concern for giving no offense "to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God" for the sake of bringing the gospel (I Cor. 10:32f.) affected what he said about women and how he associated them with his ministry. If Paul could show flexibility in this matter, may not we, his later followers, provide for a similar flexibility within the church today?

There is urgency that the Christian Reformed Church develop very soon some flexibility regarding the place and role of women in the church. The Lord is raising up in the church some women of considerable gifts and talents. Spiritual gifts are to be used. The majority report has a very important section on "Spiritual Gifts and Church Office." We shall not repeat its content, but urge its reading at this point. We can express wholehearted agreement with it. The majority report observes at the end that the matter of spiritual gifts does not shed light on the question of whether women are to be subject to men and whether men may be subject to women—the headship issue. It is the headship issue which, for the majority, is a barrier to gifted women's becoming church officers. This minority report has attempted to show that there does not have to be a problem with allowing women's gifts to come to recognition in the congregation, even in the offices of the church. In fact, we think the presence of the gifts makes the matter of opening offices to women the more urgent.

C. *The Overall Direction of the Bible on Male-Female Relations*

The overall thrust of Scripture is toward women attaining a place alongside men, rather than under them or sequestered from them. The Scriptures open with the man and the woman side by side as God's image-bearers, assigned a common task. They are equals and in beautiful harmony. Very soon we hear of the man's ruling his wife as the sad result of sin. Men are regularly in the foreground and women very much in the background as Scripture proceeds to narrate its significant events. However, already with Moses there was the wish that all God's people could be prophets (Numbers 11:29). Joel foresaw the arrival of such a day: "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy" (3:28). Joel's vision saw that the distinctions between male and female, age and youth, and owner and slave would fall. The beautiful harmony of creation had not been lost forever. It was to be restored.

With Jesus the restoration began to take place. He lived in a remarkable openness toward women. He allowed women to join his band of disciples and travel about with him (Luke 8:1-3; Mark 15:40-41)—a shocking thing for his day. To the amazement of his disciples he could engage a woman he did not know in deep spiritual conversation and make her the first missionary to the Samaritans (John 4:27-30). He could praise Mary for being a learner at his feet over Martha for being so busy with household tasks (Luke 10:38-42). He chose women to be the first heralds of his resurrection (Matt. 28:1, 10; and parallels). With Jesus the restoration of the created order was moving dramatically into place.

To Peter was given the privilege of proclaiming the arrival of the great day: "This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16). The Pentecost descent of the Spirit on the women and men of Jesus' disciple band, enabling "your sons and your daughters...my menservants and my maid-servants" to prophesy (Acts 2:17-18), was the evidence that the new age had arrived. The new initiatory rite for entrance into the New Covenant—baptism—was applicable to women as well as to men. Paul was soon caught up in the spirit of the new age. In the church in Corinth women were praying and prophesying alongside men, and when some were disturbed by the radicalness of it all, Paul counseled only the restriction of proper dress (I Cor. 11:4-5). He encouraged the Corinthian congregation to "earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy" (I Cor. 14:1). In view of his having acknowledged women's prophesying, he must have meant his call to seek that gift for women and men alike. Women were called to submission when their conduct disrupted the worship service, but there was no retrenching from their new status and privileges in the Lord. During his Corinthian ministry Paul had taught the Christian faith to women, and one of his female pupils became so capable that she became one of the teachers of one of Corinth's later preachers, Apollos (Acts 18:26). In the Roman colony city of Philippi Eudodia and Syntyche continued alongside Paul for the gospel (Phil. 4:2-3). Phoebe was a church leader in Cenchrae (Rom. 16:1). Paul gave her the same title—*diakonos*—which he used for his preaching, teaching, and evangelizing associates. Women were being used in leading roles in Paul's ministry.

Paul sensed that the new age had brought a leveling of the age-old barriers between people: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). The oneness in Christ spoke primarily of the one way of salvation and of spiritual oneness in Christ. But spiritual oneness in Christ had its social implications as well. Paul sensed this deeply in regard to Jew-Gentile relationships and fought for equal acceptance for the Gentile by the Jew in the hard test of table fellowship (Gal. 2:11ff.). He hinted quite straightforwardly at the social implications of "neither slave nor free" in his letter to Philemon. In his ministry he put into practice some of the new social relationships between men and women. In doing this he was sensitive to the varying cultural situations in his churches. In the Grecoan city of Ephesus, where there had been considerable hostility to Christianity for some time, he found it necessary to restrict women's role for the sake of the gospel and the peace of the church. But his use of women elsewhere shows he did not have objections to the principle of their functioning alongside men. The overall sweep of Scripture is toward Christ's restoring the created order of men and women living and working side by side, on a par mutually supporting and ministering to each other in pursuit of their common task. The New Testament pictures the beginnings of the restored creation. Paradise lost—Paradise regained.

D. *Summary*

What light has the foregoing study shed on our mandate "to examine the meaning and scope of headship in the Bible as it pertains to the relationships of husband and wife and man and woman?" We briefly review the main points of this report.

In the first chapter of Genesis the human pair were created alongside each

other with a common mandate. The Genesis 2 account pictures the man created first, with several events happening before the creation of the woman. The reason for the woman's creation is the man's need for companionship: "It is not good that the man should be alone" (Gen. 2:18). The new creature is described as "a helper fit for him" and as an *ishshah* (a play on the word *ish*, man). Neither term implies inferiority or lesser position. Neither term suggests that the man is to be some kind of authority-figure in the relationship between them. The only clues to any kind of a headship notion from the picture of the original creation order in these first two chapters are: (1) the fact of the man's being created earlier, so that he is older, more experienced, and the natural leader when woman arrives on the scene; and (2) the fact of the woman's being made from the man's rib, so that he might be seen as her head in the sense of her source or point of origin.

Genesis 3 pictures an event with the woman leading and the man following. Her leadership was not good leadership, and the human pair fell into sin. The account need not mean that the fall was somehow to be accounted for through improper sex-role relationships—a woman as a leader and a man as a follower. The account does record the sad disturbance of relationships in the created order once the pair had fallen into sin. The husband will take the position of ruler over his wife (Gen. 3:16). The early chapters of Genesis trace the widespread phenomenon of male rulership over females to a point of origin in the fall, not in the ideal creation order.

The remainder of the Old Testament pictures a very patriarchal form of society. The term *head* is used of various levels of leaders and rulers in that patriarchal society. The "head" rules over both the men and the women under him. The term *head* was not used for man's specific relationship to woman. The highly patriarchal Old Testament does have a few instances of women in leadership positions over men. These are very significant, for they strongly suggest that other patterns of societal relations than the male-dominance pattern are possible in God's good purposes with his people.

The term *headship* which synod asked us to examine undoubtedly derives from the New Testament's using the term *head* for man in relationship to woman (or his wife). In these New Testament passages *head* is a metaphor. Both Old Testament Hebrew and secular Greek were familiar with metaphorical uses of the term *head*. The metaphorical "head" in ancient times, as in modern English, could express a variety of ideas. Our study discovered that no clear and direct line could be established from the Old Testament expressions "head of the tribe" or "head of the family" to the New Testament's use of the term *head* for Christ or for men. In other words, the New Testament usage does not reflect some single and established usage of the metaphor *head* derived from the Old Testament.

When Paul called Christ or the man "head," he was not necessarily alluding to a ruling position or a ruling function. The head metaphor had other meanings as well. Although a ruling type of headship is clearly affirmed of Christ in Ephesians 1:22, more often the head metaphor focuses on the organic type of relationship between a head and its body, where the head is the supplier of life, energy, and growth (Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:15; 5:23). The head metaphor can also suggest the idea of "source" or "point of origin," similar to our English concept of fountainhead or headwaters. One must listen with care to detect the real thrust of the head metaphor when used of male-female, or husband-wife, relationships.

The head metaphor is twice used of man in relationship to woman. In Ephesians 5:23 Paul says, "the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior." Paul proceeds in this passage to develop a beautiful statement of organic headship, where the husband, following Christ's example of self-giving, takes the initiative in supplying his wife with the sustenance, energy, opportunities, and guidance to become a mature person in Christ. The wife is to "be subject" to such headship. The wife's subjection is spoken of in the context of mutual Christian subjection to one another (Eph. 5:21), and hence subjection here is not a uniquely feminine stance or role. The husband's headship is to be life-giving; the wife's submission then would be life-drawing. Together they are to be one body, one flesh. The headship here is not that of maintaining control or staying in charge. It is that of investing oneself, extending oneself into the life of the other, and sharing ever fuller life by growing together.

The marital union pictured in Ephesians 5 is close. The two become one flesh. Can such a close relationship as husband and wife permit of any other relationships for the marital partners? It has long been assumed so for men. The man goes outside the home into the factory, business, university, government, and into a wide range of arenas. He goes as a married man, but he does not function there as the head of his wife. His headship of his wife is not directly operative in his activities outside the home and family. The woman also goes outside the home. May she only function outside the home as relating to her husband as head? Her husband's headship of her does not directly function in these other areas. If she takes a nursing position, her husband's headship is not functioning as she practices her nursing. Her subjection in her nursing must be more primarily to the supervisor of nursing than to her husband. Is there some principle in the married relationship which allows one partner to function more freely beyond the married relationship than the other? Being husband or being wife does not establish the role either one is to play outside the marriage sphere. In theory at least, it would seem that married women ought to be as free to take up positions in the factory, business, university, and government as married men are, and in each of these places to act with the same degree of individuality that is accorded to men. True, the woman is to be the mother in the family. But just as truly, the man is to be the father in the family. Both are fulltime assignments, but it would appear that both may have room for other activities beyond direct obligations as mother and father.

In regard to church officers, married men do not enter the consistory room or mount the pulpit as heads of their wives. Can women be debarred from these places because of the headship of their husbands? Christian marriage, of course, calls for mutual consent and cooperation on the part of both marital partners for either of them to enter any of the arenas beyond marriage. This is the very essence of marriage. Each one serves the other as partner and supporter in all of his or her roles—that is, in all of his or her life. The headship of the man within marriage, especially the self-giving headship of Ephesians 5, places no more restrictions upon the married woman's other roles than it does upon the man's other roles. In a word, as far as the headship of Ephesians 5 is concerned, wives as well as husbands may be church officers.

Some may conclude that too little authority has been accorded to the husband in our interpretation of his designation as head. So be it. We would observe, nonetheless, that even for those who find the husband as ruler-head

of the wife in the marriage and family, there is no necessary reason for excluding wives from holding church office. Church office is a matter of exercising Christ's authority. Christ exercises his authority by means of his Word and Spirit. No one brings any personal authority to church office. Church office requires not personal authority, but the ability to exercise Christ's authority. And Christ's authority operates by way of interpreting and applying the Word and by being sensitive to the movements of the Spirit. Hence, wives in possession of these gifts, even if they are understood to be under the ruling headship of their husbands in marriage, could be very effective ministers of Christ's authority when duly called and installed in church office. Chaplains to kings may be subject to their kings, but as chaplains they speak with Christ's authority to the kings. Church office authority is Christ's authority, not some personal, or male, or husband authority.

The other head metaphor used of man is I Corinthians 11:3: "The head of the woman is man" (NIV). Both the majority report and our report have wrestled with the ambiguities and difficulties of this statement in its context. Is it speaking of husband headship of wives or male headship of females? Is the headship a ruling headship or a source headship—an allusion to the wife/woman originally coming from the man? Answers to these questions are not clear. From the passage we do detect that Paul's interest is in the maintenance of visible sexual distinctions through clothing and hairstyle. Women must keep their feminine identity. The head metaphor here is not sufficiently clear to allow for deducing a doctrine or deriving a principle which would restrict women's role or areas of activity. In fact, in this passage women are praying and prophesying along with men. This suggests that when they are properly attired they may assume the full and open participation in the worship services that the men assume. They may be leaders along with men.

The restrictions placed on women's conduct in I Corinthians 14:35ff. and in I Timothy 2:11ff. have been found to be appropriate measures in view of the disturbed situation in the congregation and in view of the larger threats to the church from the surrounding community. Where the circumstances have changed and the church is confronted with quite different challenges and threats, it does not appear that the solutions which were appropriate for the first century in Corinth and Ephesus need to be perpetuated.

There are two observations that suggest to us that when Paul placed restrictions on the conduct of women he was not laying down eternal, universally applicable, creation-order principles. For one thing, Paul himself had a larger role for women in his ministry than the "silence" texts might suggest. Women were functioning in leadership roles in some of Paul's churches. It appears that Paul practiced flexibility regarding the role of women, depending on whether the societal circumstances were open to the prominence of women or were threatened by it. The other observation suggesting that the restrictions on women were not creation norms is the overall direction of Scripture. The day foreseen by the Old Testament of the Spirit functioning through women as well as men arrived with Pentecost. The gifts of the Spirit were poured out on both, and both were encouraged by Paul to seek especially the gift of prophecy. God would be speaking through women and through men. This places women alongside men in giving leadership in the new age of the Spirit.

The role of women in society and in the church is again on the church's agenda. The church must detect the thrust of salvation in Christ for women and

their role. For a truly Christian society here on earth, Christian marriage remains a basic building block. Its purpose, as the time-honored marriage form so aptly stated, is "the propagation of the human race, the furtherance of the kingdom of God, and the enrichment of the lives of those entering this state." A man and a woman become husband and wife, one body, one flesh, a new enriched unity. In that marriage Paul designated the husband as head. The model for husband-headship is Christ's self-giving headship for the church which is his body. It is the husband's calling as head, according to Paul, to use his powers in self-giving, loving care of his wife, in order to empower her to full spiritual, social, and personal maturity in Christ. He does it as if she were his own body, exercising the care toward her that he shows toward himself. Together, husband and wife will counsel, encourage, and support each other in their marital obligations and in the various social and societal relationships each of them develops beyond their marriage.

The husband's designation as head does not imply a restriction upon the wife's involvement in arenas of life outside the marriage and family. It means that the husband will help his wife discover her gifts and talents and support her in the work and arenas, inside and outside the marital relationship, which they mutually agree are her areas of service, her *diakonia* in God's kingdom. She in turn will do the same for him, for they are one body in Christ. There is no principle to be derived from Paul's designation of the husband as head of the wife which presents barriers to a woman serving in any arena in life or office in the church or society which is appropriate to her abilities and to her responsibilities in her marriage.

Since there are viable exegetical alternatives to those proposed by the majority of the committee and to those commonly cited in support of excluding women from the offices of the church, we of the minority cannot join the majority in their position that this exclusion is clearly biblically grounded. In view of these viable exegetical alternatives, we judge that the Church Order of the Christian Reformed Church ought not to limit the options regarding those on whom the churches may call to serve in their offices. We therefore recommend the deletion of the stipulation in the church order that those eligible for the offices of the church must be male. Each congregation ought to have the option of determining from the entirety of the members of Christ's body in that congregation which ones are best able to serve them as officers.

E. Recommendations

1. That synod make the following statements regarding headship and church office:

a. Paul's use of the *head* metaphor for male-female relations in the I Corinthians 11:2-16 passage is not sufficiently clear to warrant the conclusion that women are to be excluded from church offices or other areas of leadership and service in society.

b. Paul's use of the *head* metaphor for husband-wife relations in the Ephesians 5:21-33 passage pictures the organic head-body relation, where the husband empowers the wife for spiritual, social, and personal growth toward maturity in Christ; the husband's headship does not imply that the wife must be excluded from church offices or other areas of leadership and service in society.

c. There is not sufficiently clear evidence from Scripture to warrant the

conclusion of a "headship principle," holding that man's rulership over woman is a creation norm.

d. The church should seek to recognize, develop, and use the spiritual gifts for leadership and service found in all its members, female as well as male.

e. Each congregation should be encouraged to call to office those persons best able to lead and serve it in its local ministry and mission.

2. That synod delete the word *male* from Article 3 of the Church Order, so that Article 3 would read:

Confessing members of the church who meet the biblical requirements for office-bearers are eligible for office. Only those who have been officially called and ordained or installed shall hold and exercise office in the church.

(*Note:* We can support the majority's recommendation to open the deacon's office to women. We cannot support them in their rationale for excluding women from the other church offices, nor in the distinction they make between female and male deacons, as implied in their Recommendation 9.)

Sarah Cook

Willis P. DeBoer

REPORT 34

WORLD MISSIONS AND RELIEF COMMISSION

I. MANDATE

The Synod of 1983 appointed the undersigned commission with the following mandate (*Acts of Synod 1983*, pp. 687-89):

1. That synod appoint a five-member *ad hoc* commission called the World Missions and Relief Commission with a tenure of two years, under extraordinary conditions subject to extension by the Synod of 1985 for one more year, with the following mandate:

a. The commission shall study the problems and issues not yet resolved to gain further insight into the principles and practices which should govern both agencies. (See Report 36, III, p. 464-68.)

b. The commission shall study the problems and issues involved in the adherence or nonadherence of the respective agencies to their Constitution or Mission Order, and advise synod as to possible revisions of these documents.

c. The commission shall inform itself continuously as to the ongoing performance of these joint ministries, provide CRWM* and CRWRC with evaluation and advice concerning this performance, and, as may be necessary, appeal to the Missions Coordination Council for assistance within its resources to make such evaluation and advice effectual.

d. The commission shall do everything it can and as soon as possible to secure a unified administrative organization and a single programmatic front on each field of joint ministries.

2. That synod invest the World Missions and Relief Commission with authority and power to take the following actions:

a. Consider and take appropriate action within its mandate on all matters brought to its attention or which it observes as being points of detrimental discord between the two agencies.

b. Assess and take appropriate action within its mandate on all actions of the two agencies which would potentially create difficulties for the church or any of its other agencies.

c. Veto any action of the board or staff of either agency which it deems detrimental to the effective operation of the other agency.

d. Undertake studies of structural systems with the intent to effect improvement in the operations of the two agencies, and to make them compatible by

*Following is a glossary of the acronyms which appear in this report:
 CRBWM—Christian Reformed Board of World Ministries
 CRC—Christian Reformed Church
 CRWDA—Christian Reformed World Diaconal Agency
 CRWEA—Christian Reformed World Evangelism Agency
 CRWM—Christian Reformed World Missions
 CRWRC—Christian Reformed World Relief Committee
 MBO—Management by Objectives
 MCC—Missions Coordination Council
 SIC—Synodical Interim Committee