

WHAT CAN WOMEN DO IN CHURCH?

A STUDY INTO THE SCRIPTURES CONCERNING
THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH AND
MINISTRY

Part B

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8. 1 Corinthians 11: Does “head” mean “person in charge”?

The NIV translates 1 Corinthians 11: 3 as follows:

Now I want you to realise that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

For the purpose of this section of the study, particular consideration will be given to the meaning of the Greek word *kephale* which is translated “head”. In the New Testament *kephale* is used some 57 times, and in 50 of these it refers to the physical, literal head of a person or animal. In the remaining instances it is used metaphorically.²³⁶

Of the use of *kephale* in 1 Corinthians 11: 3 Grudem (2006) has contended, “*The Greek word translated ‘head’ (the word kephale) refers to one in a position of authority.*”²³⁷ This is not a universally accepted view among scholars.²³⁸ For example, Giles (2004b) has stated, “*Theologian Wayne Grudem wants us to believe that the Greek word kephale (translated into English as ‘head’) always means a ‘person in authority over.’ His premise is that words have one fixed meaning, the context does not matter.*”²³⁹ Accordingly, the question to be answered is: Did Paul really mean “person in charge” when he used *kephale* in

236 Trombley 1985, p. 120; Belleville 2000, p. 123. A metaphor is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase that is ordinarily taken to mean one thing is used symbolically to refer to another.

237 Grudem 2006, p. 27; also, pp. 121 – 126. By way of background, in 1985 Grudem undertook a study of 2,336 examples out of 12,000 instances of *kephale* held on the University of California-Irvine’s *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* database with a view to proving that it did not mean “source”. It is notable that of Grudem’s 2,336 examples, he found that more than 2,000 simply referred to the physical head of a man or animal and had no metaphorical meaning. Of particular interest is that of his 2,336 examples he could find only 49 which appeared to him to be used metaphorically to mean “person of superior authority or rank, or ‘ruler’, ‘ruling part’” (cited in Knight 1985, pp. 64, 67).

238 While some Male Headship proponents consider the findings by Grudem that are referred to in footnote 237 of this study to be definitive (for example House 1995, p. 26), there is not unanimity among researchers in this regard. For instance, Sumner (2003) has commented, “*Grudem stretches his argument beyond tenability in the forty-nine cases he presents. None of the extrabiblical examples he offers self-evidently mean ‘ruler’*” (p. 151n19). Similarly, Cervin (1989) has concluded that Grudem’s study “... is based on a host of false assumptions” and that in the 49 cases he cites, Grudem has “...misrepresented the evidence” (p. 1). While Grudem (1990) has disagreed with scholarly criticisms of his work such as those by Cervin (to which Cervin prepared an unpublished response [as noted by Scholer, endnote 39]), even some other Male Headship proponents do not share Grudem’s view that *kephale* can only ever mean “person in authority over someone else”. For example, Hurley (1981) has stated, “*In Paul’s day ... the Greek word ‘head’ (kephale) could mean a physical head, a person with authority, or the source of something*” (p. 164), and that in passages such as Ephesians 4: 15 and Colossians 2: 19 *kephale* would mean “source” (pp. 165, 166). Also, Clark (1980) has acknowledged that Ephesians 4: 16 is a “*likely example*” of *kephale* as conveying the idea of “source” (p. 84). More recently, Blomberg (2001) has stated, “*After earlier allegations that the word virtually never meant ‘authority’ or absolutely never meant ‘source’, it is increasingly agreed that both usages do occur in the relevant cognate Greek literature, but both are rare*” (p. 342). Similarly, Schreiner (2001) has stated, “*It may well be, however, that kephale in some contexts denotes both ‘authority over’ and ‘source’*” (pp. 212 – 213). A general overview on the development of the different views in the scholarly literature about the meaning of Paul’s use of *kephale* has been provided by Johnson (2009).

239 Giles 2004b

this passage?

Research into the metaphorical use of *kephale* in antiquity has revealed that depending on the context it could have different connotations and meanings, including “having authority over” and “source” or “origin”.²⁴⁰ This is not surprising since even the English word “head” can be used variously to refer to a physical head, to one having authority or being in charge, and in describing the “source” or “origin” of a particular thing (such as someone who is a “fountainhead of knowledge/information” or the “head-waters” of a river).²⁴¹

Accordingly, it should not be assumed that in using *kephale* in verse 3 Paul only meant “leader” or “one in authority over another”. Given the various ways in which the word was used in the ancient literature, it has been increasingly recognised that the context in which *kephale* is found will determine what meaning was intended to be conveyed by its use.²⁴² Such an approach is consistent with the rule of biblical interpretation that Context determines Meaning. It is only by considering the use of *kephale* within its overall context that the meaning of the word in verse 3 will be discerned.

Before proceeding to consider this issue, it is important to note that verse 3 was not intended to be read as a standalone statement in isolation from its context. Rather, its primary purpose was to link Paul’s previous exhortations for the Corinthians not to give offence to others (1 Corinthians 8: 9 – 13, 10: 23 – 33) with a specific discussion concerning the reasons why head coverings should be worn by the women during whole-of-church worship activities (1 Corinthians 11: 3 – 16, 12: 7 – 11, 14: 1 – 5, 22, 24, 26, 39).²⁴³ While the need for head

240 Belleville (2000) notes that the range of metaphorical usages of the Greek word *kephale* include “chief” or “prominent”, “pride of place”, “the foremost position in a column or formation”, “the capstone of a building”, “the end of a pole”, “beginning” or “origin”, “the starting point of a river”, “source of evil”, “to stand as part of the whole” or “self” (p. 122; also, Mickelsen cited in Osburn 2001, pp. 163 – 164). Belleville (2000) also notes, “... *the only times kephale is used to mean ‘master’ or ‘ruler’, it is in a negative sense. For instance, those who would be Israel’s master are her foes (Lam 1: 5)*” (p. 122). Importantly, Belleville (2000) makes the point that for Paul the head was not the only, nor was it the most important, part of the body available for use as a metaphor: “*While the idea of the head as the decision-maker of the human body was current in the first century, it is absent in Paul. For Paul it is the heart, not the head, that is the seat of the human will. It is the heart that makes decisions (1 Cor 7: 37), the heart that believes (Rom 10: 9 – 10), the heart that becomes foolish and darkened (Rom 1: 21) or wise and enlightened (Eph 1: 18), and the heart on which the law is written (Rom 2: 15)*” (pp. 125 – 126). Similarly, Clark (1980) notes, “*For the Hebrews (and New Testament writers generally), the head of the human body was not the seat of the thought processes. Thinking took place in the heart*” (p. 83).

241 Sumner (2003) notes that Webster’s Dictionary suggests some 21 different meanings for the English word “head” (p. 129).

242 Belleville 2000, pp. 121 – 131; Belleville 2001, pp. 137, 138; Blomberg 2001, p. 342; Schreiner 2001, pp. 213, 227, 228; Beck and Blomberg 2001b, p. 314; Nicole 2004, p. 362n11; Marshall 2004, p. 198n39; Giles 2004b; Johnson 2009, p. 52

243 Given that 1 Corinthians was written to deal with a range of problems within the Corinthian church, it is reasonable to conclude that some of the local women must have been discarding their head coverings during church gatherings (allowing their hair, which was always worn long, to fall loose [Prior 1985, p. 180]) otherwise Paul would not have had any need to raise it as an issue. Indeed, it would have been superfluous for him to instruct them to wear head coverings and include detailed arguments for why such

coverings may not be readily apparent to modern-day Western readers, there is little doubt that the wearing of such coverings had great cultural significance for the Corinthians.²⁴⁴ Indeed, in that society the wearing of head coverings by women when they were in public was necessary to ensure that their morality was not called into question.²⁴⁵

The need to wear a head covering only became an issue for a woman when she appeared in public, which is why it is reasonable to understand Paul's concern with head coverings in 1 Corinthians 11: 3 – 16 as having particular application within the context of the Corinthians' whole-of-church worship activities (c.f., 1 Corinthians 11: 4 – 5, 14: 3 – 5, 22).²⁴⁶ During their whole-of-church worship

garments should be worn if they were already doing so. Why these women would have discarded their head coverings during church gatherings is unclear. Nevertheless, based on what is said in 1 Corinthians 11: 16 it does not appear to have been an issue in other churches. It should also be noted that while in 1 Corinthians 11: 15 Paul described a woman's long hair as a covering (Greek: *peribolaion*), that in 1 Corinthians 11: 5 – 6 he was referring to an actual cloth garment which covered the head is indicated by his use of the Greek word *katakalypto* which means "to cover as with a veil that hangs down ... to be veiled, wear a veil" (Bullinger 1975, p. 193). Had the "veil" or "covering" of verse 6 simply been "long hair" as some have reasoned, then the remainder of the verse would make little sense since it would be arguing that if a woman did not have long hair (which by implication would mean that she had short hair) then she should have her hair cut – but why would she need to have her hair cut if it was already short? The purpose of Paul's reference in 1 Corinthians 11: 13 – 15 to a woman's long hair as a covering from "nature" (Greek: *physis*) was to support and reinforce his argument for why the Corinthian women should wear head coverings during the Assembly. This is evident from his use of the rhetorical questions "Judge for yourselves ...?" and "Does not nature itself teach ...?" (c.f., 1 Corinthians 10: 15; Acts 4: 19). (NB: As a figure of speech, a rhetorical question is a literary device for producing an effect or making a point). Similarly, Bruce (1980) has observed, "... since hair is intended to serve as a covering (*Gk peribolaion*, a different term from those used in the preceding verses for 'cover' or 'veil'), then nature, which has given woman (*Mediterranean woman*) an abundant supply of this covering, manifestly intends her to be covered" (p. 108). Likewise, Morris (1985) writes, "... [By having long hair] Nature is giving a hint at the need for a woman to have her head covered on appropriate occasions" (p. 154). Paul concluded his argument for why the Corinthian women should wear head coverings during the Assembly by appealing to general practice among the churches (1 Corinthians 11: 16). That Paul indeed referred to an actual cloth head garment in 1 Corinthians 11: 5 – 6 was also understood by the early Church Fathers. For instance, Tertullian (160-215 AD) noted that the church at Corinth still practiced veiling in his day (*Tertullian, On the Veiling of Virgins*) and Hippolytus (170-236 AD) wrote, "... let all the women have their heads covered with an opaque cloth, not with a veil of thin linen, for this is not a true covering" (*Hippolytus, Apostolic Tradition*). Notably, early Christian art shows women wearing head coverings during worship activities.

244 Schreiner 2001, pp. 216, 227; Blomberg 2001, p. 344; Nicole 2004, p. 362; Webb 2004, p. 396; Belleville 2000, pp. 127 – 129. With respect to the nature and cultural significance of head coverings Prior (1985) has pointed out, "In first-century Greece dress for men and women was apparently very similar, except for the women's 'head-covering' (here called *kalumma*, or 'veil'). This, incidentally, was not the equivalent of the Arab veil, but a covering for her hair alone. The normal, everyday dress of all Greek women included this *kalumma*. The only women who did not wear them were the *hetairai*, who were the 'high-class' mistresses of influential Corinthians. Also, slaves had their heads shaved, and the same practice was enacted as punishment for convicted adulteresses. It has further been suggested that the sacred prostitutes from the local temple of Aphrodite did not wear veils" (pp. 179 – 180).

245 Blomberg 2001, p. 344; Blomberg 2005, pp. 157 – 158; Osburn 2001, p. 182; *Archaeological Study Bible*, p. 1875. This point will also be discussed in section 9.3 of this study.

246 Similarly, Osburn (2001) notes, "It is difficult to understand why Paul would make such a strong appeal for a wife to wear a head-covering in the presence of her husband in a private setting" (p. 175). Also, Morris (1985) writes, "Evidently some 'emancipated' Corinthian women had dispensed with the veil in public worship, and Paul argues that they should not do this. Jewish women were always veiled in public

activities Paul expected the Corinthians to observe cultural norms with respect to the wearing of head coverings since he did not want them to unnecessarily cause controversy or to give offence to others regardless of whether they were a fellow believer or an outsider who may have been in attendance (1 Corinthians 7: 20 – 24, 8: 9, 10: 23 – 33, 14: 23 – 24). Requiring them to observe such cultural expectations was not a problem for Paul since, as will be seen in section 8.3 of this study, he proceeded in verse 10 to invest the female head covering with an important new meaning and significance.

8.1 Context rules: “person in charge” or “source” in verse 3?

Male Headship proponents interpret the use of *kephale* in verse 3 as mandating God’s desired order for the exercise of authority: God over Christ over man over woman.²⁴⁷ However, when the overall context of verse 3 is considered it is evident that Paul’s intent in using *kephale* was not to prescribe a hierarchical “chain of command”. In this regard the following points may be made.

Firstly, contrary to the way it is interpreted by Male Headship proponents, the verse is actually constructed as follows: “Christ, man, woman, God”. If Paul’s intention was to describe a descending line of authority from God to woman, why was God mentioned last? If God is over all things (Romans 9: 5) and has ultimate authority (Romans 13: 1), why was He not listed first? Furthermore, if verse 3 was meant to be understood as a hierarchical chain of authority, why is the Holy Spirit not mentioned? For that matter, why is the Father not mentioned?²⁴⁸

The fact that the Male Headship interpretation of verse 3 does not coincide with the way the verse is actually framed seriously weakens the claim that the passage was intended to be understood as God’s approved order for the exercise of authority. As has been observed:

As a careful, inspired writer, Paul knows exactly how to write an orderly sequence on a scale of gradual differentiation. Thus in 1 Corinthians 12: 28 (when ranking spiritual gifts), he starts at the top first, then second, third, and

in the first century, but it is difficult to be certain about what was done elsewhere. A. Oepke thinks that customs varied, but Conzelmann can say, ‘It can be assumed that respectable Greek women wore a head covering in public.’ If so, the practice of the Corinthian Christian ladies outraged the proprieties. Paul rejected it with decision. It is no part of the life of the Christian needlessly to flout accepted conventions” (pp. 148 – 149).

247 For example Hurley 1981, p. 167; Grudem 2002a, p. 49; Grudem 2006, pp. 27, 121 – 126; also noted by Sumner 2003, p. 145; Osburn 2001, pp. 177, 179

248 As has been observed, “*It is critical to note that the Bible says ‘God’ is the Head of ‘Christ’.* It does not say ‘the Father’ is the head of ‘the Son” (Sumner 2003, p. 186n3). While one Male Headship proponent has interpreted the reference to “God” in 1 Corinthians 11: 3 to mean “God the Father” (Grudem 2006, p. 27), it is clear that if Paul intended the words “God the Father” or similar to be understood, especially in connection with Jesus, then it was his practice to write explicitly in this regard (note 2 Corinthians 1: 3, 11: 31; Ephesians 1: 3). Thus in the case of 1 Corinthians 11: 3, that he referred only to “God” is highly instructive. His reason for doing so will be explored shortly in this study.

down. *But in 1 Corinthians 11: 3, he begins with Christ/man, which in a hierarchical structure should be in second position; he goes on with man/woman, which in a hierarchical structure should be in third position; and he ends with God/Christ, which in a hierarchical structure should be in first position. According to this theory, Paul would have dislocated his alleged hierarchy by arranging it in this order: second, third, first. It is inconceivable that Paul would have so grievously jumbled up the sequence in a matter involving God, Christ, and humans, when he kept his hierarchy straight as he dealt with the lesser subject of spiritual gifts in 12: 28.*²⁴⁹

If God is ultimately the source of all things, as verse 12 concludes by saying, then verse 3 is appropriately sequenced since it relates an historical, rather than a hierarchical, order.²⁵⁰ In fact, from a contextual perspective, understanding the use of *kephale* in verse 3 as referring to “source” or “origins” would be entirely consistent with Paul’s clear reference to “source” in verses 8 and 12.²⁵¹ Male Headship proponents often argue that *kephale* should not be understood as meaning “source” in verse 3 since this would then mean that the source of Christ is God which cannot be true if Christ is eternal and was with God from the beginning.²⁵² While Christ is indeed eternal given His status as a member of the Godhead, this line of reasoning ignores the fact that in His human form Christ had a physical beginning as a result of divine intervention (which was why He was called “Son of God” [Luke 1: 32, 35; John 1: 1 – 14, 8: 42, 13: 3, 16: 27]). Therefore, it is consistent with the original usage of the word as well as the overall context of the passage to understand *kephale* in verse 3 as meaning “source”, not “leader” or “one in authority over another”.

Secondly, if *kephale* in this passage means “leader” or “one in authority over another”, how can God be the authoritative head of Christ given that Christ is God (John 1: 1, 8: 58, 10: 30; Philippians 2: 6)? While Christ may have

249 Bilezikian cited in *ibid*, pp. 146 – 147n8; also, Cunningham *et al* 2000, p. 167. In response to such observations one Male Headship proponent has said: *“Egalitarians often point to the unusual order of 1 Corinthians 11: 3 as further proof that Paul is not establishing a hierarchy here. If he were, so they say, one would have expected to read, ‘The head of the woman is man, the head of man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God’, thus moving from most subordinate to most authoritative (or vice-versa). Instead we get the sequence of man-Christ, woman-man, Christ-God. But in fact this makes good sense if Paul is leading up to commands to Christian men and women. It would be natural to refer to their heads first and then draw the comparison between Christ and God”* (Blomberg 2005, pp. 156 – 157). If this statement was intended as a counter argument it is difficult to see it as having any merit in this respect for at least the following reasons. Firstly, while acknowledging the “unusual order” of verse 3 it ignores the fact that when Paul elsewhere wrote hierarchical lists he did so unambiguously (1 Corinthians 12: 28). Why would he break with this practice in verse 3 if his intention in this instance was also to write hierarchically? Secondly, it does not take into account the overall context of the passage in which “*source language*” features prominently (Belleville 2005a, p. 31; Cunningham *et al* 2000, p. 165; Kaiser *et al* 1996, p. 602). As highlighted in section 3 of this study (Part A), one of the fundamental rules of biblical interpretation is that context determines meaning. In line with this principle, words and passages should not be accorded meanings that are incongruent with their overall context.

250 Sumner 2003, p. 147; Cunningham *et al* 2000, p. 168

251 Cunningham *et al* (2000) also observe that, “*The idea of ‘origins’ is found throughout the passage*” (p. 165).

252 For example Hurley 1981, p. 166

subjected Himself to God for the purpose of His human experience (Philippians 2: 7 – 8) [note: Christ subjected Himself – not only was this condition not imposed on Him, but the implication is that there was a time when He was not in subjection], Christ has now resumed having full authority (Matthew 28: 18; 1 Peter 3: 22). Therefore, it is difficult to see how *kephale* as it is used in verse 3 could have any “leadership” connotations vis-à-vis “God over Christ”. Yet, if the meaning of *kephale* in this instance is understood as “source” then it makes sense for verse 3 to mean that the head (or source) of Christ is God since, as a human, Christ was indeed conceived through the intervention of God (Luke 1: 32, 35).

Finally, the overall context of the passage is interdependence and mutuality, not the exercise of authority by members of one gender over those of the other.²⁵³ The men and women at Corinth needed each other and were responsible for edifying each other. One way they could show this was by respecting the social conventions of the day in relation to the donning of head coverings during whole-of-church worship activities so as not to give any cause for offence.²⁵⁴ Male Headship proponents often cite verses 8 and 9 as if these “prove” that woman was created to be subject to man.²⁵⁵ But what they fail to do is to continue reading the passage up to and including verses 11 and 12 in which Paul states that while the first woman may have come from the first man, ever since then men have come from women. Thus, Paul repudiates any suggestion that being “first” automatically entitles one to special priority or position over another. Accordingly, based on the context of verse 3 it is more reasonable to interpret *kephale* as used in this verse to mean “source” or “origin” rather than “person in authority over”.²⁵⁶

253 Osburn 2001, pp. 186 – 187. As noted previously, Hurley (1981) has similarly observed of this passage: “*The theme of the inter-relatedness of the sexes stands out clear and strong: ‘In the Lord, however, woman is not independent (choris) of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came out of (ek) man, so also man is born of (dia + genitive, ‘though’) woman. But everything is from God’ (1 Cor 11: 11 – 12). The husband may not consider himself the ruler of his wife and abuse his authority. By God’s design he is dependent on her for birth; they are interdependent by God’s design*” (pp. 177 – 178). While Hurley adopts a Male Headship perspective, he nevertheless recognises that the idea of the interdependency of man and woman threads throughout the passage.

254 Osburn 2001, p. 188

255 For example Schreiner (2001) states, “*If kephale means ‘source’, then women are to defer to their source by adorning themselves properly. The idea that the source has particular authority harkens back to Genesis 2: 21 – 25, where the woman comes from the man (see 1 Cor 11: 8)*” (p. 213).

256 Other writers have concluded similarly. For example Kaiser *et al* (1996) note, “... *That ‘source’ is the appropriate meaning of kephale in 1 Corinthians 11: 3 is confirmed by Paul’s ‘source’ language in his appeal to Genesis 2 ... It would therefore seem best to translate 1 Corinthians 11: 3 as ‘I want you to understand that Christ is the source of man’s being; the man is the source of woman’s being; and God is the source of Christ’s being.’ When read like this, it lays a solid foundation for, and sheds light on, the rest of the passage (1 Cor 11: 4 – 16)...*” (pp. 601 – 602). Likewise Giles (1985) observes, “... *it seems fairly certain that in this context the word kephale/head bears the meaning ‘source’ rather than ‘authority over’. The allusion is to Genesis 2, where woman finds her origin or source in man ...*” (p. 33).

8.2 Other contextual evidence supporting *kephale* as “source” in verse 3

Further evidence that Paul intended “source” or “origins” to be understood when he used *kephale* in verse 3 may be seen from his subsequent words in 1 Corinthians 11: 7 – 9, 11 – 12.²⁵⁷ In verse 7, use of the word “glory” (Greek: *doxa*) reinforces the thought that the context of 1 Corinthians 11: 3ff relates to “source” or “origins”. The word *doxa* as used in this instance means “reflection”.²⁵⁸ By virtue of his creation man is described as the “image and glory of God” (indeed, Luke 3: 38 describes Adam as the “son of God”), while woman is described as the “glory of man” on account of the particular circumstances of her creation (note: Paul does not say that woman is the “image” of man – this is because both male and female were created in God’s image [Genesis 1: 26 – 27]). Verse 8 supports this understanding by pointing out how man did not come from woman, but woman from man.

Some Male Headship proponents have interpreted verses 7 to 9 to mean that since woman came from man then women should be subject to men.²⁵⁹ However, the text itself does not support such an interpretation. The woman may have been derived from the man, but it was God who did the deriving, not the man. Also, in verse 9 the woman was created “for” the man because it was he who was in need of her presence and companionship (Genesis 2: 18). There is no sense either in verse 9 or in Genesis 2 that in being made for him, this gave him authority over her or that she was obliged to be in submission to him.²⁶⁰ Of the word “glory” in verse 7 it has been observed, “... *there is no usage of ‘glory’ anywhere in Scripture that would suggest that Paul is here advocating a subordinating relationship by means of this word.*”²⁶¹ This observation is pertinent given that in Genesis 2: 18 the Hebrew term *ezer kenegdo* is used in order to describe the woman as a “*helper corresponding to.*”²⁶² One Hebrew lexicon has defined *ezer kenegdo* as meaning a “*helper equal to him*” or “*helper corresponding completely to him.*”²⁶³ Note should also be made of the words of the man when speaking of the woman following her creation. In this regard he recognised her as his counterpart (“bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh”) and for this reason called her “woman” (Genesis 2: 23). Thus, there is no sense of subordination of the woman to the man as a result of her subsequent creation

257 As noted earlier, Cunningham *et al* (2000) also observe that, “*The idea of ‘origins’ is found throughout the passage*” (p. 165).

258 Arndt and Gingrich 1979, p. 204; Belleville 2000, p. 130; Osburn 2001, p. 183

259 For example Schreiner 2001, pp. 205 – 206, 227 – 228; House 1995, pp. 133 – 134

260 Belleville (2000) notes, “*Some would say that 1 Corinthians 11: 8 – 9 is another passage that appeals to Adam’s seniority. Yet, the language of the text is biological, not hierarchical (or even sequential). Created ‘from (ek) man’ is a reference to the creation of woman from the first man’s rib. This bespeaks sameness, not hierarchy (Gen 2: 18, ‘I will make a counterpart [AT] and Gen 2: 23, ‘bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh’). The woman, Paul states, was also created ‘for man’ (dia plus the accusative), recalling the woman’s raison d’être, namely, to be a partner or helpmate (and not hired help, as some would maintain; Gen 2: 18, 20) (p. 199n33).*”

261 Fee 2004a, p. 152

262 Hess 2004, p. 86

263 Brown, Driver and Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, cited in Greig 1999, p. 8. Grudem (2006) cites the same definition (pp. 22, 76).

or in Paul's description of her as the "glory of man".

The woman was formed to satisfy a need that remained unfulfilled in the man, the need for a suitable companion. The Genesis account indicates that she was not created for him to be the leader of or to exercise authority over (the rest of creation was for that purpose and the man and woman jointly exercised dominion in this regard). What the man did not need for a partner was a subordinate. The woman was created because the man needed a companion who was his equal in every respect otherwise his need would have continued to have gone unmet (despite being created first it was not good for the man to be alone – Genesis 2: 18 – clearly, he needed her). Even one Male Headship proponent has acknowledged that, "*Woman's role as an 'appropriate helper' does not carry with it an implication of subordination. She is the needed helper whom God supplies to end man's loneliness and to work alongside him, not the junior assistant.*"²⁶⁴

Similarly, it has been observed:

A lot of Christians mistakenly believe that God commissioned Adam to subdue and rule the woman. I'd like to challenge that assumption. If you think about it, that assumption invalidates God's statement. "It is not good for the man to be alone" (Gen 2: 18). It was God's idea to commission Adam and Eve to "fill the earth and subdue it and rule." Genesis 1: 28 says, "And God blessed them, and God said to them." He told them together to "rule". That is significant. If it was unrealistic for Adam to attempt to fill the earth without Eve, then it must have been unrealistic for him to attempt to subdue it. Granted, Adam named all the animals in the garden (Gen 2: 19 – 20). But that is not the same as ruling all the animals in the earth. Adam could no more rule the earth all by himself than he could fill it. He was incomplete until God created him a "helper" (Gen 2: 18). I believe that the woman was created "for the sake of the man" (1 Cor 11: 9) because the man was inadequate to fulfil the will of God all by himself. Apart from his helper, Adam was unable to multiply. Apart from his helper, Adam was inadequate to rule. Thus God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone."²⁶⁵

Another point in favour of understanding *kephale* in verse 3 as having the meaning of "source" or "origins" rather than "authority" is that Jesus is the only authoritative source for His body, the Church (Matthew 28: 18; John 17: 2; 1 Corinthians 8: 6, 12: 27; Ephesians 1: 22, 4: 4 – 6; Colossians 1: 18). The Church belongs to Jesus, not to men (Acts 20: 28; 1 Corinthians 1: 12 – 13, 6: 20; 1 Peter 1: 19). As it is natural for a body to have only one head (a multi-headed body is an aberration [Revelation 13: 1]), so it is with the Church. As

264 Hurley 1981, p. 209. Another Male Headship proponent, Bowman (2001) notes, "*Man and woman were equally given God's commission to be fruitful and multiply and to rule over the earth (Genesis 1: 28). No subordination of roles is expressed or implied in these verses*" (p. 268). Belleville (2000) similarly observes, "*It is worth noting that in Genesis 2: 20 the Hebrew states that the man found no 'counterpart' (kenegdo) to relieve his aloneness, and not that he found no 'subordinate' to do his bidding*" (p. 103).
265 Sumner 2003, pp. 321 – 322

women are priests together with men (1 Peter 2: 5; Revelation 1: 6), they are all directly answerable to the one authoritative source (Jesus).

Thus, it is highly problematic to interpret *kephale* as used in verse 3 as according men the right to be the “leaders” or “ones in authority over” women since doing so would contradict these principles. On the other hand, it is entirely reasonable to understand *kephale* in this instance in terms of “source” or “origins” since Christ was the Son of God (Luke 1: 35; John 1: 1 – 14, 8: 42, 13: 3, 16: 27), Christ was the source of man’s existence (John 1: 3; 1 Corinthians 8: 6; Colossians 1: 16; Genesis 2: 7), and the first woman was derived from the first man (“bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh”) (Genesis 2: 21 – 23). Moreover, verses 11 to 12 indicate that being the first created does not give any special prominence to men given that ever since the first man was created men have been derived from women, while ultimately all are derived from God and are accountable only to Him (also note Acts 17: 28 – 31).

8.3 The only mention of “authority” in 1 Corinthians 11: 3ff

It is important to note that the only time the word “authority” (*exousia*) is actually used in 1 Corinthians 11: 3ff is in verse 10. Contrary to how it is rendered in some Bible translations such as the Phillips Modern English Version (“For this reason a woman ought to bear on her head an outward sign of man’s authority...”) and the Living Bible (“So a woman should wear a covering on her head as a sign that she is under man’s authority ...”), the construction of the original Greek text indicates that the use of *exousia* in this verse is in fact referring to the head covering as the woman’s own authority to participate in the worship activities of the Assembly (1 Corinthians 11: 4 – 5, 12: 7 – 11, 14: 1 – 5, 22, 24, 26, 39).²⁶⁶ On this point Bruce (1980), for example, has noted:

*Here, as elsewhere in this letter, ‘authority’ is probably to be understood in an active sense: the veil is not a sign of the woman’s submission to her husband’s authority ... nor even of her social dignity... and immunity from molestation ...; it is a sign of her authority ... she might pray or prophesy at meetings of the church, and her veil was a sign of this new authority ... its ordinary social significance was thus transcended. As man in public worship manifests his authority by leaving his head unveiled, so woman manifests hers by wearing a veil.*²⁶⁷

266 Morris 1985, p. 152; Grenz 1995, pp. 112ff; Prior 1985, p. 183; Belleville 2001, p. 105; Belleville 2005a, p. 64; Cunningham *et al* 2000, pp. 165, 172; Kaiser *et al* 1996, pp. 605 – 607; Fee 2004a, p. 156; Liefeld 2004, p. 262; Hooker in Johnson 2009, p. 37

267 Bruce 1980, p. 106. On the other hand some Male Headship proponents have argued that the use of *exousia* in verse 10 represents a case of *metonymy*, a figure of speech which involves one word being substituted for another closely associated word (such as “crown” for “royalty”). For example, Clark (1980) asserts: “There is a question about the meaning of the word *exousia* in verse 10. The normal interpretation would understand the word as meaning ‘a veil as a symbol of authority’ (RSV). The word then would be a metonymy, referring to the headcovering. Most commonly commentators would understand the authority on her head as being the authority the woman is under, namely her husband’s” (pp. 170 – 171). However, the problem with this argument is that elsewhere *exousia* is not used passively;

Similarly, a recent German edition of the Bible has seen this verse translated as follows:

“... and woman should wear the sign of her power upon her head, out of respect for the angels.” The translators explain that the power that Paul is referring to – and that he has explicitly granted to woman – is the power to prophesy, to lead the congregation in prayer, and to engage in the kind of inspired charismatic preaching that was favoured by the early church.²⁶⁸

Also, other more recent translations, such as The Bible for Today (Contemporary English Version), render this passage as “a woman ought to wear something on her head, as a sign of her authority.” Some Male Headship proponents have supported this approach.²⁶⁹ A contrary suggestion has been made that the

rather, it is used in an active sense. This being so its use in verse 10 would be pointing to the woman's own authority, not someone else's authority over the woman. Not only is this point identified by Bruce (1980) above and others such as Fee (2004a, p. 156), it is also acknowledged by some Male Headship proponents. For instance, Hurley (1981) states that, “... *the term does not mean ‘sign of (someone else’s) authority.’ It has instead an active sense and, apart from the context, would be taken as pointing to the authority of the woman herself, not that of her husband*” (p. 176). Also, House (1995) approvingly cites Jaubert who stated that, “... *the expression [exousia] ... in Greek never has the passive sense (undergo a domination) but always the active sense: possess a power*” (p. 136). While the fact of *exousia* being used in its active sense is enough to dispel arguments that verse 10 is a case of *metonymy*, a further point in this regard may be made. As noted previously, *metonymy* involves the substitution of one word for another closely associated word. With *metonymy*, a clear logical relationship exists between the word being used and the one to be understood. Importantly, *metonymy* only involves a change of *name*, not a change of *meaning*. Accordingly, the question may be asked: Why would Paul use “authority” if what he really meant, according to advocates of the *metonymy* argument, was its antithesis, namely, “subjection”? (This point is also acknowledged by Robertson and Plummer cited in Fee 2004a, p. 156 and Hooker cited in House 1995, p. 136.) It is difficult to conceive of any correlation between “authority” and “subjection” whereas there is no such difficulty involving “crown” and “royalty” with the former easily being exchanged for the latter. So, even on definitional grounds the use of *exousia* in verse 10 cannot be considered as an instance of *metonymy*. On this point Fee (2004a) also observes, “... *this is simply not a case of one word’s standing for another. Because a passive relationship of the subject (woman) to the object (exousia) is required, one must make two jumps to get to the assumed meaning (as Robertson and Plummer clearly recognized). That is, the word exousia would stand in for the covering itself (a ‘veil’ – so some early versions and English translations), which in turn stands in for a ‘sign of the authority a man presumably has over her (see NRSV, NEB). But this double jump is not easy to come to from a straight reading of the text*” (p. 156). Similarly, Morris (1985) points out, “*But exousia means ‘authority’, not ‘subjection’; when anyone is said ‘to have authority’ it does not mean that the person is set under someone*” (p. 152).

268 Barthell 1992, pp. 383 – 384. One explanation for the mention of angels in 1 Corinthians 11: 10 is as follows: “*The presence of angels as maintainers of order and propriety during worship was a commonly held Jewish belief*” (Belleville 2001, p. 105n54; also, Blomberg 2001, p. 346; Osburn 2001, pp. 184 – 186). Certainly, throughout the New Testament there are references to the presence and role of angels in the lives of believers (for example Acts 12: 7; 1 Timothy 5: 21; Hebrews 1: 14, 12: 22). In line with the overall context of this passage that the Corinthians should not give offence to others, Paul could have intended that they should also be mindful of not giving cause for the angels to be offended (note 2 Peter 2: 9ff; Jude 8ff). Primarily however, Paul's purpose in referring to the angels was to make another argument for why the women at Corinth should wear head coverings during church worship activities. Even so, it is important to remember that by using *exousia* in its active sense Paul intended that such head coverings were a sign of their own authority to act in such activities, not a sign of them being under the authority of a man.

269 For example House (1995) writes, “*Most likely exousia stood for a sign of the woman’s authority. She had a right to function prophetically in the new age when she had her head covered...*” (p. 136).

passage should be translated as: “*For this reason a woman should exercise control over her head (that is, keep the appropriate covering on it).*”²⁷⁰ However, such a proposal has been critiqued by others who have found it unconvincing in light of factors including verse 10’s “... *plain grammatical sense [which] speaks of an authority that a woman herself possesses.*”²⁷¹

8.4 How did early Christians understand the use of *kephale* in verse 3?

In the context of its use in verse 3, *kephale* was understood in the early centuries of the Church to mean “source” or “origins” rather than “authority” or “person in charge”. For example, in his commentary on this passage Cyril of Alexandria (c.375-444 AD) wrote: “*Thus we say that the kephale of every man is Christ, because he was excellently made through him. And the kephale of woman is man, because she was taken from his flesh. Likewise, the kephale of Christ is God, because he is from him according to nature.*”²⁷²

Cyril was not the only early Christian who understood *kephale* as it is used in verse 3 to mean “source” or “origins”. Others who did so included Athanasius (c.293-373 AD) who noted, “*For the head (which is the source) of all things is the Son, but God is the head (which is the source) of Christ,*” and John Chrysostom (349-c.407 AD) who observed that with respect to the relationship between the Father and the Son the use of *kephale* in this passage should be understood to “... *imply perfect oneness and primal cause and source.*”²⁷³

The understanding of these early Christians regarding the meaning of *kephale* in

270 Blomberg 2001, p. 346

271 Belleville 2000, p. 196n3; Belleville 2001, p. 105n54

272 Kaiser *et al* 1996, pp. 601, 602; Fee 2004a, p. 151; Cunningham *et al* 2000, p. 169. Of this quote Grudem (2002b) has stated, “*This text gives an understanding of kephale as arche, probably in the sense of ‘beginning,’ namely, the point from which something started ... someone might argue for the sense ‘source, origin,’ ... Yet ‘beginning’ fits better than ‘source,’ because Cyril could have thought that ‘woman’ had one man (Adam) as the starting point from which women began, but he would not have thought that any other women had subsequent men as their ‘source,’ for no woman since Eve has been taken out of a man. Cyril is tracing back a genealogy to its starting point and comes to Adam. ‘Beginning, starting point’ therefore seems to fit this context. But the ambiguity of arche makes it difficult to decide*” (pp. 166 – 167). Grudem’s attempt to minimise the significance of Cyril’s statement by constructing a distinction between “beginning, starting point” and “source” (which seems, in any case, to be a moot point) does not alter the fact that Cyril did not automatically equate *kephale* as it is used in verse 3 with “authority”.

273 Cited in Kroeger 2006, pp. 6 – 7. With respect to Chrysostom’s comment, it is noted that he “... *assumed the metaphor in the case of man and woman to express a hierarchical relationship based on the Fall, [but] felt compelled to argue against the ‘heretics’ (Arians) that of necessity it had to have a different sense in the God-Christ pair ... But in either case he utterly rejects that the metaphor includes the notion of ‘rule and subjection’; otherwise Paul would ‘not have brought forward the instance of a wife, but rather of a slave and master.’ With regard to Christ and man, and God and Christ, he resorts to the language ‘authors of their being.’ His reason for abandoning that meaning for the man-woman relationship (which he understands as husband-wife) is that he imports here his understanding of Ephesians 5: 22 as supporting a hierarchical relationship*” (Fee 2004a, p. 150n25). While Chrysostom’s reasoning may appear convoluted to modern-day readers (a difficulty common to theological works of that time generally [Jenkins 2011, pp. 63 – 65]), it nonetheless provides strong evidence that early Christians did not automatically interpret *kephale*, when used metaphorically, to mean the “authority of one over another”.

verse 3 is particularly instructive given that in light of the less than favourable views of many Church Fathers about women generally²⁷⁴ it would have come as no surprise if they had adopted a more hierarchical interpretation of the word's meaning in this instance. That they did not do so makes it particularly strong evidence that the early Christians linked the meaning of *kephale* as it is used in verse 3 with the concept of "source" or "origins" rather than "authority", "leadership" and "person in charge".²⁷⁵

8.5 Male Headship objections to defining *kephale* as "source" in verse 3

Some Male Headship proponents have argued that rather than meaning "source" or "origins", by Paul's time *kephale* had come to mean "have authority over" since this was the way it was used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew word *rosh* (which similarly meant "head").²⁷⁶ However, this argument is questionable because when the Septuagint translators found an instance where *rosh* meant leader, they more often than not chose some other Greek word to translate it.²⁷⁷ It has also been noted:

Of 180 occurrences where the Hebrew Bible uses rosh in a figurative way to denote "ruler, leader," the Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible (the Septuagint) avoids using kephale at least 90 percent of the time. In only five passages does the Septuagint use kephale to translate rosh as "ruler, leader" (see Judg 11: 11; 2 Sam 22: 44, which is the same as Psalm 18: 43; Isa 7: 8 – 9

274 Pederson (2006) cites Swidler: "As Christianity moved into the age of the fathers, the status of Christian women became very more restricted. The fathers took a uniformly male superior attitude that often was misogynist. The trend continued into the Middle Ages and up to the most recent times" (p. 106).
 275 Understanding *kephale* as meaning "source" or "origins" also enabled them to successfully refute the heretics of the day who taught that the Son was eternally subordinated to the Father (Kroeger 2006, p. 6; Fee 2004a, p. 150; Giles 2004a, pp. 334 – 352). In fact, of 1 Corinthians 11: 3 Athanasius specifically said that, "... 'head' must be understood as 'source' rather than 'boss' lest one arrive at a faulty understanding of the Trinity" (Cunningham *et al* 2000, p. 170). Despite this, some Male Headship proponents have argued in favour of the notion of the eternal subjection of the Son to the Father and that women should be subject to men in the same way (for example Grudem 2002a, p. 49; Grudem 2006, pp. 27 – 28, 230 – 253). In critiquing this assertion one writer has found it "... rife with logical and theological difficulties [and] fails as an analogy to woman's subordination" (Groothuis 2004, p. 332). Another writer has remarked: "A hierarchical notion of the Trinity ends up underwriting an authoritarian practice in the church" (Volf cited in Viola 2008, p. 297). While it is beyond the scope of this study to evaluate the merits or otherwise of the argument that the Son is eternally subordinated to the Father, such an argument would appear to be inconsistent with passages such as John 17: 5 (which shows that in eternity the Son and the Father share the same glory together – it would be highly unusual for a "subject/subordinate" to share the same glory with a "superior" [Isaiah 42: 8, 48: 11; Matthew 10: 24; John 13: 16]) and Philippians 2: 7 – 8 (which shows that Jesus' subjection to the Father was voluntarily for the purposes of His life and ministry on earth, not in eternity). While Grudem (2002a) insists that 1 Corinthians 15: 28 refers to the eternal subjection of the Son to the Father (p. 50), other commentators have pointed out the difficulty of such an interpretation since it accords a meaning to verse 28 that appears to be in conflict with other clear Scriptures such as 2 Samuel 7: 13, Isaiah 9: 6 – 7, Luke 1: 33, 2 Peter 1: 11 and Revelation 22: 1, 3 (Giles 2004a, pp. 349 – 351). Accordingly, care needs to be taken to ensure that any interpretation of 1 Corinthians 15: 28 is consistent with the totality of the Scriptures' teachings on this subject.

276 For example Hurley 1981, p. 164. NB: The Septuagint is the second century BC Greek translation of the Old Testament.

277 Giles 1985, p. 33; Cunningham *et al* 2000, p. 163; Kaiser *et al* 1996, pp. 600 – 601

[four times]; and Lam 1: 5), and in each of these cases the translation kephale depends on Hebraisms or Massoretic marginal notes incorporated into the Greek text.²⁷⁸

Similarly, it has been observed:

In Hebrew, just as in English, one word means both “physical head” and “ruler”. The word is rosh. If arche and kephale were more or less synonymous and could be used interchangeably, then when the seventy scholars who wrote the Septuagint came to the Hebrew word rosh, they could have used either Greek word as they wished, or instead just used one of the two all the time. However, they were very careful to note how the word rosh was used, whether it meant “physical head” or “ruler of a group.” Whenever rosh meant “physical head”, they translated it kephale; or whenever rosh referred to the first soldier leading others into battle with him, they also translated it kephale. But when rosh meant “chief” or “ruler”, they translated it arche or some form of that word. Every time, this distinction was carefully preserved. Paul was certainly familiar with both words. He knew the language, he read and quoted from the Septuagint, and he used both words in his own writing. The difference between the two would have been obvious to him. Modern readers, however, may misunderstand Paul, assuming that the word for head that Paul used also carried the figurative meaning of “boss” or “ruler”. Paul in fact took great care not to say that.²⁷⁹

It is important to note that when the New Testament refers to a person in a position of authority or leadership (such as chief priest, chief tax collector) it uses words derived from the Greek word *arche* (meaning ruler, commander, chief), not *kephale* (for example Luke 19: 2, 47). As has been observed, “No where else in the New Testament is *kephale* used to designate a figure of authority. If that had been a prominent meaning it could well have served in numerous places in the Gospels where the head or master of a household appears; yet it is never used to convey this meaning (see for example, Mt 10: 25, 13: 52; Lk 13: 25, 14: 21).”²⁸⁰

Another argument by some Male Headship proponents is that even if *kephale* did mean “source” in verse 3 it would “still support male leadership.”²⁸¹ In this respect Schreiner (2001), who argues that male leadership was instituted at the time of Creation rather than being a consequence of the Fall, has asserted that there are six indicators that Adam had a special responsibility as a leader:²⁸²

1. God created Adam first, then Eve.
2. God gave Adam the command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

278 Jacobs 1998, p. 223n11; also, Fee 2004a, p. 150n28; Trombley 1985, p. 127

279 Bristow

280 Kaiser *et al* 1996, p. 601

281 For example Schreiner 2001, pp. 213, 227; also, Blomberg 2001, p. 342

282 Schreiner 2001, p. 201

3. God created Eve to be a helper for Adam.
4. Adam exercised his leadership by naming the creature God formed out of Adam's rib "woman".
5. The serpent subverted God's pattern of leadership by tempting Eve rather than Adam.
6. God approached Adam first after the first couple had sinned, even though Eve sinned first.

While Schreiner has acknowledged that not all of the above indicators are of equal weight and that some (namely 2 and 5) are plausible only if the others are credible,²⁸³ his arguments are problematic for a number of reasons. These may be summarised as follows:

1. In his first argument, Schreiner claims that "... *the responsibility for leadership belonged to Adam (and hence to males) because Adam was created before Eve ... Eve had a responsibility to follow Adam's leadership*", with his claim in this regard being based on the Old Testament custom of *primogeniture*.²⁸⁴ However, as was shown in section 7 of this study (Part A), *primogeniture* became a feature of human society only after Genesis 3: 16. Even then, God was never bound by the custom (Isaiah 55: 8 – 9; 1 Samuel 16: 6 – 7, 17: 13 – 14). Indeed, there were times when He operated in complete disregard of it by not ensuring its observance (for example Genesis 10: 21, 17: 15 – 21, 21: 8 – 12, 25: 5, 23, 48: 19, 49: 3 – 4, 10; 1 Samuel 16: 6 – 12; 1 Chronicles 5: 1 – 2, 26: 10; also note Micah 6: 7 – 8). Therefore, *primogeniture* is not a conclusive basis on which to make a case in this regard.
2. In his second argument, Schreiner states that in giving Adam the command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil rather than Eve, God was signalling that Adam was the leader.²⁸⁵ This argument ignores the fact that the command was given to Adam prior to Eve's formation (Genesis 2: 15 – 25). It is also an argument from silence since God could have given the command to the woman following her creation without the Scriptures recording Him doing so. Eve was certainly aware of the command and recounted it as though she had heard it from God, not Adam (she did not say in Genesis 3: 3, "Adam said that God said"). Given that God spoke directly to her on other matters (Genesis 3: 13), it is reasonable to conclude that He could have also communicated His requirements to her about not eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. In fact, it would be highly unlikely that God would have wanted Eve to hear about such an important matter from anyone other than Himself.

It is important to note that God treated Eve as the "*spiritual equal*" of

283 Ibid, p. 201

284 Ibid, pp. 201, 202, 203

285 Ibid, p. 203. Grudem (2006) argues similarly (p. 35).

Adam.²⁸⁶ For instance, they were both blessed by God and were jointly instructed to populate and have dominion over the earth (Genesis 1: 28). Both related to God directly without the need for an intermediary (Genesis 3: 9, 13), and God held both personally accountable for their actions (Genesis 3: 16 – 17). In light of such points Schreiner’s argument does not look strong. In fact, he acknowledges that the argument “*is not decisive but suggestive.*”²⁸⁷

3. In his third argument, Schreiner contends that Adam had authority over Eve because she was created to be his helper “... *to assist him in his task of cultivating and caring for God’s garden.*”²⁸⁸ Elsewhere, he suggests that “... *the word ‘helper’ signifies that Eve was to help Adam in the task of ruling over creation*” and that “... *‘helper’ refers to the subordinate role of women.*”²⁸⁹

In response, it has been observed that if the woman was created, “... *as Schreiner suggests, ‘to help Adam with the task of ruling over creation,’ then logic would require that she be created before the naming of the animals. The goal of overcoming loneliness is stressed in Genesis 2: 23 – 24, not the woman’s assistance in ruling over creation (though this is clear in Gen 1: 26).*”²⁹⁰

Quite apart from the fact that the Scriptures do not support Schreiner’s contention that the woman was created to “*assist*” the man in “... *his task of cultivating and caring for God’s garden*”, the reality is that the Hebrew word *ezer* (translated as “helper”) in Genesis 2: 18, 20 does not necessarily imply subservience.²⁹¹ It is often used of God in relation to the help He provided the Israelites (for example Psalm 121: 1 – 2) but apart from Genesis 2: 18, 20 it was never used in relation to a woman, although it was used of other people in a subordinate role such as soldiers (for example Ezekiel 12: 14).²⁹² Therefore, to understand the meaning of the word in a particular passage consideration must be given to its immediate context.²⁹³

286 Belleville 2001, p. 141

287 Schreiner 2001, p. 203

288 Ibid, p. 206

289 Ibid, pp. 204, 206

290 Hess 2004, p. 84n17

291 Osburn (2001) points out, “*That ‘helper’ in Gen 2 means that woman is subordinate to man will not withstand rigorous analysis*” (p. 116). It is important to note that even some Male Headship proponents such as Hurley (1981, p. 209) and Bowman (2001, p. 268) would not agree with Schreiner that a subordinate role for women is implied by these passages (refer footnote 264 of this study).

292 Sumner 2003, p. 224n6

293 Beck and Blomberg 2001b, p. 311; Osburn 2001, p. 120; Grudem 2006, p. 76. It has been noted earlier in this study how some Male Headship proponents argue that while men and women may be ‘equal in value’ before God, they nevertheless have different divinely-ordained roles with those of women being confined to the performance of auxiliary functions under the authority of men (for example Grudem 2002a, pp. 19 – 23; Grudem 2006, pp. 13, 20 – 21; Knight 1985, pp. 2, 28, 87; Schreiner 2001, p. 228). However, there is no indication from the context of Genesis 1 – 2 that there were any limitations surrounding the use

In this regard the context of Genesis 1 and 2 shows that the woman was created for the sole purpose of completing the man (“it was not good for him to be alone”), not for him to rule over her or for her to “assist” him. It has been previously pointed out in this section of the study that the word *ezer* as used in Genesis 2 is accompanied by the Hebrew word *kneged*. Of this word it has been observed, “*The second word of that phrase, ‘kneged’, shows what kind of partner God gave Adam. God qualified the powerful word ezer with the adjective kneged, which means ‘equal’. He made for Adam an equal helper. In Genesis 2: 18, God gave man ‘a help corresponding to him ... equal and adequate to himself.’ ‘Woman was created not to serve Adam, but to serve with Adam.*”²⁹⁴

The fact that the man and the woman were given joint dominion over the rest of creation (Genesis 1: 28), not one over the other, confirms their equal standing. The first mention of the “rule” of one over the other is at the Fall (Genesis 3: 16). Accordingly, the theme of Genesis 1 and 2 is equality and mutuality, not male leadership and female submission. It has been observed that Male Headship proponents have generally not “... *grappled adequately with the fact that both man and woman, as jointly created in God’s image and called adam, are commanded to ‘fill the earth and subdue it’ and to ‘rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground’.*”²⁹⁵

4. In his fourth argument, Schreiner asserts that Adam demonstrated his authority over the woman by naming her in the same way that he exerted his authority over the animals by naming them.²⁹⁶ However, the factuality

of *ezer* *kenegdo* in this passage or that the term was intended to be understood as delineating exclusive roles/functions for men and women either in a familial or spiritual sense. Indeed, even Genesis 3: 16 – 19 does not impose a strict role/function demarcation between men and women. If it did, the question may be asked as to why women throughout history have been heavily involved in ‘working the fields’ if such had been the sole responsibility of men? Thus, the purpose of Genesis 3: 16 – 19 was not about delineating male/female roles/functions; rather, its concern was with specifying the consequences of sin.

294 Cunningham *et al* 2000, p. 96 (emphasis in text). Belleville (2000) similarly observes, “... *in Genesis 2: 20 the Hebrew states that the man found no ‘counterpart’ (kenegdo) to relieve his aloneness, and not that he found no ‘subordinate’ to do his bidding*” (p. 103). It is worth recalling that even some other Male Headship proponents such as Hurley (1981, p. 209) and Bowman (2001, p. 268) would not agree with Schreiner that a subordinate role for women is implied by these passages (refer footnote 264 of this study).

295 Beck and Blomberg 2001b, p. 311

296 Schreiner 2001, pp. 206, 207. Similarly, House (1995) asserts, “*Since Adam named her – a prerogative in the Old Testament of one having authority – he demonstrated his authority over her*” (p. 23). Also, Grudem (2006) contends, “... *Given the larger context of the naming activities in Genesis 1 – 2, the original readers would have recognised that the person given the responsibility to name created things is always the person who has authority over those things. This is seen in God’s naming different parts of His creation in Genesis 1 – 2 and parents naming their children (see, for example, Genesis 4: 25, 26; 5: 3, 28 – 29; 16: 15; 19: 37, 38; 21: 3)*” (p. 21). However, if a man is divinely appointed to be the leader rather than a woman, and naming always meant that the namer had authority over the named, it is significant that in passages such as Genesis 4: 25, 19: 37 – 38, 30: 6, 8 and Ruth 4: 17 the naming is done by a woman/women, not a man. If naming is a male-only prerogative, why was it not observed in these instances? Furthermore, while Abram is identified in Genesis 16: 15 as naming Ishmael, this occurs only

or validity of this argument is never proved or established by Schreiner, it is simply asserted as though it were a self-evident truth. The problem with Schreiner's argument is that the Genesis account clearly distinguishes Adam's recognition of, and thus his identification with, Eve (2: 23) from the naming formula used for the animals (2: 20); indeed, it was only subsequent to the Fall that he actually named her "Eve" (3: 20).²⁹⁷ Schreiner insists that naming is a symbol of rule.²⁹⁸ However, another writer has noted that in ancient times naming "... was a way of memorialising an event or capturing a distinctive attribute. It was not an act of control or power. For instance, Isaac named the well he had dug in the Valley of Gerar Esek ("Dispute") because he and the herdsmen of Gerar had argued about who owned it (Genesis 26: 20)."²⁹⁹ Other cases of such naming include Genesis 16: 11 – 14, 35: 13 – 15 and 1 Samuel 7: 12. Accordingly, it has been observed, "One might thus argue that, despite the other similarities between Adam's naming the animals and naming the woman, human dominion is exercised only in the former instance, because both Adam and Eve are created equally to exercise joint dominion over the rest of creation."³⁰⁰

In response to Schreiner's argument it has also been observed:

What about the naming of the animals? Isn't this the male exercising his God-given role as leader? Yes, the man names the animals – but not as an exercise of male initiative. The text is quite clear. Naming was the means by which the man sought to discern an associate from among the animals. It is worth noting that the Hebrew of Genesis 2: 20 states that the man found no "counterpart" (kenegdo) to relieve his aloneness, and not that he found no "subordinate" to follow his lead or "helper" to accept his direction. Here finally was "bone of [his] bones and flesh of [his] flesh." Simply put, "wo-man" is the language of sameness, and the male's naming is the recognition of this fact (that is, to say, the naming describes, not prescribes).³⁰¹

Importantly, there are instances in Genesis where the act of naming did

after the child's mother (Hagar) had already been told by an Angel of God to give him this name (Genesis 16: 11). A New Testament example of a similar incident concerns the naming of Jesus. While Matthew 1:25 indicates that it was Joseph who gave Jesus His name following an appearance of an angel of God, it is notable that Mary received a similar instruction to give her baby this name (Luke 1: 26 – 31). It also is notable that the Angel of God appeared separately to Mary and Joseph to announce the conception of Jesus, not to Joseph only. This was likely done in recognition of the scriptural principle that both parents have responsibility for any children under their care, not the father only (Genesis 2: 24; Exodus 20: 12; Leviticus 19: 3; Deuteronomy 5: 16, 6: 7, 21: 18; Proverbs 1: 8, 6: 20; 2 Corinthians 12: 14; Ephesians 6: 1 – 3; Colossians 3: 20).

297 Keener 2001, p. 62

298 Schreiner 2001, p. 207; also, Grudem 2006, p. 21

299 Belleville 2001, p. 143

300 Beck and Blomberg 2001b, p. 311

301 Belleville 2001, pp. 143 – 144; also, Hess 2004, p. 87

not always imply that the namer had authority over the named (such as Genesis 16: 13). Accordingly, it should not be assumed that the act of “naming” automatically meant that one had authority over another or that one necessarily had the right to exercise such authority.

Thus, the naming argument is highly questionable since:

- the recognition by Adam of Eve and his identification with her, in which he “called” her “*woman’ for she was taken out of man*” (Genesis 2: 23 NIV), occurred within the joint dominion context of Genesis 1: 26 – 28, whereas the actual “naming” of Eve by Adam took place after the Fall (Genesis 3: 20). Therefore, Genesis 2: 23 is different to, and should be distinguished from, other instances where people were named following Genesis 3: 16 in which the relationship between the namer and the named had been greatly altered as a result of the Fall;
- when naming was done it did not necessarily mean that the namer had authority over the named;
- naming was not a male-only prerogative during the biblical period; and
- Genesis 1: 26 – 30 shows that at the beginning God’s intention was for man and woman to share joint dominion over the rest of creation. There is no indication that He intended one to exercise authority over the other. On the contrary, the passage highlights that He authorised man and woman as joint rulers as well as making them equal partners. That the man had authority over the rest of creation was because God had explicitly given it to him (together with the woman), not because of his naming of the animals (Genesis 2: 18 – 20). There is a clear difference between the naming of the animals by the man and his subsequent “naming” of the woman (Genesis 2: 19 – 24). In fact, as noted previously, in the passage he is not recorded as having “named” the woman, but only as having simply identified and recognised her as his unique companion. The first time that he is recorded as actually having “named” her is later, after the Fall (Genesis 3: 20).

Essentially, the naming argument rests on very tenuous grounds since it relies upon a number of unproved and dubious assumptions being read into the scriptural text.³⁰²

302 Indeed, one writer has described attempts by Male Headship proponents to link the man’s naming of the animals with his “naming” of the woman as an indication of his exercise of “authority over” her as “... *simply an inference that does not reflect solid exegetical analysis*” (Osburn 2001, p. 116).

5. In his fifth argument, Schreiner asserts that male leadership is indicated by the fact that in Genesis 3: 1 – 7 the serpent approached Eve rather than Adam in the temptation thus subverting “... *the pattern of male leadership, as Paul himself hints at in 1 Timothy 2: 14.*”³⁰³ Two points may be made about this argument.

Firstly, contrary to Schreiner’s argument, and that of some other Male Headship proponents who contend that Eve was alone and not in the company of her husband when she was tempted,³⁰⁴ the fact is that Adam was present with Eve when the temptation took place. As one writer has noted, “... *in Gen 3: 1 – 7, the man and the woman sin together, the serpent addresses the woman with the plural, ‘you,’ and v. 6 says the man was present with the woman.*”³⁰⁵ While Eve succumbed to the temptation first and then Adam, they were still nevertheless both together when the temptation initially occurred. If Adam was the designated leader as Schreiner asserts, why did he not seek to prevent Eve from giving in to the temptation? If he was the leader, why did he not refuse to follow her into transgression? If he was the leader, why was he not censured for failing to exercise his leadership?³⁰⁶

303 Schreiner 2001, p. 209

304 For example Clark 1980, p. 30

305 Osburn 2001, p. 228; also, p. 249

306 If the problem in the Garden was the usurpation of the man’s authority by the woman it is notable that “... *man’s failure to control his wife is not mentioned in his punishment in 3: 17 – 19 where it might be expected*” (Marrs cited in Osburn 2001, p. 122). As it is, the man is chided for “listening” to his wife and eating from the forbidden tree (Genesis 3: 17), not for failing any leadership expectations. Indeed, the remark in verse 17 about the man “listening” to his wife was most likely made in response to his earlier attempt to blame God for the incident (“The woman you put here with me” [Genesis 3: 12]). No doubt God would have been deeply grieved by this accusation and the ingratitude and lack of faith behind it. Although the woman readily blamed the serpent for her sin (Genesis 3: 13), she did not try to deflect blame onto God like the man did. Thus, if read in the context of the man’s attempt to shift the blame for his actions onto God, it is possible to understand the meaning of God’s remark to the man in verse 17 as follows: “Don’t try to blame me, I did not force you to listen to your wife, you were the one who listened to her and ate from the tree contrary to my commands, you alone are responsible for your sin, no one else.” Accordingly, there is no support in the verse 17 remark for any suggestion that the man held a leadership role over his wife let alone that her sin involved the usurpation of any such role. While some have sought to extrapolate from the woman being the first to sin a general propensity of all women to be more readily deceived thus rendering them unsuitable for public leadership and teaching roles in the Church (for example Guthrie 1976, p. 77; Jamieson *et al* 1979, p. 1358), others have seen this incident as reflecting more adversely on the inherent nature of the man. For instance, if the man was indeed the designated leader as Male Headship proponents assert then of his failure to act at this most critical of moments and of the implications arising from that failure it has been observed: “... *if the intent of 1 Timothy 2:11 – 15 is to bar from church leadership those whose gender inclines them to tolerate deception and heresy, and if the transgressions of the first man and woman indicate the different proclivities of men and women in general, then it is men, not women, who should be denied positions of church leadership. Tolerating deception in another is precisely what Adam did, not Eve. Adam sinned in going along with woman’s doctrinal error and failing to stand for what he knew directly from God to be true. It was the man, not the woman, who did the very thing a church leader must not do: he overlooked deception and declined to judge the error of someone whose favour he wanted to retain ... the first man chose relational harmony over doctrinal purity and the entire human race was plunged into sin and alienation from God ... there can be no denying that a moral deficiency is evident in one who sees error in the church and fails to exercise responsibility to take a stand for the truth*” (Groothuis 2002).

Secondly, the reality is that Eve's sin was not about the subversion of Adam's leadership, rather it was about disobedience to a command of God (Genesis 3: 11). As has been observed: "*Eve was not deceived by the serpent into taking the lead in the male-female relationship. She was deceived into disobeying a command of God, namely, not to eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. She listened to the voice of false teaching and was deceived by it. Paul's warning to the Corinthian congregation confirms this (2 Corinthians 11: 3).*"³⁰⁷ Similarly it has been observed, "*Nowhere is it stated (or implied) that the female's desire was to take the lead. On the contrary, the text explicitly states that her desire in eating was to be wise like God. The male followed suit, obviously because of a similar desire.*"³⁰⁸

It is notable that Schreiner's interpretation of 1 Timothy 2: 14 is not supported by other Male Headship proponents. For example, one has stated, "*... an exegesis that sees Paul merely as claiming that Adam sinned without having been deceived in the manner Eve was deceived may be true to the Genesis 3 account, but it again leaves Paul in the paradoxical position of favouring Adam because he sinned with his eyes wide open – a presumably less excusable situation and thus a greater character flaw than with Eve, who was tricked!*"³⁰⁹

The problem with Schreiner's fifth argument is that it needs to be read into the text (*eisegesis*) rather than being drawn out of it (*exegesis*). Schreiner recognises that the argument "*could be incorrect*",³¹⁰ which probably explains why he did not want to make too much of it.

6. In his final argument, Schreiner asserts that because God approached Adam first after the couple sinned, even though it was Eve who sinned first, that this indicates male leadership. Schreiner contends that this is confirmed by Paul in Romans 5: 12 – 19 where he traces ultimate responsibility for sin to Adam, not Eve.³¹¹

The problem with this argument is that it ignores Scripture. Firstly, the Genesis 3 account shows that God speaks equally to both the man and the woman following their sin. In verse 9, God called to the man enquiring as to his whereabouts (at this point both the man and the woman were in hiding from God because of what they had done). In verse 16, God spoke to the woman about the consequences of her sin

307 Belleville 2001, p. 129; also, Belleville 2004b, p. 223

308 Belleville 2001, p. 146; also, Belleville 2004b, p. 223. Also, Osburn (2001) notes, "*The essence of the first sin in Eden is the desire for power (Gen 3: 5). Nothing suggests that they violated some so-called 'divine order of male dominance' – rather, their sin was disobedience and wanting to be like God (3: 5 – 6, 11)*" (p. 112).

309 Blomberg 2001, p. 366

310 Schreiner 2001, p. 209

311 Ibid, p. 209

before doing similarly to the man in verses 17 to 19. God did not speak to the man about the woman's sin nor indeed did He speak to the woman about the man's sin. He addressed them individually about their own respective sins. Thus, the fact that God initially enquired from the man concerning his whereabouts is not of itself indicative of male leadership.

Secondly, in Romans 5: 12 – 19 Paul is comparing and contrasting the disobedient actions of the first man (Adam) with the righteous actions of another man (Jesus). This approach is known as typology. A "type" is a person or thing in the Old Testament that foreshadows a person or thing in the New Testament. An Old Testament person who is identified as a type of Christ behaves in a way that corresponds to Jesus' character or actions. In fact, in Romans 5: 14 Paul specifically identifies Adam as a "type" of Christ. Accordingly, it was unnecessary for him to specifically mention Eve's disobedience in Romans 5 since this fact was already well known and because doing so would not have served his typological argument in highlighting the importance of Jesus as the "last Adam" (1 Corinthians 15: 45).³¹² Thus, the purpose of the passage was not to identify who was responsible for the introduction of sin into the world (this is evident from a reading of Genesis 1 and 2) nor was it to make a statement about male leadership over women. It was to reveal what God had done to rectify the problem of sin through Jesus (2 Corinthians 5: 17; Galatians 3: 28, 6: 15).

Schreiner's arguments for the existence of male leadership from the time of Creation are extremely tenuous. As previously indicated, even he noted that some of them are weak. Other writers have also concluded, "... *one wonders if a hypothetical 'first-time' reader of Genesis 1 – 3, even in the ancient Jewish world, would have picked up any of the six indications of female subordination that Schreiner discusses.*"³¹³

Another Male Headship proponent, Grudem (2006) has asserted 10 indicators of pre-Fall male leadership which share similarities with the six proposed by Schreiner. Grudem's list is as follows:³¹⁴

1. The order – the idea of male headship before the Fall is seen in that Adam was created first, then Eve (Genesis 2: 7, 18 – 23; 1 Timothy 2: 13). For Grudem, the order of creation sets an important biblical precedent in that it provides the reason for men and women having different roles in the Church.

312 One Male Headship proponent, Clark (1980), while arguing that the main responsibility for the Fall belongs to Adam, has acknowledged, "*To be sure, the stress on 'one man' is intended to provide a basis for the comparison with the one man, Christ, the one of whom Adam is the type*" (p. 202). The conclusions about Romans 5: 12 – 19 may also be applied to a similar typological argument found in 1 Corinthians 15: 20 – 22.

313 Beck and Blomberg 2001b, p. 312

314 Grudem 2006, pp. 21 – 24, 72

2. The representation – it was Adam, not Eve, who had a special role in representing the human race (1 Corinthians 15: 22, 45 – 59; Romans 5: 12 – 21).
3. The naming of woman – Adam named Eve, Eve did not name Adam. For Grudem, this shows Adam’s authority over Eve.
4. The naming of the human race – God named the human race “man”, not “woman” thereby indicating male leadership.
5. The primary accountability – it was Adam who was called to account first after the Fall (Genesis 3: 9).
6. The purpose – Eve was created as a helper for Adam, not Adam for Eve (Genesis 2: 18; 1 Corinthians 11: 9).
7. The conflict – sin brought a distortion of previous roles, not the introduction of new roles.
8. The restoration – salvation in Christ in the New Testament reaffirms the creation order (Colossians 3: 18 – 19).
9. The mystery – marriage from the beginning was a picture of the relationship between Christ and the church (Ephesians 5: 32 – 33). For Grudem, this is why Paul writes, “For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church” (Ephesians 5: 23).
10. The parallel with the Trinity – the equality, differences, and unity between men and women reflect the equality, differences, and unity in the Trinity (1 Corinthians 11: 3). Elsewhere in his book Grudem elaborates, “*The differences in authority among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the only inter-personal differences that the Bible indicates exist eternally among the members of the Godhead. They are equal in all their attributes and perfections, but for all eternity there has been a difference in authority, whereby the Father has authority over the Son that the Son does not have over the Father, and the Father and Son both have authority over the Holy Spirit that the Holy Spirit does not have over the Father and the Son. These differences, in which there is authority and submission to authority, seem to be the means by which Father, Son, and Holy Spirit differ from one another and can be differentiated from one another.*”³¹⁵

The criticisms of Schreiner’s six indicators for the alleged pre-Fall existence of male leadership are also relevant to those proposed by Grudem as the following brief discussion will illustrate.

315 Ibid, p. 253

With respect to Grudem's indicator number 1, the discussion on 1 Timothy 2: 12 – 15 in section 10 of this study will show that Paul's reference to the Adam and Eve creation sequence in 1 Timothy 2: 13 does not have the meaning that Grudem asserts.

With respect to Grudem's indicator number 2, this has been dealt with in the response to Schreiner's indicator number 6. With respect to Grudem's indicator number 3, this has been dealt with in the response to Schreiner's indicator number 4.

With respect to Grudem's indicator number 4, it is important to note that the original Hebrew word *adam* ("man") was used early in Genesis to describe the creation of man and woman in the sense of their joint humanity (Genesis 5: 2).³¹⁶ It was only after the Fall that the word also came to be used as the name of the man (Genesis 3: 17 and subsequently). Similarly, it was only after the Fall that the woman was specifically named "Eve" (Genesis 3: 20). Despite Grudem's assertions on this point, the Genesis text itself gives no indication that male leadership was intended simply as a result of the human race being called "man".

With respect to Grudem's indicator number 5, this has been dealt with in the response to Schreiner's indicators 2 and 6. With respect to Grudem's indicator number 6, this has been dealt with in the response to Schreiner's indicator number 3. Section 8.2 of this study also showed that the woman being made from the man and for the man did not convey any sense of her being subordinate to him.

With respect to Grudem's indicator number 7, this has been dealt with in the response to Schreiner's indicator number 5. Also, the point to remember is that in the Genesis record of creation there is no indication of any delegation by God for the man to exercise authority over the woman. The only delegation of authority by God was to the man and the woman to jointly rule over the rest of creation (Genesis 1: 28 – 30). As noted in section 7 of this study (Part A), Genesis 3: 16 does not represent a delegation by God for men to rule over women. Grudem recognises that Genesis 3: 16 is one of the results of the curse associated with the Fall and "... *is not something we should try to promote.*"³¹⁷

With respect to Grudem's indicator number 8, section 11 of this study will show that passages such as Colossians 3: 18 – 19 (which is a shorter version of the passage in Ephesians 5: 21 – 33) acted to mitigate the impact of the culturally dominant Aristotelian family code under which women were considered secondary to men.³¹⁸ For Paul the ideal was voluntary, mutual submissiveness (Ephesians 5: 21), not the exercise of authority by one over the other.

316 Belleville 2000, pp. 97, 100, 102; Belleville 2001, pp. 140, 144; Belleville 2005a, p. 29; Hess 2004, pp. 82 – 83; Osburn 2001, p. 110; Beck and Blomberg 2001b, p. 311

317 Grudem 2006, p. 23

318 Footnotes 166 and 168 of this study briefly outlined the Aristotelian family code.

With respect to Grudem's indicator number 9, certainly the Church is the bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11: 2) and Christians should willingly submit to Christ as the One who possesses all authority (Matthew 28: 18). However, as section 7 of this study (Part A) has previously noted, there is no indication that husbands have ever been delegated by God to exercise unilateral authority over their wives let alone there being a delegation for men to exercise such authority over women generally. Therefore, while the picture of the Church as the bride of Christ and the need for Christians to be submissive to the authority of Christ remains true, this section of the study has shown that man being the "head" of woman does not equate to men having "authority over" women. Again, as shown in section 7 of this study, the only time that "authority" is specifically mentioned in the context of the marriage relationship is with respect to the marital authority that a husband and wife jointly have over each other (1 Corinthians 7: 4).

With respect to Grudem's indicator number 10, this section of the study has briefly noted the contention of some Male Headship proponents that the Son is eternally subordinate to the Father and that this arrangement should be mirrored in the husband/wife relationship.³¹⁹ However, as section 8.1 of this study has shown, 1 Corinthians 11: 3 is not written from a hierarchical, chain of command perspective. If it was, then it is written out of sequence and fundamental elements (such as references to the Holy Spirit and the Father) are missing. On the other hand, if it is written from an "origins" perspective, which the overall context of the passage indeed demonstrates, it is constructed perfectly. In any event, verse 3 was never intended to be understood or used as a standalone passage. In this regard it was meant to be read as introducing Paul's main point which concerned the reasons why the Corinthians should respect the cultural sensitivities of the day in relation to the wearing of head coverings by women during whole-of-church worship activities.

The preceding discussion has considered a pivotal contention of Male Headship proponents that male leadership over women was instituted from the time of Creation. However, the discussion has shown that arguments in this regard, such as those by Schreiner and Grudem, are extremely tenuous and do not withstand scrutiny.

8.6 Final observations on 1 Corinthians 11: 3

A number of points may be made in summary of the discussion in section 8 of the study.

Firstly, verse 3 should not be read on its own and needs to be understood within its overall context about the importance of not giving offence to others (note 1 Corinthians 7: 20 – 24, 8: 9, 10: 23 – 33, 14: 23 – 24). In verse 3, Paul opened his discussion for why the Corinthians needed to observe a particular cultural norm. In doing so the contextual indications are strong (note verses 8, 9, 12)

319 Refer footnote 275 of this study

that he intended for *kephale* to be understood, not in a hierarchical sense of a “person in charge”, but as “source” or “origins” from which he then proceeded to make his argument for why the cultural norm in question should be observed.

Paul’s purpose in verse 3 was not to establish that men are “over” women as in some hierarchical chain of command. Rather, his purpose was to introduce the rationale and begin the argument for why the women of the Corinthian church should observe the prevailing cultural convention of wearing head coverings during whole-of-church worship activities. Paul’s raising of this issue is in keeping with the overall corrective nature of 1 Corinthians – the need for him to tell these women to wear head coverings would not have arisen had they already been doing so. Based on what he subsequently wrote in verse 16 it does not appear to have been a problem for other churches elsewhere.

Paul required the Corinthian women to observe the custom because not doing so would dishonour their “head” (source) and so give cause for offence (note verses 5 – 6). In subsequent verses Paul added to his argument for why they should adhere to this custom with his logic again being based on “source” allusions (verses 7 – 9) as well as the “presence of angels” (verse 10), what “nature itself teaches” (verses 13 – 15), and general Christian practice (verse 16). While this is a reasonable conclusion given the overall context of the passage the point should be made that regardless of the meaning of *kephale* in verse 3, Paul made it clear that the women at Corinth could actively participate in whole-of-church worship activities in the same way that the men could (1 Corinthians 11: 4 – 5, 12: 7 – 11, 14: 1 – 5, 22, 24, 26, 39).³²⁰ In fact, for Paul the head covering represented a woman’s own authority to participate in such activities (1 Corinthians 11: 10 – note the use of *exousia* in its active sense).

Secondly, despite arguments of Male Headship proponents to the contrary,³²¹ 1 Corinthians 11: 11 – 12 indicates that there is no “order of creation” principle which gives men any special priority or position over women. This aligns with Genesis 1: 26 – 27 where the man and woman were both given joint dominion over creation. There is nothing in this passage to indicate that man’s prior creation to that of woman gave him any pre-eminence in their relationship.

Finally, Genesis 3: 16 is not God’s ideal for men and women. This state, which since the Fall has seen men rule over women, is not in accordance with what God established originally at the time of Creation. The rule of man over woman came about only as a result of sin. As one writer has observed: “*We must remember that Genesis 3: 16 is not God’s intent for the marriage relationship. Genesis 1 – 2 defines the marital norm. We do a tremendous disservice to the church’s witness when we put humanity’s fallen condition forward as God’s intent*”

320 That the Corinthian women actively participated in the worship activities of the church has been recognised by some Male Headship proponents (for example Schreiner 2001, p. 231; Bowman 2001, p. 281; Blomberg 2001, p. 344).

321 For example Knight 1985, pp. 85, 88

for male-female relations.”³²²

9. 1 Corinthians 14: Women in the Church – seen but not heard?

The NIV translates 1 Corinthians 14: 33 – 35 as follows:

For God is not a God of disorder but of peace. As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. 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.

If read on its own this passage appears distinctly at odds with the evidence discussed previously in this study (Part A), indeed with 1 Corinthians itself, indicating that women carried out particular roles and functions in the early Church. Accordingly, to understand the passage, the rules of biblical interpretation require that consideration must be given to its overall context, and in particular verses 26 to 40.³²³

Before proceeding to consider the context of the passage it is important to keep in mind that the Christians of the first century AD conducted their whole-of-church worship activities very differently from what happens in many modern-day Western churches. In this regard the worship activities of the early Church “... were marked by every-member functioning, spontaneity, freedom, vibrancy, and open participation (see, for example, 1 Corinthians 14: 1 – 33 and Hebrews 10: 25). The first-century church meeting was a fluid gathering, not a static ritual. And it was often unpredictable, unlike the contemporary church service.”³²⁴

322 Belleville 2000, p. 108; also, Belleville 2001, pp. 145 – 146. One Male Headship proponent, Grudem (2006) similarly notes: “... just as we weed our gardens and take steps to prevent pain in childbirth (thus seeking to overcome two other results of the curse), so we should do everything we can to overcome this conflict and distortion in the relationship between men and women” (p. 23). However, Grudem (2006) later appears to contradict himself by asserting: “Adam is assumed to have the primary responsibility for providing for his family, for it is Adam who is told that he will suffer pain as he tills the earth (Genesis 3: 17 – 19). Eve is assumed to have the primary responsibility for caring for the home and children, for it is Eve who is told she will suffer pain in bearing children (Genesis 3: 14 – 16)” (p. 26). Belleville (2001) disputes the premise underpinning such assertions: “Although male and female can decide on practical grounds how to divide the labour, the assumption of the creation accounts is that both have what it takes to rule and subdue the entirety of what God has created ... Both male and female are given joint responsibility in the bearing and rearing of children. The idea that the woman’s job is to produce and raise the children and the man’s job is to work the land is simply not found in the creation accounts. Both are called to be fruitful. And both are called to enjoy the produce of the land. The pronouns are plural throughout...” (p. 141).

323 As one writer has observed, “... the simplest error of reading is the failure to consider the immediate context of the verse or passage in question” (Sire cited in Osburn 2001, p. 189). One Male Headship proponent, Grudem (2006) refers to the context as commencing from verse 29 rather than verse 26. He then asserts that “... this passage requires women to be silent with respect to the activity under discussion, which is the judging of prophecies” (p. 144, also p. 42). However, in assuming that the context of the passage commences from verse 29, Grudem bases his subsequent interpretation on only part of the overall passage.

324 Viola and Barna 2008, p. 50. These authors also note that, “... the New Testament presents to us different kinds of meetings. Some meetings are characterised by a central speaker like an apostle or

Being aware of the dynamic nature of the early Christians' worship activities is important in understanding the background to the problems at Corinth that Paul was seeking to remedy.

9.1 Verses 26 to 40: total silence or orderly conduct?

In verse 26 Paul recognises that each member of the Corinthian church had a role to play during corporate worship activities and that all those who possessed gifts should exercise them for the common good: "*All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.*" Christians gathering together for such a purpose is a theme reflected throughout the New Testament (note Hebrews 10: 24 – 25). As gender was not a consideration in the allocation and exercise of these gifts (as noted in section 4 of this study [Part A]),³²⁵ it is reasonable to conclude that men and women would have participated in whole-of-church worship activities. Indeed, the Greek word for the expression "each one" as used in verse 26 "*encompasses men and women*".³²⁶ If Paul had intended for men only to verbally contribute during such gatherings, then rather than using a gender neutral expression he would more likely have used a word which conveyed an exclusive "men only" sense. That he in fact anticipated, and even encouraged, the verbal participation and contribution of men and women during corporate gatherings of the Corinthian church is reflected elsewhere in passages such as 1 Corinthians 11: 4 – 5, 12: 7 – 11, 14: 1 – 5, 22, 24, 39, 40.

From verse 27 Paul specifies how whole-of church worship activities were to be conducted. Tongue speakers could exercise their gift, one at a time. If no interpreter was present the tongue speaker should "keep quiet" (Greek: *sigao* which meant to keep absolute silence, not to make any sound). It is important to note that Paul is not saying that tongue speakers were forever banned from speaking (note verse 39), rather that they were only to remain silent if an interpreter was not available. His point was that if tongue speaking is to be edifying for the church then it was important that the people should be able to understand what was being said otherwise it was meaningless (1 Corinthians 14: 13 – 17).

evangelist preaching to an audience. But these kinds of meetings were sporadic and temporary in nature. They weren't the ordinary, normal meeting of first-century believers. The 'church meeting', however, is the regular gathering of Christians that is marked by mutual functioning, open participation from every member, freedom and spontaneity under the headship of Jesus Christ" (Ibid, p. 59n68). Furthermore, rather than being modelled on the Synagogue form of service, the worship activities of the early Christians were "... *totally unique to the culture*" (Ibid, p. 51). Similarly, Barnett (2009) notes that the meetings of the early Christians "... *were marked by joyful and enthusiastic fervour. Members spontaneously offered hymns, prophecies, tongues and revelations in the Corinthian meetings. Although this spontaneity may have been greater in Corinth, there are strong hints that it was also part of church life elsewhere (1 Cor 14: 26; cf. Rom 12: 11; 1 Thess 5: 19 – 20)*" (p. 180).

325 As noted previously in this study, some Male Headship proponents have also acknowledged that gender was not a consideration in the allocation of gifts which were given for the common good of the Church (for example Schreiner 2001, pp. 191, 231; Bowman 2001, pp. 271, 279; Blomberg 2001, pp. 339, 350; Grudem 2006, p. 160).

326 Payne 2008, p. 248

In verses 29 to 33 Paul instructs prophets to exercise their gifts in turn so that all may have opportunity to edify and instruct the Assembly (cf 1 Corinthians 14: 1 – 6). When one was prophesying, the others were to keep silent (again, *sigao*, absolute silence) (note verse 30). The reason for this instruction is found in verse 31: “*for you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged*” (NIV). Again, prophets were not prohibited from ever speaking (note verses 39 and 40), but they were not to interrupt others when it came to their turn to edify the Assembly. Paul’s intent was that whole-of-church worship activities should be conducted “decently and in order” so that all participants could be afforded the opportunity to exercise their gifts fully for the edification of all present.

It is important to reiterate that the use of *sigao* in these verses does not mean that the prophets and tongue speakers in question were never to speak in the Assembly. The use of the word in this context only means that they were to be silent, in the case of prophets, whenever it was the turn of others to speak and, in the case of tongue speakers, if no interpreter was present. This point will be important to remember when consideration is given to the particular women in verses 34 to 35 who were similarly instructed “to be silent”. Interpreting *sigao* in verse 34 as if it meant that the women in question were never to speak in the Assembly would be to give it a meaning that was contrary to how it is used elsewhere in its immediate context (verses 26 to 40). Doing so would be contrary to the rules of biblical interpretation outlined earlier in this study (Part A).³²⁷

The use of *sigao* in verse 34 cannot be interpreted as imposing a perpetual silence on women in relation to speaking and exercising their gifts and abilities in the Assembly when it did not have this meaning for the tongue speakers and prophets. The use of this word in relation to the women in question was intended only to have the same effect as its use in relation to the tongue speakers and prophets. Nothing additional was intended for the women in question by its use.³²⁸

327 If women were “never to speak in the Assembly” it might be asked whether they should be even permitted to engage in whole-of-church singing since doing so amounts to “speaking” (NB: Ephesians 5: 19 employs the same word for “speak” as is used in 1 Corinthians 14: 34). While some religious leaders of the past did in fact interpret 1 Corinthians 14: 34 as a prohibition on women from participating in congregational singing (Grenz 1995, p. 121), such an interpretation is highly problematic since it requires *sigao* being accorded a meaning that it did not have in the immediate context of verses 26 to 40. Furthermore, such an interpretation is inconsistent with passages such as 1 Corinthians 11: 4 – 5, 12: 7 – 11, 14: 1 – 5, 22, 24, 26, 39 which envisage women being able to pray and prophesy during the Assembly. Even some Male Headship proponents have recognised this point (for example Schreiner 2001, p. 231; Bowman 2001, p. 281; Blomberg 2001, p. 344). Thus, this demonstrates the importance of considering the Scriptures in their complete context so as to avoid such problematic interpretations.

328 Belleville (2000) notes, “... *it was not merely inquiring women who were silenced but also long-winded prophets (1 Cor 14: 29 – 30) and unintelligible speakers (vv 27 – 28). Paul’s target was anyone and anything that would compromise the instruction and edification of the body of believers (1 Cor 14: 12. 32. 40)*” (p. 162). Osburn (2001) notes similarly: “*We must remember that females are not the only ones on whom this silence is imposed, but that sigao was also used for disruptive tongue-speakers and prophets in vv. 27 – 33... since the verb sigao is used in vv. 28 and 30 with regard to tongue-speakers and prophets,*

Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that this passage is no more a perpetual prohibition on women exercising their gifts during whole-of-church worship activities than it was for tongue speakers and prophets. In other words, it does not silence women from ever speaking during whole-of-church worship activities. Paul's intent was not to stop them from participating during such activities (verse 39); rather, his aim was to ensure that they participated in an orderly and edifying manner (verse 40).³²⁹

9.2 Verses 33 – 34: punctuation matters

The NIV translates 1 Corinthians 14: 33 – 34 (with verse divisions) as follows:

(33a) For God is not a God of disorder but of peace. (33b) 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.

The Revised Standard Version (RSV) translates these verses similarly:

(33a) For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. (33b) As in all the churches of the saints, (34) the women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says.

Both the NIV and RSV render verse 33 as though it is comprised of two separate sentences with verse 33(b) forming the first part of the leading sentence of verse 34. Based on such renderings Male Headship proponents assert that the universal applicability of Paul's subsequent words about women is established.³³⁰ The question may be asked: Is this a reasonable assertion to make?

It is important to note that punctuation was not used in the ancient Greek language, which means that modern translators have to decide where one sentence ends and another begins.³³¹ Where and how punctuation is used can affect the meaning, and application, of Scriptures such as this. As one writer has observed:

its meaning in v. 34 is not a universal silence, but one dictated by the circumstances" (pp. 196, 200). Osburn (2001) also makes the following important observation: "... *neither in this nor in any other biblical text is there a prohibition against women speaking in public, on the ground that it is public*" (p. 204n64) (emphasis in text).

329 Some Male Headship proponents have acknowledged this point, for example Blomberg 2001, p. 348. Grudem (2006) also acknowledges that the instruction in verses 34 and 35 does not mean perpetual silence on women, although he reads into the text that this would mean that the women could still not be involved in the evaluation of prophecies since this assumes "... *the possession of superior authority in matters of doctrinal or ethical instruction*" (p. 143).

330 For example Schreiner (2001) argues, "... *we cannot simply say that the verses are restricted to the local situation at Corinth. The admonition here relates to what is practiced 'in all the churches of the saints' (1 Cor 14: 33)*" (p. 231).

331 Cunningham *et al* 2000, p. 186; Henrichsen and Jackson 1990, p. 188

... what does “as in all the congregations of the saints” go with (1 Cor 14: 33b)? If it goes with what follows, then Paul is saying that the silence of women in the church is a matter of universal practice: “As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches.” If it goes with what precedes, then Paul is stating that orderly worship is a matter of universal practice: “God is not a God of disorder but of peace, as in all the congregations of the saints.”³³²

An argument against verse 33(b) being translated as a separate sentence of introduction for the subsequent text, such as occurs in the NIV and the RSV, is that doing so produces an awkward redundancy: “As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silence in the churches” (RSV). The obvious question is: Why repeat the words “in the churches” in the same sentence?³³³ Even some Male Headship proponents have noted the awkwardness of this rendering.³³⁴

The NIV attempts to remove this overt redundancy by translating the passage as follows: “As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches.” Yet despite substituting “congregations” for “churches” the redundancy within the sentence effectively remains.

It is significant that other translations have not rendered verses 33 to 34 in the same way that the NIV and RSV have done. For example, the KJV, the New King James Version and the New American Standard Version have translated

332 Belleville 2001, p. 117; also, Belleville 2000, p. 157. One Male Headship proponent, Grudem (2006) has counter argued, “Grammatically it is possible to make ‘as in all the churches of the saints’ modify the preceding clause, and thus the passage would read, ‘For God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.’ However, this division of the sentences does not fit the sense of the passage. After saying something about the character of God, which is always the same, it would be pointless for Paul to add ‘as in all the churches of the saints,’ as if the Corinthians would have imagined that God would be a God of peace in some churches but not in others” (p. 144n2). While acknowledging that verse 33(a) can indeed be read as one with verse 33(b), Grudem’s explanation proceeds to ignore the basic problem then apparent in the Corinthian church which necessitated Paul’s intervention – disorder from a number of different groups during whole-of-church worship activities. The purpose of Paul’s letter to the Corinthians was to address such matters, not to delineate authoritative roles and functions with respect to the judging of prophecies which Grudem claims is the context for the discussion (pp. 42, 144). Osburn (2001) addresses claims that verse 33(b) does not belong with verse 33(a): “It is difficult to understand the objection that ‘as in all the churches of the saints,’ does not make good sense if taken with v. 33. The problem in chapters 12 – 14 is verbal misconduct by tongue-speakers and prophets. It is widely held that vv. 26 – 32, appealing for the cessation of the verbal misconduct of these two groups, ends appropriately with 33a, ‘God is not the author of confusion but of peace.’ This thought is directly related to ‘all things must be done for edification’ v. 26. In light of this, an appeal is made in v. 33b for those involved to conduct themselves with customary Christian mutual deference. V. 33 should read, ‘For God is not a God of disorder, but of peace, as in all the congregations of the saints,’ as in King James Version and Phillips’ translation” (pp. 195 – 196).

333 Belleville 2001, p. 117n76; Belleville 2000, p. 158

334 For example House (1995) writes, “Although verse 33b – ‘As in all the churches of the saints’ – does fit awkwardly with the phrase that follows in verse 34, ‘let the women keep silent in the churches’ ...” (p. 35). Grudem’s (2006) explanation, cited in footnote 332 of this study, neither recognises nor addresses the redundancy issue associated with the NIV and RSV renderings of verses 33 and 34.

verse 33 as one sentence, not two.³³⁵ Similarly, the TNIV addresses the redundancy issue by translating these verses as follows:

(33) For God is not a God of disorder but of peace – as in all the congregations of the Lord’s people. (34) Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says.

If translated as a single sentence, verse 33 is clearly linked with its preceding text by reinforcing the requirement for tongue speakers and prophets to respect the need for orderly worship. By not observing proper etiquette and courtesy during whole-of-church worship activities tongue speakers and prophets had been causing disorder and confusion. Understanding verse 33(a) and 33 (b) as a single sentence would make sense of this context: such disorder should cease since, as He does for all the churches, God desires the Corinthians’ worship activities to be edifying, orderly and peaceful rather than disorderly.³³⁶ Doubtless, Paul’s wish to ensure that no outsider had anything negative to say about the way the Corinthians conducted themselves during worship was also a contributing factor to his instructions in this regard (1 Corinthians 14: 23 – 24).

Verse 34 then proceeds to deal with the issue of certain women at Corinth and their particular disruptive behaviour during worship with a similar view to ensuring orderly and edifying worship activities (verses 39 and 40).

9.3 Verses 34 – 35: general cultural background

Before examining verses 34 and 35 it is important to have an understanding of the cultural conditions existing in Corinth at the time. As previously noted, one of the fundamental rules of biblical interpretation is the need to “... *take into account the culture into which the biblical authors wrote; that is, we need to consider the historical context.*”³³⁷

The ancient Roman Empire incorporated two distinct cultures: the Hellenistic (Greek) culture, which permeated the eastern parts of the empire, and the Roman culture, which predominated in the West. In its expansion throughout

335 Other translations that translate verse 33 as one sentence are the 1886 Revised Version, the 1911 Bible, the Berkeley Version, J B Phillips’s Translation, the Knox Version, the Modern Language Version, the Modern Reader’s Version, the Scofield Bible, and the Thompson Chain Reference Bible (Cunningham *et al* 2000, p. 268n3).

336 Footnote 332 of this study cited Grudem’s (2006) statement that it would be “... *pointless for Paul to add ‘as in all the churches of the saints,’ as if the Corinthians would have imagined that God would be a God of peace in some churches but not others*” (p. 144n2). Such a statement, however, does not take into account that this is not the only instance in this letter where Paul referred to “the churches” to either reinforce the point he was making or to highlight the example of brethren elsewhere for the Corinthians to emulate (1 Corinthians 4: 17, 7: 17, 11: 16; c.f., 1 Thessalonians 1: 7; 2 Thessalonians 1: 4). Therefore, understanding verse 33(a) and 33(b) as a single thought would certainly align with his practice in this regard (Belleville 2000, pp. 157 – 158).

337 Payton 2002, p. 13. One Male Headship proponent, Schreiner (2001) also has noted this point: “... *we must interpret the Scriptures in their historical and cultural context. They were written to specific situations and to cultures that differed from our own*” (p. 219).

the empire, the early Church had to negotiate its way through the influences and practices of these two very different cultures, most notably the differences in attitudes towards women. In Roman culture, the rights of women were almost on par with those of men. In terms of being seen and speaking in public, they could do so without their virtue being impugned. By contrast, in areas influenced by Hellenistic culture, a woman was defined legally as belonging to a man, and could not appear in public without being accompanied by a male guardian or her husband. The only women who appeared publicly without being accompanied by a male were prostitutes. It also was regarded as being highly inappropriate for a woman to publicly speak to or interact with a man other than her husband. To do so would impugn her character and give rise to suspicions regarding her morals. So, while a woman under Roman culture was able to speak to and interact with men without questions being raised in this regard, the opposite was the case for women who lived in areas under the influence of Hellenistic culture. It is important to note that the injunction in 1 Corinthians 14: 34 – 35 was written to a church which was located in an area under the influence of Hellenistic culture.³³⁸

An exception to the restriction on a woman speaking publicly in Hellenistic societies was if she did so for religious purposes, such as to prophesy. Public speaking of this nature appears to have been culturally acceptable and would not have been considered scandalous.³³⁹ Therefore, it would not have been a problem culturally for the women of the Corinthian church to pray and prophesy during whole-of-church worship activities (1 Corinthians 11: 4 – 5, 12: 7 – 11, 14: 1 – 5, 22, 24, 26, 39). The only condition that Paul required was that in doing so they should wear head coverings (1 Corinthians 11: 3 – 16). This is because in that culture a woman who did not wear a head covering in public was regarded as though her head had been shaved, which was a sign of disgrace – a sign of a woman who had been convicted of prostitution.³⁴⁰ Given Paul's insistence for Christians to live morally upright lives (1 Corinthians 5, 6: 18), it was imperative that the Christian women of Corinth not convey such an impression. This was particularly the case in consideration of any non-believers who attended the gatherings of the Corinthian Christians (1 Corinthians 14: 16, 23 – 25). However, Paul did not leave it at that since he gave the head covering special significance for the women of the Corinthian church by telling them that the wearing of such coverings was their own authority (as indicated by his use of *exousia* in an active sense) to participate in the worship activities of the Assembly (1 Corinthians 11: 10).³⁴¹

338 Payton 2002, pp. 13 – 15; Goodman 2008, pp. 155 – 156; Keener 2001, pp. 44 – 45; Keener 2005, p. 222; Nicole 2004, p. 362; Pederson 2006, pp. 92 – 93. NB: Tenney (2004, pp. 80 – 91) and Goodman (2008, pp. 39, 53, 104 – 116) provide useful background information on the Hellenistic/Roman culture under which the early Church arose.

339 Payton 2002, p. 15; Keener 2004, pp. 166, 168; Torjesen 1995, p. 28; Belleville 2000, pp. 31, 155
 340 Payton 2002, p. 15; Osburn 2001, pp. 182 – 183; Prior 1985, pp. 179 – 180. One Male Headship proponent, Blomberg (2001) similarly notes that by not wearing head coverings "... *the Christian worshipers would have been sending misleading signals suggesting sexual or religious infidelity*" (p. 344).

341 As discussed in section 8.3 of this study.

Paul did not want the Corinthians to be perceived as being associated with any activity that could be construed as sexually immoral (1 Corinthians 5, 6: 18; also note 1 Thessalonians 4: 3 – 8, 5: 22). For this reason he encouraged them to respect cultural mores such as the wearing of head coverings so as to avoid any such perceptions. He was conscious of the need for them to model good behaviour, especially to unbelievers, and that being respectful of appropriate cultural values could assist in the spread of the Gospel message (1 Corinthians 10: 32 – 33, 14: 23).

9.4 Verse 34: to whom at Corinth was Paul speaking?

First Corinthians 7 reveals that the women of the Corinthian church included those who were married, widows, divorcees, the engaged, and the never married. Verse 35 indicates the identity of the women mentioned in verse 34. In this respect, Paul required the women concerned to direct the questions they had to their own men (*tous idious andras*); that is, their own husbands.³⁴²

Thus rather than being concerned with all the women at Corinth, the passage was relevant only to a select group of married women whose particular contribution during whole-of-church worship was not edifying or respectful.³⁴³ Even so, the point should be restated that Paul's words still need to be read in light of the immediate context which was not to impose a perpetual prohibition on the exercise of anyone's gifts and abilities in the Assembly (note verse 39).

9.5 Verse 34 continued: to whom were the women to submit?

The question arising from verse 34 is: To whom were the married women to submit? Paul's use of the word "submission" (Greek: *hupotasso*) in this verse does not have exclusive application to women.³⁴⁴ His clear intention elsewhere was that all Christians need to be subject (*hupotasso*) to one another (Ephesians

342 Belleville 2001, p. 116; also, Osburn 2001, p. 200; Jamieson *et al* 1979, p. 1475

343 The reason why the passage is silent with respect to any application of Paul's words to widows and single women is because they were not the source of the problem being addressed. One Male Headship proponent, Hurley (1981) appears to acknowledge this point (p. 192). However, some other Male Headship proponents have argued that even though it was the married women who were in view, Paul's instruction was intended to apply to all women, married or not. Regarding the dilemma posed by such an interpretation for unmarried women Grudem (2006) argues that "... *there would have been other men within their family circles, or within the fellowship of the church, with whom they could discuss the content of the prophecies. Paul's general guideline is clear, even though he did not make pedantic qualifications to deal with each specific case*" (p. 43). Also, Grudem (2006) asserts that Paul assumed "... *that the Corinthians can make appropriate applications for single women, who would no doubt know some men they could talk to after the service*" (p. 145). The problem with such an interpretation, however, is that it is based on assumptions and the silence of the Scriptures and requires more to be read into the text than is stated. It also ignores the reality of cultural restraints then in play on the interaction between unrelated men and women which was most likely at the core of the initial problem (Keener 2004, pp. 166 – 168; Belleville 2001, p. 116). This issue will be discussed later in this section of the study.

344 The significance of the Middle Voice tense of *hupotasso*, as it is used in 1 Corinthians 14: 34, is discussed in section 11 of this study.

5: 21).³⁴⁵ The question may be asked: Was he applying the principle of mutual submission to the Corinthian situation to address the particular problem being experienced? Given that he was referring to married women, various suggestions have been made that he was requiring them to submit to their husbands or perhaps even to someone else such as God, church elders, those who evaluate prophecies, or even to their own spirit.³⁴⁶

As to the suggestion that Paul intended for the women in question to be submissive to their husbands “*as the Law says*” (NIV), the problem with this view is that there is no Old Testament requirement which imposed such an obligation on wives.³⁴⁷ Another problem with this view is that there is no mention of “husbands” in verse 34 – the requirement simply is for the women concerned to “be in submission as the law says”.³⁴⁸

Therefore, in order to identify who or what the women in question were to submit consideration should be given to the context of the passage (in accordance with the rules of biblical interpretation). In this regard, it has been pointed out:

*In 1 Corinthians 14: 32 Paul states that the spirits of the prophets are submissive to the prophets. So when another prophet receives a revelation, the first prophet is to sit down and be silent. Those who speak in tongues are also commanded to be silent, if there is no one to interpret. If one follows Paul’s thinking carefully, “submission” and “silence” are two sides of the same coin. To be silent is to be submissive – and to be submissive (in the context of worship) is to be silent. Control of the tongue is most likely what Paul is talking about. The speaker (be they tongue speaker, prophet, or inquirer) must “bite his or her tongue” for the sake of orderly worship.*³⁴⁹

As a “... calm, submissive spirit was a necessary prerequisite for learning back then,”³⁵⁰ Paul’s intent in this verse appears to be for the women concerned to reserve any questions they had for their husbands at home rather than asking them of other men during whole-of-church worship proceedings (as the discussion on the meaning of verse 35 will show).

9.6 Verse 34 continued: to what “law” was Paul referring?

As noted in the previous section of this study, there is no Old Testament

345 Belleville 2001, p. 132; Beck and Blomberg 2001b, p. 313

346 Belleville 2005a, p. 77n114; Belleville 2001, p. 119n79; Cunningham *et al* 2000, p. 198

347 Belleville 2005a, p. 77; Keener 2004, p. 170

348 Osburn (2001) observes that Paul does not say “be in submission to your own husbands,” but to “submit yourselves” (p. 201). In making this statement Osburn points out that the use of *hupotasso* in the Middle Voice tense in verse 34 “denotes readiness to renounce one’s own will for the sake of others ... the entire context of chapters 11 – 14 evidences Paul’s strong appeal for voluntary submission in the Corinthian congregation...” (p. 202).

349 Belleville 2005a, p. 77; also, Belleville 2001, p. 119. This is consistent with the biblical principle: “... he who holds his tongue is wise” (Proverbs 10: 19) (NIV).

350 Belleville 2004b, p. 208; also, Belleville 2001, p. 123; Cunningham *et al* 2000, p. 218

requirement for wives to submit to their husbands let alone one which required women to be silent during worship.³⁵¹ In any event, it should be noted that verse 34 does not require the women concerned “to be silent as the law says”, but “to be in submission as the law says.”³⁵² With this in view the question may be asked: What “law” required the particular married women to be in submission during whole-of-church worship activities?³⁵³

While some writers believe that the “law” is a reference to Genesis 3: 16,³⁵⁴ others have concluded otherwise. For instance, one writer has observed, “*Would Paul take an OT text (Gen 3: 16) that is descriptive of a post-Fall, dysfunctional marital relationship and cite it as a prescriptive for the husband-wife Christian relationship? He does not do so elsewhere; why would he do so here? In fact, when the topic of marital relations surfaces in Paul, he cites Genesis 2: 24 as prescriptive (Eph 5: 31 – 32) – and not 3: 16.*”³⁵⁵

This view is shared by some Male Headship proponents. For example, one disputes that Genesis 3: 16 would be the basis for 1 Corinthians 14: 34 because “... *it would be the only place in the New Testament where the ‘curses’ of the Fall were appealed to as a basis for Christian conduct, direction, or teaching.*”³⁵⁶ Another has observed, “*It is not likely that Genesis 3: 16 is in view, since Paul elsewhere does not ground his ethics in the Fall.*”³⁵⁷

Another reason for concluding that Paul was not likely thinking of Genesis 3: 16 when he referred to the “law” in verse 34 is because God’s Words in Genesis 3: 16, that the man would rule his wife, are prophetic and descriptive rather than directive and prescriptive.³⁵⁸

Instead of Genesis 3: 16, some Male Headship proponents assert that an “order

351 Grenz 1995, p. 120; Keener 2004, p. 170; Belleville 2000, pp. 80, 158; Belleville 2001, p. 119; Belleville 2005a, p. 77; Hurley 1981, pp. 191 – 192. That women were not silent, passive worship spectators during the Old Testament period is also highlighted in footnote 61 of this study.

352 On this point Osburn (2001) has observed that “... *taking ‘the law’ here to refer to women’s silence is grammatically incorrect, for ‘as the law says’ is related not to lalein (speaking), but to ‘being in submission’! The text does not say that women are ‘not to speak as the Law says’ but ‘to be in submission as the Law says’...*” (p. 201).

353 It is interesting that in some Bible translations the word “law” in verse 34 is rendered with a capital “L” (for example, the NIV) while others use a lower-case “l” (such as the TNIV). As noted above, there is no explicit Old Testament requirement for women to submit to their husbands or to be silent during worship activities. Consequently, it has been suggested that “... *since no Old Testament submission text can be found, the word ‘law’ should not be capitalised as it has been in the NASB, NIV, and others*” (Belleville 2000, p. 198n22).

354 As noted by House 1995, p. 152

355 Belleville 2005a, p. 77; also, Kaiser *et al* 1996, p. 616

356 Clark cited in House 1995, p. 168n3

357 Blomberg 2001, p. 351n90. Another Male Headship proponent, Hurley (1981) makes a similar observation (pp. 192, 205). Also, Grudem (2006) recognises, “*Because Genesis 3: 16 is one of the results of the curse, this is not something we should try to promote*” (p. 23). Likewise, Clark (1980) notes, “*The New Testament never refers to the curse on woman as the foundation of any recommended form of Christian subordination. In fact, the New Testament bases none of its directives on the curses*” (p. 33).

358 Trombley 1985, pp. 19, 112; Grenz 1995, p. 120; Keener 2001, p. 63; Kaiser *et al* 1996, p. 98

of creation” principle which sets man over woman is the basis for Paul’s remark.³⁵⁹ However, as pointed out previously in this study Paul specifically repudiated the view that man had any special position or priority over woman simply on the basis of the sequence of their respective creations (1 Corinthians 11: 11 – 12).

One Male Headship proponent has argued that Paul is “... *likely appealing to ‘Torah’ as Scripture as a whole and thinking of some combination of God’s created order plus Old Testament regulations in general.*”³⁶⁰ This explanation is unconvincing since it is based on assumptions and requires much to be read into the text in order to arrive at such a conclusion.

Another explanation is that it could be a reference to the particular customary/social/legal requirements of the day.³⁶¹ Given Paul’s directions for Christians to submit to governing authorities (Romans 13: 1 – 7; Titus 3: 1; cf 1 Peter 2: 13 – 17), and his desire for Christians not to bring the Gospel into disrepute (1 Timothy 6: 1; Titus 2: 5, 8, 10), the suggestion is that it could have been used by Paul in this regard:

*“As the law says” could then easily be understood as Roman law. Official religion of the Roman variety was closely supervised. The women who participated were carefully organised and their activities strictly regulated. The unrestrained activity and inclusive nature of oriental cults (such as the popular cult of Isis) made them immediately suspect, if for no other reason than the fear that such uninhibited behaviour would adversely affect the family unit and erupt in antisocial behaviour.*³⁶²

Yet another explanation for the meaning of the reference to the “law” is that since elsewhere in 1 Corinthians Paul drew upon aspects of the Old Testament to reinforce his arguments (such as 1 Corinthians 9: 9, 14: 21), it is possible that in verse 34 he was using an Old Testament principle with respect to “silence” and “submission” to God to bolster his argument. In this regard it has been observed:

... The Greek-speaking Jews who prepared a Greek version of the Hebrew Bible (the Septuagint) saw a remarkable correlation between “silence” and “submission.” There are three places in the Psalms where the Hebrew text speaks of being silent unto God. In each case ... translators rendered this by the Greek verb meaning “to submit oneself.” The original implication is one of attentiveness and receptivity to God ... Perhaps when he spoke of submission, Paul simply had in mind the Old Testament idea of ‘waiting on God, or the

359 For example Knight 1985, pp. 85, 87, 88; Grudem 2006, p. 145

360 Blomberg 2001, p. 351

361 Belleville 2001, p. 119

362 Belleville 2005a, p. 77

*thought of humility towards God.*³⁶³

While debate about the identify of the particular “law” referred to by Paul in verse 34 will undoubtedly continue, this does not detract from the fact that the passage was not written to prohibit public speaking activity during church gatherings that was orderly, edifying and respectful (verse 40). Rather, verses 34 and 35 were designed only to prevent certain inappropriate speaking by particular women during the Corinthians’ whole-of-church worship activities. By implication, verse 40 would also have prohibited the Corinthian men from engaging in inappropriate public speaking during worship. Certainly, this would have been the case if they were one of the prophets and tongue speakers whom Paul addressed in verses 27 to 33.

9.7 Verse 35: what were the women doing and what was Paul’s remedy?

Some Male Headship proponents have argued that the purpose of verses 34 and 35 was to prohibit women from public roles within the Church such as judging or evaluating prophecies, “... *for [this] involves assuming the possession of superior authority in matters of doctrinal or ethical instruction.*”³⁶⁴

However, there is no justification in this passage for concluding that it prohibits women from occupying public speaking roles within the Church.³⁶⁵ This is because verse 35 clearly identifies what the married women in question were prohibited from doing:

... “*Since they want to learn something*” (*ei de + ti mathein thelousin = a condition of fact, 1 Cor 14: 35 AT*). *This rules out tongues, prophecy, and the like. Paul is not addressing women who were exercising their spiritual gifts by contributing a teaching, a revelation, a tongue, or other Spirit-inspired gift to the worship experience (14: 26). Nor is he speaking to women who were exercising their gift of discernment in evaluating the truthfulness of the prophetic word (14: 30). These were, rather, married women in the congregation who were asking questions because they wanted to learn (“let them ask,” 14: 35). Their fault was not in the asking per se, but in the corporate disorder that their asking was producing.*³⁶⁶

Similarly, another writer has noted:

Some have suggested that Paul opposes women evaluating other prophecies,

363 Cunningham *et al* 2000, p. 200. The three Old Testament references in question are Psalms 37: 7, 62: 1, 62: 5. The earlier observation in this study is also recalled that in verse 34 the women in question are not required “to be silent as the law says”, but “to be in submission as the law says” (footnote 352 of this study).

364 For example Grudem 2006, p. 143; also, pp. 42, 55n25, 104, 144; House 1995, p. 42

365 As Osburn (2001) notes, “*Neither in this nor in any other biblical text is there a prohibition against women speaking in public, on the ground that it is public*” (p. 204n64) (emphasis in text).

366 Belleville 2001, pp. 115 – 116

*but this proposal makes little sense of the text itself (which speaks of asking questions) as well as of Paul's suggestion that all those who prophesy are to participate in evaluating prophecies (1 Cor 14: 29). Some have suggested that the passage means that women cannot teach, but nothing in the context or elsewhere in Paul's Corinthian correspondence indicates that this is the issue he is addressing here.*³⁶⁷

Fundamentally, verses 34 and 35 address the issue of married women at Corinth who had been asking questions during the church Assembly, not their participation in other respects during worship activities (verse 26).³⁶⁸ In antiquity the asking of questions even during public learning was not discouraged, although "*novices were expected to learn quietly.*"³⁶⁹ So the question may be asked: Why would it have been a problem for the married women at Corinth to be asking questions during whole-of-church worship activities?

While Paul does not disclose what the questions asked by these particular women were about, in light of his requirement for worship activities to be conducted in a "*fitting and orderly way*" (verse 40 NIV) it would appear that the problem had arisen from the way the questions had been asked rather than their subject matter. Given the dynamic nature of the early Christians' whole-of-church worship activities as previously outlined in this section of the study, it would appear that the manner of questioning adopted by these women had been disruptive to the orderly proceeding of such activities in the same way that the particular speaking of the prophets and tongue speakers had been disruptive. Not only would such disruption have been unedifying to the Christians present, it would not have been a good witness to any non-believers who may have been in attendance (1 Corinthians 14: 16, 23 – 25).

What was it about the manner of their questioning that necessitated Paul to direct them to refer their questions to their "*own husbands at home*" (verse 35 NIV)? In referring to the use of present infinitives in the original Greek text of this verse one writer has suggested that it was the "*... 'ongoingness' of the 'speaking' that is in focus ... they were doing more than merely chatting ... they were 'piping up,' giving in to 'irresistible impulses' to ask question after question, creating chaos ... these women were creating the same sort of disruption in the assembly as that by the tongue-speakers and prophets.*"³⁷⁰

However, given Paul's instruction for them to direct their questions to their "own husbands at home" it also appears that these women had been asking questions during the church's worship activities of men who were *not* their own

367 Keener 2001, p. 50. Guthrie (1976) agrees that no specific injunction against a woman teaching is found in 1 Corinthians (p. 76).

368 Belleville 2000, pp. 160 – 161

369 Keener 2001, p. 51; also, Blomberg 2001, p. 350; Keener 2004, p. 165

370 Osburn 2001, p. 199

husbands.³⁷¹ If this was the case then it most certainly would have had implications from a broader cultural perspective given the potential scandal and offence that could have been caused. In line with his earlier exhortation to the Corinthians not to cause offence to others (1 Corinthians 10: 32), Paul would not have wanted such an accusation laid against any of them as this would bring the name of the Church and the Gospel message into disrepute.

As previously noted in section 9.3 of this study, the Hellenistic cultural attitudes of the time disapproved of respectable women publicly engaging in conversations with unrelated men because of the risk of their morality being impugned.³⁷² In this respect, the Hellenistic culture of the day “... *defined the virtuous woman as chaste, silent, obedient, and content within the domestic sphere.*”³⁷³ Silence was a virtue that was particularly praised in women.³⁷⁴ There were strong cultural expectations that a woman would marry young, avoid conversations with unrelated men, and “*speak to her husband and through her husband.*”³⁷⁵ A woman would bring shame upon her husband if she displayed “... *‘looseness’ by providing males outside her family with her company or her words.*”³⁷⁶

As also previously noted in section 9.3, while it was acceptable in Hellenistic society for a woman to speak publicly for religious purposes such as to prophesy or lead in religious activities,³⁷⁷ the expectation was that an honourable married

371 Belleville 2001, p. 116. The question might be asked: Would the husbands have necessarily had the answers to their wives' questions? It is important to remember, as Hurley (1981) has noted, “... *that Paul was not writing an exhaustive manual for enquiring women but rather addressing a problem*” (p. 192). In directing these women to refer their questions to their “own husbands at home” Paul must have been confident that the men would have been able to provide their wives with the particular information they were seeking. Of course, had they needed to the husbands would have been able to consult with other more knowledgeable men on any point they may have been uncertain prior to answering their wives. Unlike the situation for a married woman, no cultural stigma attached to a husband making such enquiries of other men.

372 Payton 2002, p. 14; Nicole 2004, p. 362. Section 5.5 of this study (Part A) explored the honour-shame codes that operated in ancient Mediterranean cultures in terms of expectations regarding the general behaviour of men. While they were very different to those which operated for men, honour-shame codes also operated with respect to the societal conventions governing the behaviour of women (Internet 7, p. 33; Rabichev; Torjesen 1995, pp. 118 – 120, 136 – 152, 165 – 172).

373 Torjesen 1995, p. 149

374 Ibid, pp. 119 – 120; Cunningham *et al* 2000, p. 203

375 Internet 7, p. 33; Keener 2004, pp. 166, 167; also, Torjesen 1995, p. 143; Osburn 2001, p. 197. A similar cultural value operated among the Jews which explains the reaction of the disciples to Jesus talking with a Samaritan woman on one early occasion (John 4: 27) (Spencer 2004, p. 128; Barnett 2009, p. 100).

376 Internet 7, p. 34. Torjesen (1995) notes how a woman who was not retiring, discreet, or silent (the hallmarks of chastity) was naturally regarded in that culture as unchaste, and that an entire family was disgraced and suffered dishonour if one female member failed to maintain the value of female chastity (pp. 140, 143).

377 Payton 2002, p. 15; Keener 2004, pp. 166, 168; Torjesen 1995, p. 28; Belleville 2000, pp. 31, 155. It should be reiterated that Paul is not prohibiting those women from speaking who were exercising their spiritual gifts (verse 39), only their culturally inappropriate way of asking questions during the Assembly of men who were not their own husbands (Belleville 2000, p. 160). That women prophesied and prayed during the worship activities of the Corinthians is evident from 1 Corinthians 11: 4 – 5, 12: 7 – 11, 14: 1 –

woman would not casually converse with, or address questions to, an unrelated man.³⁷⁸ Doing so was considered highly inappropriate and would bring shame and disgrace to her husband. Such behaviour in the Corinthian church could have compromised the effectiveness of its witness to non-believers, particularly those who attended their meetings, since in terms of that culture it could have been seen as bringing into question the sexual propriety of these women and Paul was keen for them not to do anything which gave rise to such a perception (1 Corinthians 5, 6: 13 – 20).³⁷⁹

This would explain why in verse 35 Paul describes it as a “shame” or “disgrace” (depending on the Bible translation used) for these women to speak in the church.³⁸⁰ The “shame” was not because there was something fundamentally inherent in a woman’s voice that made it a “disgrace” for women ever to be heard in the Assembly (otherwise they would not have been able to even sing or exercise their spiritual gifts and abilities during corporate worship activities). On the contrary, the “shame” arose in this case because the women concerned had breached an extremely pervasive cultural taboo by asking questions during church gatherings of men who were not their own husbands.³⁸¹

The point should be reiterated that despite being required to refrain from the culturally inappropriate way of asking questions during the Assembly of men other than their own husbands, this did not mean that the women concerned were prevented from exercising their various gifts and talents when the church

5, 22, 24, 26, 39. That a woman being able to engage in such activities was not in dispute; rather, what was at issue in verses 34 and 35 was the culturally inappropriate way the married women had been asking questions of men other than their own husbands.

378 Keener 2004, pp. 166 – 168; Belleville 2000, p. 161; Nicole 2004, p. 362

379 Belleville (2000) also notes the impact that such behaviour could have had on the effectiveness of the Corinthians’ ministry (p. 161). Although not specified it is conceivable that the dynamic nature of the Corinthians’ whole-of-church worship activities (see footnote 324 of this study) could have seen some members disregarding such social norms as being no longer applicable (also suggested by Kaiser *et al* 1996, p. 603). While Christians are certainly blessed with a newfound liberty in Christ (2 Corinthians 3: 17), and elsewhere Paul powerfully expressed this reality in a very practical way through his reinterpretation of the prevailing Aristotelian family code (see section 11 of this study), he never endorsed such liberty being used in a manner that could cause others (be they a “weaker brother” or a non-believer) to stumble or be offended nor for it to be used in any way that brought the name of the Church and its message into disrepute or disgrace (Romans 14; 1 Corinthians 8: 1 – 13, 10: 23 – 33; 1 Timothy 6: 1; Titus 2: 5, 8, 10).

380 In verse 35 Paul used the word *aischron* (“disgraceful”), which means “base, shameful, of that which is opposed to modesty or purity” (Vine n.d., p. 1039). It referred to sexual indiscretion when it was applied to women (Torjesen 1995, p. 41). Belleville (2000) notes that “... *aischros* (*‘shameful’*) means to act in defiance of social and moral standards with resulting disgrace, embarrassment, and shame” (p. 195n76). In that culture, a married woman speaking to or asking questions of an unrelated man was regarded as being tantamount to sexual promiscuity and Paul did not want allegations of this nature levelled at the Corinthians.

381 Payton 2002, p. 15; Belleville 2001, p. 116; Keener 2004, p. 167; Nicole 2004, p. 362. The culturally perceived dishonour of a married woman asking questions of a man other than her own husband would have provoked scandal, shame and offence, particularly in the wider community, which was why Paul wanted these particular women to avoid such a situation and the potential for the name of the Church to be brought into disrepute.

gathered.³⁸² Paul's summation in verses 39 and 40 confirms that it was not his intention to prohibit anyone from participating in and exercising their various gifts during the Assembly. Rather, it was to ensure that the exercise of gifts such as prophesying (which was available to men and women for use during the Assembly – 1 Corinthians 11: 4 – 5, 12: 7 – 11, 14: 1 – 5, 22, 24, 26, 39) and the making of other verbal contributions (“everything”, verse 40) were conducted in a “fitting and orderly way”.

One final point about verse 35 is the important insight into Paul's understanding of the status of wives that may be gleaned from his use of the word translated as “ask” (Greek: *eperotao*). This word is derived from the Greek word *erotao*, which denotes that the questioner is on the same footing, familiarity or equality with the one from whom he seeks an answer.³⁸³ *Aiteo*, which indicates that one who is lesser asks one who is greater a favour, is a word that could have been used in this instance, but was not. *Eperotao* is a strengthened form of *erotao* and so it virtually means to demand from an equal. Paul's use of this word is consistent with his use of *exousiazo* (a word akin to *exousia*, “authority”) in 1 Corinthians 7: 3 – 4 which specifies that a wife has certain authority over her husband in the marriage relationship.³⁸⁴ Thus, rather than putting these particular women “in their place”, Paul is making it clear that as far as he was concerned a wife was on equal footing with her husband.³⁸⁵ To him, the wives in this instance could expect to receive an answer to their questions from their husbands thus making it unnecessary for them to ever think about asking questions of other men and in so doing contravene a highly dominant social protocol. As will be shown in section 11 of this study, Paul's approach in this regard was completely antithetical to the broader cultural views and attitudes prevailing at the time which expected that a wife would be ruled by her husband.

9.8 Final observations on 1 Corinthians 14: 33 – 35

One of the accusations levelled at the early Christians was that they had

382 As Belleville (2000) notes, “... *the motive for disrupting worship was ‘to learn’ (manthano; the NIV ‘to inquire’ captures the action but not the meaning of the Greek verb). This rules out inspired speech (ecstatic or otherwise). Paul is not addressing women who are exercising their spiritual gifts – those with ‘a hymn, a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation’ to share with the congregation (1 Cor 14: 26). Nor is he speaking to women exercising a gift of discernment by judging the truthfulness of the prophetic word (vv. 29 – 30). These are, rather, married women in the congregation who are speaking out in church because they want to learn. Their fault was not in the asking per se but in the inappropriate setting for their questions. It would also seem that these questions were directed at men other than their husbands, for Paul instructs them to ask their own men. This would have been considered shameful behaviour even to a Roman*” (pp. 160 – 161) (emphasis in text).

383 Vine n.d., pp. 81 – 82. Similarly, Viola (2009) notes that “*Erotao means a request made between equals*” (p. 100).

384 This point also is recognised by some Male Headship proponents (for example Schreiner 2001, p. 214; Blomberg 2001, p. 339).

385 Unmarried men and women in that culture did not share the same equal, special relationship which is another reason why Grudem's (2006) assertion that Paul assumed “... *that the Corinthians can make appropriate applications for single women, who would no doubt know some men they could talk to after the service*” (p. 145) (cited in footnote 343 of this study) is highly implausible.

disrupted and threatened important social conventions and customs (Acts 16: 20 – 21, 17: 6). The ancient Roman historian Tacitus, in referring to the period when Nero was Emperor, described the Christians as “*enemies of the human race*” and “*antisocial because they did not conform to the social habits of the time.*”³⁸⁶

To mitigate any undue criticism of the Gospel, Paul constantly exhorted Christians to make a good impression on unbelievers (Romans 12: 17 – 18, 14: 19; 1 Corinthians 9: 19 – 23, 10: 32 – 33, 14: 23 – 24; 1 Timothy 6: 1; Titus 2: 5, 8, 10), which explains why he urged the Corinthians to respect the particular cultural norms of their society.³⁸⁷ First Corinthians 14: 34 – 35 was not an isolated occurrence nor was it the only instance of him doing so since there were other occasions when Paul taught the Corinthians to respect the cultural sensitivities of their day (such as in relation to the wearing of head coverings by women during whole-of-church worship activities [1 Corinthians 11: 3 – 16]). Of course, Paul’s encouragement in these respects was subject to such norms and sensitivities not being in violation of fundamental Christian principles such as the need for sexual propriety.

The fact that cultural norms played a significant part in the lives of the early Christians is apparent from 1 Corinthians. The preceding discussion of 1 Corinthians 14: 34 – 35 has highlighted the importance of understanding cultural factors when seeking to ascertain the meaning of Scripture. As one Male Headship proponent has recognised, “*The Bible, not our culture, must reign supreme. On the other hand, we must interpret the Scriptures in their historical and cultural context. They were written to specific situations and to cultures that differed from our own.*”³⁸⁸ Elsewhere, the same writer has noted, “*... some of the commands and norms in Scripture are the result of cultural accommodation.*”³⁸⁹

While it is important to interpret the Scriptures in consideration of their historical and cultural context, this does not mean that passages such as 1 Corinthians 14: 34 – 35 have little or no relevance for modern-day Christians. The general principles underpinning such passages, for example the need to show respect to others, the essentiality of sexual propriety, and the importance of conducting whole-of-church worship activities in an edifying and orderly manner, have universal application irrespective of time or culture.³⁹⁰ Specific requirements such

386 Tenney 2004, p. 138. In describing them as “anti-social” Tacitus may also have had in mind the refusal of many early Christians to participate in the communal practice of Emperor Worship, a duty which was expected of most citizens at that time.

387 Internet 7, p. 35n12; Keener 2004, pp. 167n20, 168; Belleville 2000, p. 120

388 Schreiner 2001, p. 219; also, Schreiner 2005b, p. 308

389 Schreiner 2001, p. 216

390 Similarly, Osburn (2001) notes, “*The general principle that is to be applied to contemporary church life is that decorum is mandatory for all in the public assembly without regard to gender*” (p. 205). Fee and Stuart (2003) have suggested seven guidelines “*... for distinguishing between items that are culturally relative on the one hand and those that transcend their original setting on the other hand and are thus normative for all Christians of all times*”: distinguish between the central core of the biblical message and what is dependent on or peripheral to it; distinguish between what the New Testament itself sees as

as the wearing of head coverings by women during church worship activities (1 Corinthians 11) and the need for married women to respect cultural mores in relation to the asking of questions during corporate worship of men who were not their own husbands (1 Corinthians 14) exemplify how these principles were applied in that particular time and culture. While the need for these particular cultural outworkings may no longer be apparent in the contemporary Church, the principles underpinning them certainly are.³⁹¹ As has been noted:

*Paul's operative principle for congregational life and worship is constant. Whatever hinders the movement of the gospel, causes confusion rather than growth, offends rather than encourages or strengthens, builds up the self at the expense of others – all this is contrary to God's intention. And insofar as the women in Corinth and elsewhere in the young churches used their gifts contrary to God's intention, the injunction to silence is an appropriate, authoritative word. The principle which underlies the injunction is authoritative for both men and women in all churches.*³⁹²

In concluding section 9 of this study, the importance of considering the entire context of a passage rather than drawing conclusions on the basis of one or two verses in isolation has been demonstrated. With respect to 1 Corinthians 14 the purpose of the passage was to stipulate how the dynamic worship activities of the Corinthians were to be conducted in order for everyone to be edified. Different people (tongue speakers, prophets and married women) had been contributing to disorder during the Assembly and were required to cease their respective disruptive behaviours since such had not been edifying and, in some cases, had even brought shame and offence to others. While each member had a part to play in the edification of the church (verse 26) and was certainly not prohibited in this regard (verse 39), it was essential that the various activities be performed in a fitting and orderly way (verse 40). For the tongue speakers this meant waiting to speak until someone was available to interpret their message for the benefit of all. For the prophets it meant taking their turn and being silent when others were speaking. For the married women in question it meant acting in a way that did not cause offence to others during whole-of-church worship activities. Specifically, they were to observe prevailing social norms which frowned on them asking questions of men who were not their own husbands, to

inherently moral and what is not; make special note of items where the New Testament has a uniform and consistent witness and where it reflects differences; distinguish within the New Testament itself between principle and specific application; determine as far as possible the cultural options open to any New Testament writer; keep alert to possible cultural differences between the first and twenty-first centuries that are sometimes not immediately obvious; and finally, exercise Christian charity (pp. 80 – 86). Similarly, Osburn (2001) cites several guidelines for distinguishing between matters that may be culturally relative and those which have universal normativity (pp. 106 – 108). NB: The term “normative” has been defined to mean “... *that which is required practice for the church in all times and all places, so that not to do so is to disobey*” (Fee 2004b, pp. 246n9, 248).

391 Similarly, Schreiner (2005b) notes, “*Discerning why a command was given is appropriate, precisely because culture has changed. We must distinguish between the principle and the cultural outworking of a principle*” (p. 308).

392 Kaiser *et al* 1996, p. 616

cease asking questions of such men and to reserve them for their husbands with whom, Paul said, they could engage on an equal basis.

Finally, despite verses 26 to 40 being written to address particular problems that were evident in the Corinthian church, the underlying principle that still remains applicable for Christians today is that whole-of-church worship activities should be conducted in an orderly, edifying fashion.

10. 1 Timothy 2: What activity does the passage really prohibit?

The NIV translates 1 Timothy 2: 12 – 15 as follows:

I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be kept safe through childbirth, if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

Male Headship proponents generally regard this passage as pivotal to their contention that men are solely responsible for exercising authority and teaching in the Church with women submitting to male leadership.³⁹³ For example, one Male Headship proponent has asserted:

God does have a place for the woman teacher, but He also places certain limitations upon her. She may teach in any capacity which does not violate this order of authority (1 Tim 2: 11 – 12). The woman cannot teach the man nor act in any way that would cause her to have the authority over him. Does this mean we cannot teach a man privately? It would not seem so, for did not God give us the example of Priscilla who helped teach Apollos privately? And there may come a time when a woman is the only person available to teach some man. We should be ready for this opportunity but we must not teach a class of men, taking their rightful leadership. God's position for women from the beginning lets us know that we are to be subject to man and not allowed to usurp his authority. There are several ways that woman can take the authority from man as a teacher. We might teach without the approval or consent of the elders. We can refuse to recognise the husband as the head of the family. We can allow ourselves to be rebellious to man and not follow the rules and suggestions made for our good. Or we might dominate man by acting in such a way as to show that we do not respect the relative positions of the man and woman. Any of these situations would find us teaching in direct disobedience to God's will for us.³⁹⁴

Similarly, another Male Headship proponent has contended, "... *the Scriptures*

393 For example Schreiner 2001, p. 218; Grudem 2006, p. 33; also noted by Belleville 2001, p. 111

394 Green 1964, p. 45. The argument that Priscilla was able to teach Apollos because she did so "privately" has been considered previously in section 5.3 of this study (Part A) and found to be untenable.

*indicate that for all the churches women are not permitted to teach nor to have dominion over men on the basis of God's order of creation, the implication of the fall, the explicit statement of the law, and the fact that the Apostle's command is itself 'the commandment of the Lord' (1 Tim 2: 11 – 15; 1 Cor 14: 33b – 37)."*³⁹⁵

At the outset it is important to note that while some Male Headship proponents claim that "... 1 Timothy 2: 8 – 15 teaches that men rather than women should teach and exercise authority in the church"³⁹⁶ and others claim that the passage restricts "... some governing and teaching roles in the church to men",³⁹⁷ the text in fact is completely silent about any such role for men.³⁹⁸ Indeed, the passage contains no explicit delegation at all from God which authorises men to exercise authority over women,³⁹⁹ let alone over the Church. Therefore, irrespective of the message of the passage, there is no warrant for concluding that its purpose was to give men the right to exercise what Grudem (2006) frequently terms "governing authority" in the Church.⁴⁰⁰ Such a role is expressly reserved for the Lord Jesus Christ alone since it is His Church (Matthew 16: 18, 28: 18).

At this point it is also important to note that 1 Timothy 2: 12 is the first (and indeed, the only) indication in the New Testament of any sort of prohibition being placed on women teaching men.⁴⁰¹ This does not mean that the passage should be treated lightly since, as observed earlier in this study, "... everything in the Bible means something."⁴⁰² Yet as the only such instance, care is necessary to interpret it in a manner that is consistent with the broader scriptural evidence including the universal passages discussed in section 4 of this study (Part A).⁴⁰³ As will be seen in the next section of this study, interpreting this passage in isolation from other relevant Scriptures and without regard to the other well

395 Knight 1985, p. 88. Other Male Headship proponents have argued similarly (for example Roberts 1964, pp. 22 – 23; Hurley 1981, p. 202; House 1995, p. 44).

396 For example Hurley 1981, p. 207

397 For example Grudem 2006, pp. 33, 157. Clark (1980) similarly claims that the "... passage prohibits women from holding positions of authority in the Christian community such that men would be subordinate to them. It reserves to men the kind of teaching which is an exercise of authority over men or over the community as a whole" (p. 200).

398 This study will show that rather than being addressed to men, the purpose of 1 Timothy 2: 12 – 15 was to proscribe certain behaviour by a woman. As Fee (2004b) observes, "... Paul's concern in 1 Timothy 2: 9 – 15 is not with the men but with the women" (p. 252n22) (emphasis in text).

399 Padgett, p. 27; Sumner 2003, pp. 249, 252n19; Cunningham *et al* 2000, p. 222; also, Belleville 2001, pp. 80, 114, 145 – 146; Nicole 2004, pp. 357, 358; Fee 2004c, p. 374; Groothuis 2004, p. 313; Belleville 2005a, p. 31

400 Grudem 2006, pp. 49, 140 – 141, 145, 155. As will be discussed later in this section of the study, the usual word for authority, *exousia*, is not even used in the passage.

401 As noted also by Crabtree. As shown in section 9 of this study, 1 Corinthians 14: 34 – 35 does not prohibit the teaching of a man by a woman. Rather, it was written in consideration of the cultural conditions of the time which deemed it to be inappropriate for a married woman to ask questions during the church Assembly of men other than her own husband. Guthrie (1976) agrees that no specific injunction against a woman teaching is found in 1 Corinthians (p. 76). On this point Keener (2001) notes similarly (p. 50).

402 Sumner 2003, p. 127

403 The need in this regard aligns with the scriptural principle, "The sum of thy word is truth" (Psalms 119: 160) (RSV).

established rules of biblical interpretation can result in a number of unscriptural conclusions being made. However, when such rules are applied a more reasonable interpretation and understanding of the passage compared to that proposed by Male Headship proponents is possible.

10.1 Interpreting the passage – which rules apply?

It will be recalled that section 3 of this study (Part A) outlined the commonly accepted rules of biblical interpretation. The observance of such rules is important in determining and understanding the meaning of Scripture, in “*rightly dividing the word of truth*” (2 Timothy 2: 15 KJV). One of the primary rules of biblical interpretation is the literal reading rule. However, this rule is subject to the following important caveat: “*It is a stated rule in interpreting, never to depart from the plain, literal sense, unless it implies an absurdity.*”⁴⁰⁴

Importantly, section 3 noted that if a literal reading of a passage results in an understanding that is contrary to other relevant Scriptures then a more complete understanding of the passage needs to be determined in consideration of those Scriptures, not in isolation from them. In fact, a literal reading which results in a meaning that is absurd or otherwise contrary to other relevant Scriptures is a strong indication that the passage in question is one to which the full range of interpretative rules should be applied, not simply the literal reading rule.

First Timothy 2 is a prime example of a passage in this regard. With respect to this passage Sumner (2003) has outlined how an uncritical use of the literal interpretative approach can result in absurd, unbiblical conclusions such as that:

- *women are saved by the blood of childbearing rather than the blood of Christ;*
- *women are to receive instruction without practicing spiritual discernment;*
- *women, unlike men, are not to wear gold wedding rings; and*
- *men, unlike women, are always to raise their hands when they pray.*⁴⁰⁵

A literal reading of this passage on its face value without taking account of other relevant Scriptures can also give rise to other questionable conclusions such as that women are:

- more susceptible to temptation and deception than men (*Question: if this conclusion was correct, why did God create women with such a flaw? Such a conclusion would seem to contradict Genesis 1: 31 where it states that everything God created was “very good”. Also, if this was the case, what is the explanation for the scriptural examples of men who were readily deceived and led into sin? It should be noted that despite the fact that Eve was deceived, Jesus still trusted women to faithfully carry His message to others including men [John 4, 20: 17]);*

404 Sumner 2003, p. 209; also, Henrichsen and Jackson 1990, p. 195

405 Sumner 2003, p. 212

- by nature less able to resist deception than men (*Question*: same as for above. Additionally, if this conclusion was correct then it would result in the following dilemma: "... *an exegesis that sees Paul merely as claiming that Adam sinned without having been deceived in the manner Eve was deceived may be true to the Genesis account, but it again leaves Paul in the paradoxical position of favouring Adam because he sinned with his eyes wide open – a presumably less excusable situation and thus a greater character flaw than with Eve, who was tricked!*"⁴⁰⁶);
- only to pursue "private" (domestic) rather than "public" (non-domestic) activities (*Question*: if this conclusion was correct why are there positive instances recorded in both the Old and New Testaments of God-fearing women who were active in both private and public spheres? Also, how would such a conclusion align with Jesus' teachings in passages such as Luke 10: 38 – 42, 11: 27 – 28?);
- not trustworthy to communicate the deep spiritual truths contained in the Scriptures to men (*Question*: if this conclusion was correct, why are women considered sufficiently trustworthy to teach the leaders of tomorrow – children – as well as other women?⁴⁰⁷);
- to be silent whenever they are in the presence of men in "public" worship settings (*Question*: if this conclusion was correct then should women even be allowed to sing during public worship given that this is a form of speaking and teaching [Ephesians 5: 19; Colossians 3: 16]?⁴⁰⁸); and
- to be submissive to the leadership and authority of men (*Question*: where is the explicit authorisation for men to exercise authority over women in this or any other passage? It will be recalled that the question of whether there is any such Scripture was considered in section 7 of this study (Part A) where it was found that no delegation from God exists for men to exercise authority over women. Given that there is no explicit authorisation in this regard, how can men legitimately claim the right to exercise such authority?).

While the aforementioned conclusions may be justified on the basis of a literal reading of the passage, they are not supported elsewhere in the Scriptures. Furthermore, as demonstrated above they raise even more questions than

406 Blomberg 2001, p. 366

407 It would be highly illogical and inconsistent to conclude that women are not fit to teach men "publicly" because of a supposed predilection to deception yet trustworthy enough to teach children and other women. As noted earlier in this study, Groothuis (cited in Keener [2001]) observes, "... *those who prohibit women from teaching men because 'women are more easily deceived' often allow women to teach other women – the very people they would most easily lead into further deception!*" (p. 39n17). Also, Grenz (1995) has remarked on "... *the absurdity of permitting women to teach impressionable children but not men who should possess the spiritual acumen to discern heretical statements*" (p. 219). Similarly, Osburn (2001) notes, "*It seems odd that women would be presented as more easily led into heresy, yet still be entrusted with teaching the children(!)*" (p. 48).

408 This issue has been considered previously in footnote 327 of this study.

answers. Therefore such conclusions, even though they may be derived from the passage using the literal interpretative rule, are highly questionable since they are drawn in disregard of other important interpretative principles such as Scripture interprets Scripture, Context determines Meaning, and the overall need to interpret any unclear or difficult passage in light of other clear biblical teachings on a particular subject as a whole. Accordingly, in studying this passage it will be necessary to draw on a wider selection of interpretative approaches in order to discern its message.

10.2 The reality of women as teachers

As discussed in sections 4 and 5 of this study (Part A), the weight of evidence indicates that women participated fully with men in the life, worship and organisation of the early Church and were supported and encouraged to do so by none other than Paul himself.⁴⁰⁹

Notably, the destination of this letter to Timothy was Ephesus (1 Timothy 1: 3). This was the same city where some time previously Priscilla together with her husband Aquila had taught Apollos, a man who was already a believer in the Lord as well as being very knowledgeable in the Scriptures, and helped him to become an even more effective evangelist (Acts 18: 24 – 28).

The following questions may be asked: When was the prohibition in 1 Timothy 2: 12 first publicised? Was this passage the first time it had ever been pronounced or had such a prohibition been in force earlier? The answers to these questions have significant implications in terms of whether or not the prohibition had/has universal applicability to all women. If there had been a prohibition on a woman teaching a man prior to the writing of verse 12 and as early as the event in Acts 18: 26, it certainly did not function in any way to prevent Priscilla from being a teacher to Apollos.⁴¹⁰ On its own this point would strongly indicate the prohibition in verse 12 not to have had universal application even to all women of the first century AD let alone to every woman since.

On the other hand, if verse 12 was the first ever articulation of a prohibition on a woman teaching a man,⁴¹¹ then this too would strongly indicate it not to have had

409 As also noted by writers such as Sumner 2003, p. 241; Haddad and Mickelsen 2004, pp. 489 – 490

410 The contention of Male Headship proponents that Priscilla was able to teach Apollos because she did so “privately” has been considered previously in section 5.3 of this study (Part A) and found to be untenable. As section 10.5 of this study will also show, Paul placed no contextual limits on the prohibition in 1 Timothy 2: 12 and intended it to apply irrespective of whether the setting was public or private. Furthermore, the passage in 2 Timothy 2: 2 where Paul used the generic word *anthropos* (“people”) rather than the masculine word *aner* (“man” or “men”) is another strong indication that he did not intend for faithful Christian women like Priscilla to be limited in any way from spreading the Gospel message. As to whether 1 Corinthians 14: 34 – 35 imposes a prohibition on a woman teaching a man it will be recalled from section 9 of this study that the purpose of this passage was not to impose any such ban (as also acknowledged by Guthrie 1976, p. 76 and Keener 2001, p. 50).

411 As noted in footnote 401 of this study, the fact is that 1 Timothy 2: 12 is the first (and only) indication in the New Testament of a prohibition being placed on a woman teaching a man. There is no record any earlier than this passage of any ban being imposed in this regard. Keener (2001) observes, “If we do not

universal applicability. This is because up until the time of the writing of the passage there could have been any number of instances of women teaching men the truth of the Gospel “publicly” and “privately”. Given the evangelistic zeal of the early believers, this is entirely likely (Matthew 28: 19; John 4: 39 – 42; Acts 1: 8, 8: 3 – 4; Philippians 4: 22; Colossians 1: 6, 23; 1 Thessalonians 1: 8; Philemon 6). If women were specifically prohibited from “publicly” teaching men as Male Headship proponents assert, then this should have been made clear from the very inception of the Church rather than being left for more than 25 years before being announced.⁴¹² Put another way, if women are prohibited from “publicly” teaching men as Male Headship proponents assert, why was such a fundamental tenet not stipulated from the time of the Church’s foundation in the same way that other important beliefs and practices were (for example baptism [Matthew 28: 19; Acts 2: 38] and the Lord’s Supper [Luke 22: 19 – 20; 1 Corinthians 11: 23 – 25])?

As pointed out in section 5.3 of this study (Part A), one piece of evidence that women did indeed function as teachers in the Church during the New Testament period despite the prohibition in verse 12 is the fact that the church at Thyatira, a city not too distant from Ephesus, accepted a woman known as “Jezebel” in this capacity (Revelation 2: 20 – 23). According to tradition, the book of Revelation was written long after 1 Timothy.⁴¹³ Had verse 12 established a universal principle that women should not teach men, then Revelation 2: 20 – 23 would have provided an ideal opportunity for such a principle to be restated.⁴¹⁴ But the fact is that the passage contains no such statement. There is no suggestion in Revelation 2: 20 – 23 that Jezebel’s condemnation arose because women were not supposed to teach men. She was censured because of what she taught, not because she was a teacher.

Also, had a universal principle existed that women should not teach men, why did the Thyatiran church accept Jezebel as a teacher at all? Had there been such a principle then surely the church would have been reprimanded for disregarding it? Yet, on the contrary, the Thyatirans were censured only for tolerating the woman’s false teachings, not because they allowed her to teach.

read 1 Timothy 2 into the earlier texts, whose original readers had no access to Paul’s first letter to Timothy, we have no reason to doubt that Paul accepts women in ministry. Paul describes the ministries of women in the same language he employs to describe those of men” (p. 40). In this regard it will be recalled from section 5.3 of this study (Part A) how Paul used the term “fellow worker” to describe his male and female colleagues.

412 The Church is commonly accepted to have been established in approximately 33 AD, while the timeframe for the composition of 1 Timothy has been identified as 62-63 AD (Fee and Stuart 2002, p. 373). Any argument made that an oral, rather than written, prohibition could have been in place from the time of the Church’s inception would simply be an argument from silence as there is no indication in the Scriptures regarding any such prohibition. Generally, arguments from silence are regarded by scholars as not being very strong (Carson 1996, p. 139).

413 According to Irenaeus (c.180 AD), Revelation was written in approximately 95 AD (Fee and Stuart 2002, p. 426), although some modern scholars have argued for an earlier composition date (cited in Sproul 1998, pp. 141 – 145).

414 As has been observed, “*If women weren’t supposed to teach men, this would have been the best place for the Lord to make it known*” (Trombley 1985, p. 193).

This is further indication that women were accepted as teachers by the early Church.

Thus, it may be concluded that the Christians of the first century AD did not interpret 1 Timothy 2: 12 as constraining, or they were otherwise unaware of any limitation on, women teaching men the truth of the Gospel “publicly” or in any other context.⁴¹⁵ This is not an unreasonable conclusion particularly in consideration of the universal passages discussed in section 4 of this study (Part A). Since “Scripture interprets Scripture” it is reasonable to understand any injunction within this passage as having been originally written for a specific and localised application rather than being intended for all women everywhere. As will be noted in section 10.12 of the study, this was neither the first nor the only such instance in Paul’s writings.

10.3 Ephesian society and culture

The historical and cultural influences operating in Ephesus at the time of the writing of 1 Timothy 2: 12 – 15 need to be considered when seeking to understand its message.⁴¹⁶

Ephesus was the major centre of pagan religion in its region; in fact, it boasted the largest temple in Asia Minor, which was dedicated to Artemis, the goddess of fertility.⁴¹⁷ Illicit sex and symbolic death rites were common activities associated with the ancient so-called “mystery religions” and these were particularly common in the cult of Artemis of Ephesus. Furthermore, sacred prostitution was widely practised in the temples of Asia Minor that offered the worshipper a ritual union with the divine. It was accepted that women would lead in these activities.⁴¹⁸ Under the cult of Artemis the female was exalted and considered to be superior to the male. It also was believed that Artemis had appeared first before her male (human) consort. This made Artemis and all her female adherents superior to men.⁴¹⁹

Additionally, it was believed that Artemis could help protect women during the

415 Even the fact of the prohibition itself is an indication that women at Ephesus were engaged in teaching men, as Belleville (2000) has observed: “*We can also be fairly certain that women were functioning as teachers in the Ephesian community; otherwise, Paul would have no need for a corrective*” (p. 169). Similarly, of the later pronouncements by some of the Church Fathers against the involvement of women in ministry activities Torjesen (1995) has identified “... *an important implication in these ancient denunciations: that women actually held significant positions of leadership in the churches. Otherwise, there would have been no need for these fulminations*” (p. 114).

416 As noted by Payton (2002), “*The New Testament letters ... were written to first-century churches in the ancient Roman Empire. To understand them, we need to take into account the culture into which the biblical authors wrote; that is, we need to consider the historical context*” (p. 13). Similarly, as noted by Schreiner (2001), “... *we must interpret the Scriptures in their historical and cultural context. They were written to specific situations and to cultures that differed from our own*” (p. 219).

417 Grenz 1995, p. 126; Sommer 1991, pp. 7 – 8

418 Kroeger and Kroeger 1992, pp. 86, 92, 97, 98; Belleville 2004b, pp. 220, 221

419 Belleville 2004b, p. 219; Belleville 2005a, pp. 89 – 90

rigours of childbirth.⁴²⁰ In this regard, “*Artemis was seen as the Mother Goddess. She was the mother of life, the nourisher of all creatures, and the power of fertility in nature. Maidens turned to her as the protector of their virginity; barren women sought her aid, and women in labour turned to her for help.*”⁴²¹

The importance of the cult of Artemis to the Ephesians is evident from a reading of Acts 19: 23 – 41 where the people are recorded as having loudly protested for about two hours against Paul’s teachings and the associated impact on their livelihoods. The appendix to this study contains further information about the significance of the cult of Artemis.

In Asia Minor, women were known to have served as high priestesses of the imperial cult, civil servants, public officers and magistrates. In fact, the more the location was Romanised (such as Ephesus) the more the leadership of women was “visible”.⁴²²

Acceptance of the primacy of the feminine in Ephesian society as expressed through the cult of Artemis was not unusual, nor was it an isolated occurrence. It was common for many ancient societies to revere the feminine.⁴²³ Accordingly, the question arises: Could general societal beliefs and attitudes have had an influence on the Ephesian Christians? Given the social and economic importance of the cult of Artemis it would be very unusual if at least some of them, particularly those recently converted from paganism, still did not have some attachment to aspects of their former life.⁴²⁴ In this regard it has been noted, “*The unrestrained license of the pagan world affected the church as new converts joined its ranks. Many of them had no concept of ethical standards and needed to be taught the rudiments of moral conduct.*”⁴²⁵

Of the influence of pagan culture on the Corinthian Christians, for example, this study has previously noted one writer’s observation that:

The prevailing laxity in sexual behaviour, the gluttonous and idolatrous feasts, the incessant holiday-making in honor of the emperor or of the gods, and the interchange of entertainment in pagan homes must have affected many Christians. Particularly are these pressures mirrored in 1 Corinthians, an epistle written to the church in a prosperous heathen city. The moral degeneration of Corinth had infiltrated the church so that one man had taken his father’s wife and had consequently created a public scandal. Others had been so affected by the

420 Belleville 2000, p. 177; Belleville 2001, p. 128; Belleville 2004b, pp. 219 – 221; Belleville 2005a, p. 90

421 Belleville 2000, p. 201n46

422 Ibid, pp. 31 – 38, 50, 155; Belleville 2001, pp. 95 – 96; Belleville 2005a, pp. 54 – 56; D’Ambra 2007, p. 166

423 Husain 1997

424 Old ways of doing and thinking about things can be very difficult to change, particularly if they are entrenched in the individual or collective psyche. Although from a non-theological academic discipline the following observation about the nature and influence of culture is still relevant with respect to this point: “*Culture ... tends to be highly resistant to change because it is so deeply rooted*” (Sinclair 1991, p. 322).

425 Tenney 2004, p. 326

*atmosphere of idolatry that they did not know whether they should eat food that had been offered to idols or not (1 Cor 10: 23 – 31). Living as they did under the constant influence of idolatry, it was easy for the Christian to lose sight of the niceties of distinction in ethical behaviour.*⁴²⁶

The Ephesian Christians would have been no less susceptible to the cultural influences of their society.⁴²⁷ For example, in that society it was fashionable for women to adorn themselves ornately, such as when participating in religious activities.⁴²⁸ In this regard they “... would often braid their hair, interweaving into it golden spangles and threads that glittered and tinkled with every movement of the head. One ancient writer, Xenophon of Ephesus, described women with braided hair in such a way in a procession for the goddess Artemis as erotically attractive.”⁴²⁹

In fact, outward adornment was frequently regarded by pagan philosophers of the time as being indicative of “sexual seductiveness”.⁴³⁰ Given Paul’s emphatic teaching that Christians should avoid any form of sexual impropriety (1 Corinthians 5, 6: 18; Ephesians 5: 3; 1 Thessalonians 5: 22), his urging of the women of the Ephesian church not to focus on outward adornment particularly when they engaged in spiritual activities such as prayer comes as no surprise (1 Timothy 2: 9 – 10).⁴³¹

In accordance with the rules of biblical interpretation, it is essential to consider historical and cultural factors such as those outlined above when seeking to understand the message of 1 Timothy 2: 12 – 15.

10.4 Trouble at Ephesus

It has been observed, “*When we recognise that [Paul’s] letters were not written as abstract theological treatises but often as responses to specific problems within the context of specific church situations, we can better understand the*

426 Ibid, p. 138

427 One researcher, Steven Baugh, has questioned whether the beliefs and values of ancient Ephesian society could have had an influence on the local Christians of the time. However, not only have a number of his assumptions and conclusions been disputed (Belleville 2001, pp. 95 – 96n40; Belleville 2004b, pp. 220 – 221; Belleville 2005a, pp. 55 – 56, 90n135; Padgett, pp. 25 – 26) but passages such as 1 Corinthians 5: 9 – 11, 2 Timothy 4: 10 and 1 John 2: 15 – 17 illustrate that Christians can indeed be influenced by the beliefs and practices of their surrounding culture. This is the reason why Christians are exhorted to be “in the world, but not of the world” (John 15: 18 – 19, 17: 14 – 16; 1 Corinthians 15: 33 – 34; 2 Corinthians 6: 14 – 18; Colossians 2: 8, 3: 2; 2 Timothy 4: 10; Hebrews 10: 34, 11: 16, 13: 14; 1 John 2: 15).

428 Bragg 2003, p. 7

429 Archaeological Study Bible, “The Demeanour of Wives”, p. 2013

430 Davids 2004, p. 230; Blomberg 2001, p. 360; Osburn 2001, p. 241

431 Paul’s direction with respect to outward adornment has previously been discussed in section 5.5 of this study (Part A).

lessons these letters contain."⁴³² Consequently, the nature of the Ephesian church's internal problems should be considered when seeking to understand the message of 1 Timothy 2: 12 – 15. In this regard Belleville (2001) offers the following snapshot:

*The first step in getting a handle on 1 Timothy 2: 11 – 15 is to be clear about the letter as a whole. Why was Paul writing to Timothy? It certainly was not to provide routine instruction. His stance throughout is a corrective one. Paul is reacting to a situation that had gotten out of hand. False teachers needed silencing (1: 3 – 7, 18 – 20; 4: 1 – 8; 5: 20 – 22; 6: 3 – 10, 20 – 21). Two church leaders had been expelled (1: 20), and the men of the congregation had become angry and quarrelsome (2: 8). Women were dressing inappropriately (2: 9) and learning in a disruptive manner (2: 11 – 12). Some widows were going from house to house, speaking things they ought not to speak (5: 13). Other widows had turned away from the faith altogether to follow Satan (5: 15). Certain elders needed public rebuking because of their continuing sin ('Those continuing to sin are to be rebuked publicly so that the others may take warning' [5: 20 AT]). The congregation had turned to malicious talk, malevolent suspicions, and perpetual friction (6: 4 – 5), and some members of the church had wandered from the faith (6: 20 – 21). Overall, it was an alarming scenario.*⁴³³

As noted by Belleville (2000, 2001, 2004b), false teaching was high on the list of Paul's concerns in 1 Timothy. Estimates of the extent to which the letter is occupied in dealing with false teaching range from 35 to 50 percent.⁴³⁴ It is evident that elements of the false teaching related to the rejection of marriage and the promotion of asceticism and false knowledge (1 Timothy 4: 3, 6: 20 – 21). It was not necessary for the false teaching in question to have been done openly and in public; much such teaching would often be done furtively in order to avoid exposure and challenge (John 3: 19 – 20). Coincidentally, there are indications that at Ephesus it was being done "quietly", in people's homes (1 Timothy 5: 13, 15; 2 Timothy 3: 6). Some Male Headship proponents have also recognised that the need to confront false teaching at Ephesus was a significant reason for the writing of the letter.⁴³⁵

Thus, rather than being a piece of routine correspondence, the reason for the composition of this letter had more to do with helping Timothy deal with a range of problems and dysfunctional behaviours that were evident in the church at Ephesus (1 Timothy 1: 3ff). It is against this backdrop that the injunction and

432 Archaeological Study Bible, "The 'Missing' Letter from the Corinthians to Paul", p. 1870. Similarly, Kaiser *et al* (1996) describe 1 Timothy 2: 11 – 12 and 1 Corinthians 14: 33 – 34 as belonging to "... the category of 'corrective texts' whose purpose is focused toward a local situation ..." (p. 614).

433 Belleville 2001, pp. 120 – 121 (emphasis in text); also, Belleville 2005a, pp. 78 – 79; Bowman 2001, pp. 287 – 288; Blomberg 2001, pp. 358 – 360; Osburn 2001, p. 207n1

434 Belleville 2000, p. 165; Belleville 2001, p. 137; Belleville 2004b, p. 206. The teaching was "false" in the sense that it was contrary to the already revealed Will of God (Galatians 1: 6 – 9; Ephesians 4: 14; 1 Timothy 1: 3 – 11; 2 Timothy 3: 15 – 17).

435 For example Bowman 2001, p. 287; Blomberg 2001, p. 358; Bragg 2003, p. 5; House 1995, p. 163; Clark 1980, p. 193

corresponding remedy in verses 12 to 15 need to be understood.

10.5 Setting of the passage: public or private?

To arrive at a correct understanding of 1 Timothy 2: 12 – 15 it is essential to determine the setting in which it has application. Some Male Headship proponents argue that the “... *setting for this passage is the assembled church*” and that “... *when there is an assembled group of Christians, women should not teach the Bible to men or exercise governing authority over men.*”⁴³⁶

However, there is no indication in the passage that it was intended to apply “only” to a whole-of-church setting. In fact, the context of the passage suggests a specific concern for the whole of life, not just with congregational worship. As has been observed, “... *the contention that chapter 2 is concerned exclusively with conduct within the church worship service is an assumption without adequate support within the text.*”⁴³⁷ Given the nature of the problems the letter was written to address, Paul would have intended for his instructions to apply irrespective of whether the particular problems occurred within or outside the whole-of-church context.

This would mean, of course, that if Paul intended for a woman to be prohibited from teaching a man in the way that Male Headship proponents assert, then the prohibition applied regardless of the setting in which the teaching took place (public or private). If this was the case then Priscilla should never have been involved in teaching Apollos, even though the Scriptures attest that she was indeed involved in his instruction and without any hint of censure for doing so. Accordingly, it is reasonable to conclude that the issue at stake in 1 Timothy 2: 12 is not the setting in which the teaching takes place; rather, it is the nature of the teaching itself that is the cause for concern. In fact, as the following sections of this study will show, it is a particularly negative type of teaching that is the subject of the prohibition in verse 12, “... *not teaching per se.*”⁴³⁸ Priscilla’s involvement in the teaching of Apollos would not have offended against the prohibition because it did not constitute the particular type of teaching that was proscribed.

436 For example Grudem 2006, pp. 33, 34, 49; also, House 1995, pp. 159, 166

437 Pyles. Grudem’s (2006) rationale for arguing that the “assembled church” setting is in view is that, “*This is a setting in which men lift ‘holy hands’ to pray, and they do so ‘without anger or quarrelling,’ which implies that Paul is thinking of them in a group when they get together as an assembled church. Similarly, the demand that women dress ‘with modesty’ implies that Paul is thinking about a time when other people are present, as when the church gathers together*” (p. 34). The flaw in this reasoning is that if the assembled church context only is in view, then it could be argued that Paul’s words about the importance of not praying in a quarrelsome manner or the need to dress appropriately would have no application to men and women outside of the “assembled church” context, which of course would be highly problematic. In any event, if Paul’s instructions had been given in the context of the “assembled church only”, most likely he would have included specific indications to this effect (as was his practice elsewhere, for example 1 Corinthians 5: 4, 11: 17 – 20, 14: 23). That he did not do so in this instance is highly significant and is further evidence that he did not intend for his requirements to be constrained by setting.

438 Belleville 2004b, p. 223

Nevertheless, as the next section of this study will detail, some Male Headship proponents argue that rather than prohibiting teaching of a “negative” type, verse 12 prohibits the “positive” teaching of a man by a woman. While this argument will be considered further, one problem with it is that it is completely at odds with the fact that Priscilla was actively involved in teaching Apollos, a highly knowledgeable believer, to understand more completely the Will of God and was not rebuked for doing so either at the time or subsequently. To overcome this problem, Male Headship proponents commonly rationalise a distinction between the “public” teaching of men by a woman which they contend is prohibited and the “private” teaching of a man by a woman which they argue is permitted on grounds that it is “... *outside the context of the assembled congregation.*”⁴³⁹ It is argued, for example, that Priscilla’s teaching of Apollos was permissible because it was conducted privately and not during a whole-of-church worship setting.⁴⁴⁰ However, as shown in section 5.3 of this study (Part A), such distinctions are extremely tenuous since they are artificial constructions with no scriptural basis. It is also significant that there is no explicit scriptural injunction against women teaching men “publicly”.⁴⁴¹ Furthermore, to argue that 1 Timothy 2: 12 has no application outside the whole-of-church setting would lead to the highly dubious conclusion that Paul’s prior injunctions to men and women in that chapter also have no application outside of that context.

Some Male Headship proponents have further rationalised verse 12 by suggesting that the passage does not prevent a woman from teaching “... *skills (such as Greek or Hebrew or counselling) to the church*” provided that such teaching is not “*Bible teaching*”, or chairing a church committee “... *as long as that does not involve functioning as an elder with authority over the whole church.*”⁴⁴²

Similarly, another Male Headship proponent has argued: “... *All believers are to instruct one another, both when the church gathers and when we meet in smaller groups of two or three (Col 3: 16; 1 Cor 14: 26). To encourage and instruct one another is the responsibility of all believers. But such mutual encouragement and instruction is not the same thing as a woman being appointed to the pastoral office or functioning as the regular teacher of a gathering of men and women.*”⁴⁴³

One Male Headship proponent, Grudem (2006) has devised an elaborate list of “governing”, “teaching” and “public visibility/recognition” activities he considers are restricted to men and the “governing”, “teaching” and “public visibility/recognition” activities he considers are open to women albeit subject to a

439 For example Grudem 2006, p. 45; also, House 1995, p. 166; Sumner 2003, p. 228

440 Grudem 2006, pp. 45, 104

441 In referring to 1 Corinthians 14: 34 – 35 but also to the Scriptures more broadly Osburn (2001) notes, “... *neither in this nor in any other biblical text is there a prohibition against women speaking in public, on the ground that it is public*” (p. 204n64) (emphasis in text).

442 For example Grudem 2006, pp. 32, 34 – 35

443 Schreiner 2001, p. 191

series of complex and highly prescriptive caveats.⁴⁴⁴ In his list Grudem includes, for example, that teaching Bible or theology in a theological college should be restricted to men, although teaching as a Bible professor on a secular university campus should be open to both men and women.⁴⁴⁵ Grudem rationalises the distinction he makes in this regard on the basis that the latter activity is “... *essentially a combination of evangelism and teaching about the Bible as literature, mainly to non-Christians.*”⁴⁴⁶ From his list Grudem also states that only men should be members of the governing board of a church, although roles such as a church committee chairperson or “Sunday School Superintendent” should be open to both men and women. His rationale for making such a distinction is that the latter roles have “... *some kind of authority in the church, but it is less than the authority over the whole congregation that Paul has in mind in 1 Corinthians 14: 33 – 36; 1 Timothy 2: 12; 3; and Titus 1.*”⁴⁴⁷

The problem with insisting on a public/private dichotomy is that sheer practicality will make it necessary to develop a highly prescriptive and complicated list such as Grudem’s in order to articulate when a particular activity is “public” and when it is “private”, and when it can and cannot be done. Later in his book, when considering the question whether a woman could preach publicly with the permission of the church elders, Grudem (2006) writes, “[Paul] *said, ‘I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man’ and ‘no pastor or church elder or bishop or any other church officer has the authority to give people permission to disobey God’s Word.*”⁴⁴⁸ Despite this, he asserts that a woman could still exercise authority as a church committee chairperson or Sunday School Superintendent on the basis that such activities supposedly involve “less than” a whole-of-church exercise of authority.⁴⁴⁹

But surely, regardless of whether the authority exercised is “a little or a lot” it does not alter the fact that authority is still being exercised? If a woman is prohibited from “exercising authority” in one context (whole-of-church), what suddenly makes it acceptable for her to exercise it in another (committee chairperson/Sunday School Superintendent)? Grudem states that no one has the authority to give others permission to disobey God’s Word. Yet if it is truly God’s Will that women are not to exercise authority over men, why does Grudem suppose that it is permissible for a woman to exercise authority as a church committee chairperson or Sunday School Superintendent simply because the

444 Grudem 2006, pp. 54 – 63. The list is based on Grudem’s own understanding and interpretation of the passages in question and he readily admits that not everyone would agree with him (pp. 57, 63). Belleville (2000) has critiqued similar attempts to distinguish between what women can and cannot do based on the perceived *degree* of governing or teaching authority attached to the particular activities involved (pp. 150 – 151).

445 Grudem 2006, pp. 57, 59

446 Ibid, p. 59n35

447 Ibid, p. 55n25 (emphasis in text). While Grudem claims that 1 Corinthians 14: 33 – 36 prohibits a woman from engaging in authoritative roles in the Church, section 9 of this study demonstrated that the passage does not contain any indication that would warrant such a conclusion.

448 Ibid, p. 227

449 Ibid, p. 55n25

exercise of authority in such roles is “less than” the exercise of authority in a whole-of-church sense? It is notable that Grudem offers no scriptural support for his rationalisation in this regard.

This section of the study has highlighted several problems and inconsistencies associated with attempts by Male Headship proponents to rationalise an “assembled church only” setting as the backdrop for the prohibition in 1 Timothy 2: 12 on a woman teaching a man. Furthermore, it was seen that Paul intended the prohibition to apply irrespective of whether the setting of the teaching was public or private. This being the case the indications are strong that the nature of the teaching being conducted was the source of his concern rather than its setting. Accordingly, the question now arises: What type of teaching of a man by a woman was Paul actually prohibiting?

10.6 Verse 12: what type of teaching is prohibited?

A fundamental rule of biblical interpretation is that the meaning of words should be interpreted in the way that the original author and readers would have understood them.⁴⁵⁰ Before consideration is given to 1 Timothy 2: 12 in this respect, it will first be necessary to determine whether the words in verse 12 that are translated as “teach” (Greek: *didasko*) and “have authority over” (Greek: *authentain*) involve separate proscriptions or are linked in some way.

Some Male Headship proponents argue that verse 12 constitutes two distinct prohibitions: a prohibition on a woman teaching a man and a prohibition on a woman exercising authority over a man.⁴⁵¹ However, such a view is not supported by the original Greek text in which the word *authentain* is used to actually explain the type of teaching that was being prohibited.⁴⁵² In this regard one writer has described the purpose of *authentain* as follows: “... *the admonition ‘not to teach or domineer over a man’ is a hendiadys, an expression that uses two words to express a single idea.*”⁴⁵³

Belleville (2000, 2001, 2004b, 2005a, 2005c) has undertaken research into the Greek correlative *ouk ... oude* (“neither ... nor”) as used in verse 12 and has found that it defines one activity, not two.⁴⁵⁴ In particular, she has found that, “*The correlative construction ‘neither ... nor’ (ouk ... oude) is what links the infinitives ‘to teach’ and ‘to dominate’ ... In biblical Greek (and Hebrew) ‘neither ... nor’ is a poetic device that ... connects similar or related ideas, like the Lord who watches over Israel will ‘neither slumber nor sleep’ (Ps 121: 4).*”⁴⁵⁵

450 Henrichsen and Jackson 1990, p. 183

451 For example Schreiner 2001, p. 220; House 1995, pp. 46 – 49

452 Grenz 1995, p. 129; Belleville 2000, pp. 173, 176; Belleville 2001, pp. 124, 126, 127, 135 – 136

453 Hutson 2003, p. 4; also, Osburn 2001, pp. 220 – 223. NB: The term “hendiadys” means “... *the expression of an idea by the use of two independent words, one of which is subordinate to and comments on the other*” (Osburn 2001, p. xvi). Notably, the earliest known commentary on 1 Timothy 2:12, that by Origen, treats it as a single prohibition (Payne 2008, p. 253).

454 Belleville 2005c, p. 328

455 Belleville 2001, pp. 126, 135; Belleville 2005a, pp. 88, 98

Belleville has also found that the correlative *ouk ... oude* is used elsewhere in the New Testament to pair or group:

- synonyms (such as Galatians 4: 14);
- closely related ideas (as with 1 Thessalonians 5: 5); and
- antonyms (for example Galatians 3: 28).

Furthermore, it is used to:

- describe a move from the general to the particular (as with 1 Corinthians 2: 6);
- define a natural progression of related ideas (such as Matthew 6: 26); and
- define a related purpose or a goal (for example Matthew 6: 20).⁴⁵⁶

However, it is never used to pair a particular idea with a general idea (such as “neither to teach nor exercise authority over”). From this Belleville has concluded: “... *if Paul had the exercise of authority in mind, he would have put it first, followed by teaching as a specific example (i.e., ‘I permit a woman neither to exercise authority over nor to teach a man’)*.”⁴⁵⁷ Consequently, Belleville has proposed that the purpose of the correlative in verse 12 is to “define a related purpose or goal” (such as “I do not permit a woman to teach a man in a domineering way”).⁴⁵⁸

Another writer who considers that “teaching” and “domineering” in verse 12 are linked is Osburn (2001) who points out that “... *in the Greek text, the verb ‘domineer’ [NEB; ‘have authority’ RSV NIV] qualifies ‘teach’ and specifies what kind of teaching is prohibited.*” Drawing on the principles of Greek grammar Osburn notes that “... *when two Greek verbs are joined in this way, the nearer qualifies the farther, i.e. ‘domineer’ qualifies ‘teach.’*” Osburn concludes, “*It is not that these women are ‘teaching’ per se, but specifically that they are ‘teaching domineeringly’ that annoys Paul.*”⁴⁵⁹

Similarly, Towner (2006) observes that “... *authentain ... here describes something about the way in which didasko (‘to teach’) was being done.*”⁴⁶⁰

Yet another writer, Payne (2008), has noted that “... *Paul typically uses oude not to convey two separate ideas, but to join two expressions together in order to convey a single idea. Consequently, to interpret oude in 1 Tim 2.12 as*

456 Belleville 2000, p. 176; Belleville 2001, p. 126; Belleville 2004b, p. 218; Belleville 2005a, pp. 87 – 88

457 Belleville 2001, pp. 127, 136; Belleville 2005a, pp. 88, 98; also, Belleville 2004b, p. 217

458 Belleville 2001, p. 127; Belleville 2004b, p. 219; Belleville 2005a, pp. 88 – 89; Padgett, p. 25. While one Male Headship proponent, Kostenberger (2005) disagrees with Belleville’s findings, it is notable that another Male Headship proponent, Blomberg (2001) has observed that “... *Belleville’s study does prove helpful, because she shows the diversity of relationships among paired items in similar constructions; one cannot simply assume the two terms are mutually defining because of the grammar*” (p. 363n144).

459 Osburn 2001, pp. 246, 246n102

460 Towner 2006, p. 224n97

*separating two different prohibitions for women, one against teaching and the other against having authority over a man, does not conform to Paul's typical use of *oude*.*"⁴⁶¹

Some Male Headship proponents have also recognised that these two words are linked. For example, Roberts (1964) observes, "*Grammatically 'man' is not the object of the verb 'teach' in the sentence. 'Teach' is intransitive and absolute, grammatically. Lenski, the great Lutheran commentator, hits on the correct grammatical exegesis of the passage. 'Usurp' authority is an unfortunate translation in the King James. The verb means to 'exercise authority,' to 'domineer,' and man is the subject of this verb alone. But 'have dominion over a man' is the explanatory clause of 'teach.'*"⁴⁶²

Similarly, Blomberg (2001) notes that "... *the two terms ... are closely related and together help to define a single concept. This makes it overwhelmingly likely that 1 Timothy 2: 12 Paul is referring to one specific kind of authoritative teaching than two independent activities.*"⁴⁶³

Despite the evidence that the particular teaching being prohibited is explained by the use of *authenthein*, one Male Headship proponent, Kostenberger, has argued that it is *didaskein* which determines the nature of *authenthein*, be it positive or negative. Kostenberger has further asserted that there was no adverse intent behind the linking of *didaskein* and *authenthein* in verse 12 since in the Pastoral Epistles *didaskein* is used in a positive sense which would then mean that *authenthein* must also be interpreted positively, such as in the sense of the normal exercise of authority.⁴⁶⁴ Kostenberger co-authored a book, *Women in the Church, A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15* (Baker, 1995), in which he detailed his study in this regard.

Kostenberger's contention has been challenged on several grounds. For instance, it has been noted by some writers that in the Pastoral Epistles there are instances of "to teach" being used in a negative sense such as in reference to the activities of false teachers (Titus 1: 11; 1 Timothy 1: 7, 6: 3).⁴⁶⁵ This has

461 Payne 2008, p. 244

462 Roberts 1964, p. 23. The validity of the assertion that the verb in question, *authenthein*, also can mean "exercise authority" will be discussed in the next section of this study.

463 Blomberg 2001, pp. 363 – 364. Another Male Headship proponent, Hurley (1981) also notes that "teach" and "authority" are linked, although like Blomberg he takes verse 12 to be prohibiting a woman from engaging in "authoritative teaching" (pp. 200 – 201). The validity of assertions that the passage is referring to a particular kind of "authoritative teaching" will be considered shortly in this study.

464 Kostenberger 2006; Kostenberger cited in Grudem 2006, pp. 189 – 191; Schreiner 2001, pp. 220 – 221; Schreiner 2005b, pp. 309 – 310; Green Baggins (2); Cryder, pp. 6 – 7

465 For example Sumner 2003, p. 253n21; Padgett, p. 25. Kostenberger (2005, 2006) has responded to observations such as Padgett's by arguing that in 1 Timothy 1: 7, 6: 3 the words used indicate the teaching in question to have been false teaching and that there is no similar indication regarding the use of the word "teach" in verse 12. In subsequently referring to his 1995 book Kostenberger (2006) states, "*Since the word 'teach' regularly in the Pastorals is presented as a positive activity (see esp. 1 Tim. 4:11; 6:2; 2 Tim. 2:2), and one in which Timothy and other church leaders are called to engage, it was concluded that a negative force of 'teach' in 1 Tim. 2:12 is highly unlikely, especially since a different word,*

resulted in one writer observing, “*This fact undermines a major point [Kostenberger’s] book seeks to make, viz that Paul forbids good teaching and good authority to women.*”⁴⁶⁶ Moreover, another writer has pointed out that Kostenberger’s contention does not take account of the fact that in 1 Timothy 2: 12 “... *the infinitives (“to teach,” authentein) are functioning grammatically not as verbs but as nouns in the sentence structure*”, thus unduly limiting the possibilities for understanding how New Testament “neither-nor” constructions may be applied.⁴⁶⁷ Yet another writer’s conclusion with respect to Kostenberger’s argument that “... *only two categories of usage are important for 1 Tim 2: 12*” is

heterodidaskalein, ‘to teach falsely,’ is used elsewhere in the same epistle (1 Tim. 1:3; 6:3).” Quite apart from the fact that this still leaves Titus 1: 11 as an example of the word for “teach” (not *heterodidaskalein*) being used negatively in the Pastorals (other examples outside the Pastorals include Matthew 15: 9 and Revelation 2: 20 [Osburn 2001, p. 222n43]), Kostenberger’s argument is not clear as to how *authentein* could be understood to assume a positive meaning in verse 12 when as this study will show there is not a single precedent from around the time of the first century AD for it being understood or used in such a way. Not only does Kostenberger’s approach in this regard appear to conflict with the rule of biblical interpretation that words should be interpreted in the way that the original author and readers would have understood them (Henrichsen and Jackson 1990, p. 183) it is also, as noted above and despite his claims to the contrary, moot as to whether the word “teach” should “regularly” be understood positively in the Pastoral Epistles given the example in Titus 1: 11 where it is used in a negative context. Clearly, whether “to teach” is to be interpreted as having a positive or negative connotation will depend on the context in which it is found (Osburn 2001, p. 223n43). Similarly, Towner (2006) points out that Kostenberger’s “... *assertion that the verb ‘to teach’, when used absolutely in the NT, is always regarded positively by the respective writer is far too confident and somewhat artificial. The context, not just an expressed object, may supply the ‘content’*” (p. 223). In a footnote on this point Towner (2006) writes, “*In my opinion, from the standpoint of lexical-semantic requirements, once a verb such as didasko is used in a negative sense (ie to teach something inferior, substandard, untrue, or contrary to the law, as in Matt 5: 19), it is quite capable of implying as much in a case where what is being ‘taught’ is left implicit, if the context warrants. The ground rules are the same as those that apply to didasko used of positive constructive teaching, with or without content expressed*” (p. 223n96). Towner (2006) continues, “*If ... Paul is addressing women who have been involved in teaching the heresy, then ‘teaching’ is here under a negative evaluation. But even if the problem is that they have assumed the role inappropriately (whatever they teach) out of a desire to dominate in the public meeting (or out of a desire to enact gospel freedom), their assumption of the teaching role is under a negative evaluation*” (pp. 223 – 224, emphasis added). There is no doubt that false teaching was a cause for concern in the letter to Timothy (1 Timothy 1: 3ff). However, as Towner points out, it is not necessarily the case that Paul’s prohibition in verse 12 was warranted because the women in question had been engaged in false teaching. It would have been warranted even if they had adopted a domineering manner over those whom they taught. In fact, such a scenario is consistent with the known uses of *authentein* from around the time of the first century AD as well as the particular cultural circumstances at Ephesus (see section 10.3 of this study). This point is recognised by the TNIV, for example, which includes a footnote that verse 12 can be rendered as “*I do not permit a woman to teach a man in a domineering way.*” The negative context of verse 12 will be discussed shortly in this study.

⁴⁶⁶ Padgett, p. 25. In subsequently referring to his 1995 book Kostenberger (2006) has acknowledged the lack of lexical data to support his contention of *authentein* as meaning “to have authority” in a neutral or positive sense: “... *the likelihood was suggested that ‘exercise authority’ (Grk. authentein) carries a neutral or positive connotation, but owing to the scarcity of the term in ancient literature (the only NT occurrence is 1 Tim 2: 12; found only twice preceding the NT in extrabiblical literature) no firm conclusions could be reached on the basis of lexical study alone.*” McCarthy (2008) shows that the two particular extra-biblical usages of *authentein* cited by Kostenberger as evidence for his conclusions (BGU 1208 and the Philodemus fragment) actually support the understanding of the word as having negative, rather than neutral or positive, connotations. Similarly, Osburn (2001) notes that the use of *authentein* in these two examples has the meaning “to domineer” (p. 82).

⁴⁶⁷ Belleville 2004b, pp. 217 – 219; also Belleville 2001, p. 136; Belleville 2005a, p. 98

that the argument "... is simply wrong. By omitting the important category of 'hendiadys,' restricting categories and manipulating data, Kostenberger presents a mass of material that gives only apparent support to his thesis. By distorting and manipulating data, Kostenberger wrongly dismisses 'teaching domineeringly' as even a possible meaning in 2: 12."⁴⁶⁸

Two further points may be made in relation to the contention that "... since the term 'teach' has no negative connotations we should not read a negative sense into 'exercise authority'."⁴⁶⁹ Firstly, contrary to claims that if *didaskhein* is used positively then it means that *authenthein* must also be understood positively, the fact is that there is "... no grammatical or syntactical rule that keeps *oude* from conjoining a positive activity with a negative activity."⁴⁷⁰ Secondly, as the next section in this study will show, rather than having neutral or positive connotations *authenthein*, as it was used during the first century AD, had decidedly negative (domineering) undertones and was not the "normal" word used for authority (which was *exousia*).⁴⁷¹ Accordingly, even if *didaskhein* in verse 12 was to be taken as a positive activity, there is no impediment to it being linked with a negative activity such as what *authenthein* was understood to be during the first century AD.

One final point to consider in relation to this particular contention is that when interpreting the Scriptures it is important to "... interpret a word in relation to its sentence and context."⁴⁷² That this is a fundamental principle of biblical interpretation was established in section 3 of this study (Part A). One Male Headship proponent, Schreiner (2001) has also recognised it as being necessary with respect to understanding the link between *didaskhein* and *authenthein* in verse 12: "... whether the activities are positive or negative is established by the context."⁴⁷³ Furthermore, Schreiner (2001) has noted that, "... it is just possible in context that a term with a positive meaning ('to exercise authority') could have a negative meaning ('to domineer')."⁴⁷⁴

468 Osburn 2001, p. 223. Overall, Osburn's (2001) assessment of Kostenberger's 1995 book is that, "... significant problems in the volume leave it unconvincing. Major problems exist with their presentation of word study, grammar, and interpretation of this troublesome text. In fact, there are major problems with each of the seven chapters in the book ..." (p. 212; see Osburn 2001, pp. 213 – 252 for detailed critique).

469 Schreiner 2001, p. 221

470 Payne 2008, pp. 250 – 251, 252

471 Belleville 2001, pp. 125, 133 – 135; Belleville 2004b, pp. 211 – 216; Belleville 2005a, pp. 85, 95 – 97

472 Henrichsen and Jackson 1990, p. 186

473 Schreiner 2001, p. 220

474 Ibid, p. 221 (emphasis in text). While Schreiner acknowledges the role of context in understanding scriptural meaning, in this case he still appeals to Kostenberger's work as showing that both terms are either inherently positive or inherently negative and that as the term "teach" has no negative connotations then it must mean that no negative connotations can be read into the term "exercise authority" (p. 221). However, as noted in this study, such reasoning ignores the fact that there is "... no grammatical or syntactical rule that keeps *oude* from conjoining a positive activity with a negative activity" (Payne 2008, pp. 250 – 251, 252). Also, it ignores the evidence that *authenthein* was understood in a decidedly negative, domineering way during the first century AD and was not the normal word used for "authority" (Belleville 2001, pp. 125, 133 – 135; Belleville 2004b, pp. 211 – 216; Belleville 2005a, pp. 85, 95 – 97).

There are several indications within the surrounding context of verse 12 which point to the negative association between *didaskein* and *authenthein*. In this regard one study has observed:

Paul, starting in 1 Timothy 2: 8 begins positively requesting men to pray lifting up holy hands and not (negatively) with wrath and dissension; in verse 9 Paul begins in a positive sense requesting women to clothe themselves modestly and not – here in a negative sense – with braided hair or costly garments; in verse 11 he begins positively allowing a woman to learn in a quiet manner but not, (in verse 12) negatively, allowing a woman to teach or have authority over a man; in verse 13 Paul affirms positively Adam was created first but (in verse 14) Eve in contrast, negatively, was deceived and fell into transgression. There seems to be a pattern to what Paul is, in a positive sense, affirming and what he is, in a negative sense, not allowing.⁴⁷⁵

Another indication from the context of the passage which identifies the negative association between *didaskein* and *authenthein* is the fact that the activity in question is being *prohibited*. Prohibitions are usually applied to activities that are by nature harmful or negative. For example, the first man and woman were prohibited from eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because of the harm that would follow if they did (Genesis 2: 17, 3: 3). Likewise, Christians are exhorted not to engage in certain activities because of the potential dire consequences of doing so (1 Corinthians 6: 9 – 10; Galatians 5: 19 – 21). Accordingly, the question may be asked: Why ban someone from engaging in a positive or neutral activity? On this basis alone the prohibition in verse 12 can reasonably be seen as a prohibition on a particular activity that was negative, rather than positive or neutral, in character.

A further indication from the context that identifies the negative association between *didaskein* and *authenthein* is that in verse 14 Paul refers to the deception of Eve by Satan. If *didaskein* and *authenthein* were inherently positive as asserted by Male Headship proponents,⁴⁷⁶ why would Paul need to refer to such an archetypal negative event if he was only prohibiting a woman from engaging in an activity of a purely positive nature? What purpose would be served by referring to this incident if verse 12 had nothing to do with prohibiting a woman from engaging in a negative activity? If *didaskein* and *authenthein* were indeed inherently positive, as argued by Male Headship proponents, why would Paul need to follow up his prohibition on a woman teaching a man by referring to this incident at all?⁴⁷⁷ The citing of Eve's deception in verse 14 is a strong contextual

475 Internet 8 (emphasis in text). One Male Headship proponent, Hurley (1981), similarly observes: "Verse 11 makes a positive statement, and verse 12 a corresponding negative one" (p. 199). Paul continued to utilise this technique of contrasting acceptable (positive) behaviour with non-acceptable (negative) behaviour in 1 Timothy 3: 2 – 11.

476 For example Schreiner 2001, p. 221

477 On the role of the event referred to in verse 14 in establishing the negative context for the type of teaching that was prohibited in verse 12 Giles (2008), in reviewing Grudem's 2006 book *Evangelical Feminism: A New Path to Liberalism*, has written, "As with *kephale* in 1 Corinthians 11: 3, the context of the passage is the most important indicator of the word's meaning within the range of legitimate semantic

indication that the injunction in verse 12 was intended to prohibit a woman's involvement in an activity that was regarded by Paul as being negative, rather than positive, in character.

Verse 15 provides yet another contextual indication that the behaviour Paul was prohibiting in verse 12 was negative, not positive or neutral, in character. In this regard Paul highlights the qualities that he wants the women in question to display (faith, love, and holiness with propriety) as opposed to the behaviour that he was proscribing (*authentēin* teaching).

It is significant that the TNIV includes as a footnote to this verse that it can be rendered as “*I do not permit a woman to teach a man in a domineering way.*” This rendering not only recognises the link between the two key words *didasko* and *authentēin* but also the role of *authentēin* in explaining how *didasko* is to be understood.

10.7 Verse 12 continued: the meaning of *authentēin*

Now it has been established that verse 12 is prohibiting a particular type of teaching rather than teaching in general, the next question is: What does *authentēin* actually mean? Male Headship proponents assert that “to exercise authority” in a positive, ordinary sense is the word's most “natural” meaning.⁴⁷⁸ However, does it indicate “ordinary” authority or is it indicative of something more negative? How does it relate to the particular type of teaching being prohibited?

The word commonly used in the New Testament for authority is *exousia*.⁴⁷⁹ As noted in section 7 of this study (Part A), *exousia* is used at least 100 times in the New Testament. However, *authentēin* appears only once, here in 1 Timothy 2: 12. On no other occasion when Paul was writing about “authority” did he use *authentēin*; he only ever used *exousia* or its cognate forms.⁴⁸⁰ Had Paul intended

possibilities. In 1 Timothy 2, authentēin is used of what Paul forbids, and then he backs up his ruling by reminding his readers that Eve was the one deceived by the Devil – I take it implying the women at Ephesus have also been deceived by the Devil (1 Tim 2: 14). Surely, this suggests a negative connotation. It is also to be noted that ‘Evangelical Feminism’s’ case for the neutral meaning of authentēin is based on the work of a fellow hierarchist, H. Scott Baldwin, who ignores the cognate noun forms of this verb that, in the first century, definitely had very negative meanings” (p. 29).

478 For example Knight 1985, p. 18; Hurley 1981, p. 202; House 1995, pp. 32, 162; Schreiner 2001, p. 221; Grudem 2006, p. 185

479 Cunningham *et al* 2000, pp. 222, 275n32

480 If the “natural” meaning of *authentēin* is “to exercise authority” as Male Headship proponents assert, why did Paul not use it more often when he wrote about authority in his other letters? Why did he overwhelmingly use *exousia* or its cognates when referring to authority in his other writings but never *authentēin*? Why did he not use *authentēin* more often if indeed it did have a meaning that was “approximately synonymous” with *exousia* (as argued by Grudem 2006, p. 196)? If he was writing only about “ordinary” authority in 1 Timothy 2: 12, why did he not just use *exousia* or its verb form *exousiazō* as was his practice elsewhere (1 Corinthians 6: 12, 7: 4) (Osburn 2001, p. 82)? The only reasonable explanation for why verse 12 is the sole passage where Paul used *authentēin* rather than *exousia* (or a cognate) is because he understood *authentēin* and *exousia* to be completely different, not synonymous, in

to refer to the normal exercise of authority in verse 12 it is highly unlikely that he would have used *authentein*. As has been observed:

*... he could have picked any number of words. Within the semantic domain of "exercise authority", biblical lexicographers J P Louw and Eugene Nida have twelve entries and of "rule, "govern" forty-seven entries [authentein is noticeably absent from both of these domains]. Yet Paul picked none of these. Why not? The obvious reason is the authentein carried a nuance (other than "rule" or "have authority") that was particularly suited to the Ephesian situation.*⁴⁸¹

The actual meaning of *authentein* also disqualifies it from use as a synonym for normal, lawful authority. In this regard it should be noted that in the early centuries of the Church, *authentein* was not associated with normal authority.⁴⁸² In fact, during the first century AD *authentein* "... was more likely to carry negative than neutral or positive connotations."⁴⁸³ This is not surprising since, "... the verb comes from the Greek word for 'self' and most likely had negative overtones for Christian hearers."⁴⁸⁴ This is particularly pertinent since Paul had exhorted Christians to "crucify self" (Galatians 2: 20).

In the first century AD *authentein* was associated strongly with the sense of power, domination, being autocratic, being the master of, and domineering over.⁴⁸⁵ In this regard it has been noted:

Those who have studied Hellenistic letters argue that authenteo originated in the popular Greek vocabulary as a synonym for "to dominate someone". Biblical lexicographers J P Louw and Eugene Nida put authenteo into the semantic domain "to control, restrain, domineer" and define the verb as "to control in a domineering manner": "I do not allow women ... to dominate men" (1 Tim 2: 12). Other meanings do not appear until well into the third and fourth centuries AD. So there is no first-century warrant for translating authentein as "to exercise

meaning and that the circumstances in Ephesus were such that it required the use of *authentein* not *exousia*. It was "... an unusual word for an unusual situation" (Cunningham et al 2000, p. 222).

481 Belleville 2004b, p. 211; Belleville 2005a, p. 83. Similarly, Osburn (2001) notes, "If 'exercise authority' had been meant, Paul would have used *exouiazō* here instead ... one only has to note 1 Cor 6: 12, or perhaps 7: 4, to see that if 'exercise authority' was meant, Paul certainly knew and used the usual term *exousiazō*" (p. 82). While one Male Headship proponent, Grudem (2006) acknowledges that *authentein* may have conveyed certain nuances of meaning, he concludes "... but it is difficult for us to say what those might be" (p. 196) which is inexplicable given that he has no difficulty with insisting that *authentein* can only mean "have authority over" (p. 196).

482 Pyles; Belleville 2004b, pp. 209 – 210, 216

483 Grenz 1995, pp. 132 – 133; also, Belleville 2005a, p. 86

484 Padgett, p. 25; Vine n.d., p. 91. Similarly, Belleville (2004b) notes, "Lexicographers, for the most part, agree that the root of *authentēs* is *auto+entes*, meaning 'to do or to originate something with one's own hand' (LSJ *autoentes*). Usage confirms this. An *authentēs* is someone who originates or carries out an action" (p. 212).

485 Belleville 2005a, p. 95; Vine n.d. p. 92; Bullinger 1975, p. 77; Thayer 1979, # 831, p. 84. Clearly, *authentein* involves attitudes and behaviour that are antithetical to the attitudes and values which Jesus taught (Matthew 20: 25 – 28; Mark 10: 42 – 45; Luke 22: 25 – 26). Paul was very familiar with Jesus' teachings (Galatians 1: 12).

*authority” and for understanding Paul in 1 Timothy 2: 12 to be speaking of the carrying out of one’s official duties. Rather the sense is the Koine “to dominate, to get one’s way.” The NIV’s “to have authority over” therefore must be understood in the sense of holding sway or mastery over another. This is supported by the grammar of the verse. If Paul had a routine exercise of authority in view, he would have put it first, followed by teaching as a specific example. Instead he starts with teaching, followed by authentein as a specific example. Given this word order, authentein meaning “to dominate” or “gain the upper hand” provides the best fit in the context.*⁴⁸⁶

As noted previously in this study, context plays a large part in determining the meaning of words. It was noted, for example, how the citing of Eve’s deception by Satan in verse 14 emphasises the negative sense of the prohibition given in verse 12. The negative connotations of *authentein* are further established within the context of the passage by the use of the word translated as “submission” in verse 11 and the word translated as “silent” in verse 12. In these instances Paul sought to contrast the various behaviours by pointing out that being “submissive” and “silent” were more highly desirable than engaging in *authentein* teaching.

Regarding verse 11, the question may be asked: To whom were the women in question to be submissive? The passage would not have intended for them to submit to males since it does not designate men to be the teachers let alone provide authorisation for men to exercise authority over women. It has been suggested by one writer that verse 11 could be understood as requiring submission either to one’s teachers or to oneself (in the sense of having self-control): “*Submission to a teacher well suits a learning context, but so does self-control. A calm, submissive spirit was a necessary prerequisite for learning back then.*”⁴⁸⁷ It more than likely seems that in this verse Paul was concerned to ensure that the women possessed appropriate learning attitudes. In this regard it has been observed that “... *the phrase, ‘with all submissiveness,’ describes the manner in which these women are to learn ... ‘submissiveness’ refers to a willingness to be taught and to be accountable to what is taught.*”⁴⁸⁸ Thus, in verse 11 Paul was distinguishing behaviour that was approved (submissive learning attitudes) from that which was reproved in verse 12 (engaging in *authentein*, domineering teaching).⁴⁸⁹

Regarding verse 12, Paul again contrasts appropriate and inappropriate behaviours. The word translated “silent” in the NIV is the Greek word *hesuchia*, not *sigao* as is used in 1 Corinthians 14: 27 – 34. Rather than meaning “absence of speech” (which is the meaning of *sigao* [see section 9 of this study]), *hesuchia* means “peace”, “peaceable”, “undisturbing” and “harmony”. It is

486 Belleville 2004b, pp. 216 – 217; also, Belleville 2001, p. 125; Belleville 2005a, p. 85

487 Belleville 2001, p. 123; also, Belleville 2004b, p. 208; Cunningham *et al* 2000, p. 218

488 Osburn 2001, p. 245

489 Some Male Headship proponents appear to concur with this point. For example, Hurley (1981) writes that, “*Verses 11 and 12 should be taken together. Verse 11 makes a positive statement, and verse 12 a corresponding negative one*” (p. 199).

related to the word translated “peace” in 1 Timothy 2: 2.

It is notable that while the NIV translates *hesuchia* as “silent”, the TNIV more appropriately translates it as “quiet”. With respect to the meaning of *hesuchia* it has been noted:

*... in the first century “silence” (hesychia) was a positive attribute. It did not necessarily entail “not speaking”, as is evident in Paul’s use of the word earlier in the chapter (1 Tim 2: 2; compare 2 Thess 3: 12). Rather, it implied respect or lack of disagreement (as in Acts 11: 18, 21: 14). As a result, the rabbis and the early church fathers deemed quietness appropriate for rabbinical students, wise persons and even leaders.*⁴⁹⁰

Despite the evidence regarding the negative meaning of *authenthein* as it was understood and used in Paul’s time, some Male Headship proponents have argued the use of this word indicates that women should only ever be learners rather than teachers.⁴⁹¹ However, not only does such an assertion conflict with passages such as Romans 15: 14, Colossians 3: 16, 2 Timothy 2: 2 and Hebrews 5: 12 where a teaching role for Christians (irrespective of gender or setting) was anticipated, it also ignores the fact of the many faithful women during the New Testament period who were valued (particularly by Paul) for both their teaching expertise and leadership abilities (Romans 16; 1 Corinthians 16: 19; Philippians 4: 2 – 3; Colossians 4: 15; 2 Timothy 4: 19). Moreover, it ignores the fact that all Christians (regardless of gender) were exhorted to live quiet (*hesuchia*) lives and not to engage in controversy (1 Thessalonians 4: 11; 2 Thessalonians 3: 12; 1 Timothy 1: 4, 2: 2). In verse 12 the women of the church at Ephesus for which Timothy was responsible were reminded of this requirement.⁴⁹² Thus, in making this statement Paul required them to assume an attribute that was antithetical to the nature of the activity which they had hitherto been engaged (that is, *authenthein* teaching).

Given the negative domineering connotations associated with *authenthein* in the way it was understood and used during the first century AD, it has been suggested that verse 12 may be best understood as follows: “*I do not permit a woman to teach a man in a dominating way but to have a quiet demeanour.*”⁴⁹³ As noted previously in this study, the TNIV also includes as a footnote to verse

490 Grenz 1995, p. 128; also, Blomberg 2001, p. 360

491 For example Roberts (1964) states, “*The exercise of the gift of prophecy, teaching, or preaching, was the principal means of instructing or edifying the church. In such exercises women found their proper places as learners, and their proper attitude was that of quietness. ‘Quietness’ is simply the converse of ‘teaching’ ... Teaching implies authority, and a woman’s place is in subjection*” (pp. 22 – 23). In response to such arguments it is important to note that verse 11 itself does not include any indication that women were only ever meant to be learners. This is an interpretation that needs to be read into the passage.

492 Even though the letter was addressed to Timothy, it contained information that was applicable to the Ephesian church: “*Paul went back and forth continuously between these two topics – personal instruction to Timothy and teaching on the ministry of the church ... this back-and-forth style of writing is called a literary interchange, or an A-B-A-B structure*” (Cunningham et al 2000, p. 206).

493 Belleville 2001, p. 127; Belleville 2004b, p. 219

12 that it can be rendered as “*I do not permit a woman to teach a man in a domineering way.*” If understood in this respect the focus and application of the passage changes completely. Instead of being seen as a prohibition on women teaching men generally (which is a problematic interpretation given other scriptural evidence), verse 12 would be understood as prohibiting only inappropriate teaching that “... *tries to gain the upper hand.*”⁴⁹⁴

The question may be asked: How did a word with such a negative background come to be understood as meaning “normal” authority? As with some English words that have changed in meaning over time, so it was in the centuries following the New Testament period that *authentēin* gradually came to be associated with the concept of someone “having authority” over another in a mundane or routine sense.⁴⁹⁵ Indeed, such mundane use did not arise until late into the third and fourth centuries AD.⁴⁹⁶ Even after its gradual acceptance in this regard, the association of *authentēin* with “normal” authority was by no means universal for as late as the 1300s the word was still considered by some to be too “vulgar” for use.⁴⁹⁷

It should be noted that even though *authentēin* gradually assumed this new meaning, the word as used in 1 Timothy 2: 12 was still historically understood to mean “to domineer” rather than “to exercise authority”. In this respect early Latin versions of the Scriptures, such as the fourth century AD Vulgate confirm the domineering sense of *authentēin* by translating verse 12 accordingly.⁴⁹⁸ Similarly, other translations from ancient times (such as the Old Latin [2nd – 4th century AD]) to modern (such as the New English Bible and the Berkeley Version of the New Testament) have rendered *authentēin* in this instance to mean “dominate” or “domineer”.⁴⁹⁹ It is instructive to note that no Bible translation rendered it as “exercising authority over” until that which was produced by Martin Luther in 1522 and even then, his was one of only two such translations to do so.⁵⁰⁰

While a number of English translations between the 1940s and early 1980s such as the RSV and NIV have rendered *authentēin* as “authority” in a neutral sense, it is significant that not all English translations produced in the latter part of the 20th century have done so.⁵⁰¹ As noted earlier in this section of the study, the TNIV includes a footnote which recognises that verse 12 could be translated: “*I do not permit a woman to teach a man in a domineering way.*” Thus,

494 Belleville 2001, p. 127; Belleville 2004b, p. 223

495 Grenz 1995, p. 133; Trombley 1985, pp. 174 – 178; Belleville 2000, p. 175; Belleville 2001, p. 125; Belleville 2004b, p. 216

496 Belleville 2001, p. 125n90; Belleville 2004b, p. 216. Payne (2008) notes, “*The first clear instance of authentēin meaning ‘exercise authority’ is ca. 370 CE, Saint Basil*” (p. 236n4).

497 Trombley 1985, p. 175; Kroeger and Kroeger 1992, p. 90. In this context “vulgar” should be understood as “popular” or “common” rather than in the formal “literary” sense (Belleville 2004b, p. 216).

498 Belleville 2001, p. 126; Belleville 2005a, p. 86

499 Belleville 2004b, pp. 209 – 211; Belleville 2005a, p. 86. Another translation, the American Standard Version (1901), renders *authentēin* as “have dominion over”.

500 Belleville 2005a, p. 86n128; Belleville 2005c, p. 328

501 Belleville 2004b, pp. 209, 210; Belleville 2005a, p. 87

understanding *authentēin* in verse 12 in a negative domineering sense cannot reasonably be regarded as being a new or novel approach since from an historical perspective it can be seen to be entirely consistent with how the word was understood and used.

The presence of *authentēin* in verse 12 confirms that rather than being a routine instruction, Paul's proscription against *authentēin* teaching was a corrective in response to a specific situation in which certain women had actually been engaged.⁵⁰² As previously pointed out, "... [*authentēin*] is not the normal New Testament word for authority. It was an unusual word for an unusual situation."⁵⁰³ Understanding *authentēin* as having a negative domineering meaning also makes sense given that verse 12 follows on from the correctives in verses 8 to 10 to proscribe certain conduct on the part of men and women.⁵⁰⁴ It is notable that some Male Headship proponents have acknowledged that verse 12 was indeed written in response to specific circumstances at Ephesus.⁵⁰⁵

The following questions may be asked: Why had the women in the Ephesian church been teaching men in a domineering way? Were they influenced by false teachings or beliefs that led them to feel a sense of superiority over their Christian brothers and which resulted in them teaching them in a domineering manner? Were they seduced by the allure of "special" knowledge (1 Timothy 6: 20) which once having "puffed" them up (1 Corinthians 8: 1) played out in the way that they conducted their teaching? Or were there other, unknown reasons for their behaviour?

As seen earlier in section 10.3 of this study, Ephesus was permeated by a strong Artemis culture which accepted the superiority of the feminine over the masculine. Within this atmosphere it would not have come as a surprise if at least some of the women in the local church had regarded a domineering approach to the teaching of men as being perfectly natural. The experience of history shows that Christians, despite their faith, can still be influenced by the surrounding culture.

While the rules of biblical interpretation require historical and cultural factors to be taken into account and the above scenario is consistent with the culture existing in Ephesus at the time, the fact remains that Paul did not identify the reasons for the particular behaviour. Although the lack of information in this regard may be somewhat frustrating for the modern reader, it was not unusual for Paul. There are other instances in his writings where, if the original reader was already aware of the background, he did not feel the need to reiterate the

502 Belleville 2000, p. 169; Belleville 2001, pp. 120 – 121; Bowman 2001, p. 287; Blomberg 2001, p. 358; Scholer

503 Cunningham *et al* 2000, p. 222

504 Some Male Headship proponents have recognised that verses 8 – 10 were written to address certain inappropriate behaviours on the part of men and women (for example Blomberg 2001, pp. 359, 360; Clark 1980, p. 194).

505 For example Bowman 2001, pp. 287 – 288

details. For example, of Romans 14: 1 – 15: 13 it has been said:

*The precise nature of the problem Paul is dealing with ... is not clear. He is clearly discussing the relations between Christians who are 'weak', and Christians who are 'strong'. However, he never details who the weak and strong were or what specific teachings they held. Since the Roman Christians knew these details, Paul did not feel it necessary to pursue them.*⁵⁰⁶

With respect to verse 12, it would not have been necessary for Paul to provide the reasons why the women in question had been conducting themselves in this manner since the original recipient of his letter, Timothy, would have been fully aware of such matters. For Paul, the reasons which led to the behaviour in question were not important otherwise he would have mentioned them. What mattered more to him was that those engaging in the particular behaviour should cease and desist from doing so since, as the discussion on verse 13 will show, it was contrary to how God originally had intended for members of the respective genders to interrelate.⁵⁰⁷

10.8 Verse 12 continued: objections by Male Headship proponents

Despite the weight of evidence that *authentain* had negative domineering connotations during the first century AD, Male Headship proponents have commonly argued that the word did not have negative or pejorative overtones in New Testament times; rather, that it conveyed only a normal sense of having authority.⁵⁰⁸

Some Male Headship proponents have taken research that was conducted by

506 Powell 1990, p. 16. Of Romans 14 Morris (1988) likewise notes, "*Paul is discussing the relations between those he calls 'weak' and those he calls 'strong', but he never explains in detail who they were and what teachings they held. Quite clearly the Roman Christians knew, so there was no need to go into the question*" (p. 475). Similarly, of 1 Corinthians Keener (2004) notes, "*When Paul named various people in the church at Corinth, he did not have to explain to his readers who these people were. The Corinthian Christians already knew them*" (p. 164). Yet another passage, 1 Timothy 2: 8, is silent with respect to the particular issue that prompted Paul to require the men to pray without anger or disputation. It has been suggested that the men must have been praying in an angry and contentious way for them to have been instructed to not do so (Belleville 2001, p. 122; Belleville 2004b, pp. 209, 223; Blomberg 2001, pp. 359 – 360; Clark 1980, p. 194). Another example of Paul's practice in this regard is the case of the two anonymous Christian brothers in 2 Corinthians 8: 18, 22. While modern readers can only speculate as to their identities, they were so well known to Paul and his original readers that he did not need to name them.

507 Some Male Headship proponents, for example Grudem (2006, pp. 159ff) and Schreiner (2001, pp. 222ff), have sought to discredit various scenarios that have been proposed by other writers to explain what may have been happening in the Ephesian church to warrant Paul's proscription of a woman teaching a man in a domineering way. While it may be possible to find fault with some of these scenarios, or aspects thereof, it does not take away from the fact that for Paul the reasons for this behaviour were irrelevant otherwise he would have mentioned them. Instead, what concerned him more was that those engaging in such behaviour should stop because it was inconsistent with God's original creation intent for the way women and men were to interact with each other.

508 For example Hurley 1981, p. 202; Knight 1985, p. 18; House 1995, pp. 32, 162; Grudem 2006, pp. 185, 196

George W. Knight III in the 1980s, in which he concluded that *authentēin* meant “have authority” in a normal sense only, to be the definitive work on the meaning of the word.⁵⁰⁹ However, Knight’s work has been criticised on several grounds including that he misread and mistranslated key words, inaccuracies that were subsequently relied upon and uncritically reiterated by other Male Headship proponents in their own studies.⁵¹⁰ Of Knight’s work one writer has remarked:

*... his reasoning is not easy to follow. It seems that what he is arguing is that later uses of the verb do not reflect the negative aspects basic to the classical usage. His main evidence is to quote translations of these later texts that simply render the term ‘authority’. The problem with this approach is that the English word ‘authority’ is ambivalent and can be used positively and negatively. Furthermore Knight has to cite several instances in these later texts where authentēo is given a negative nuance. It can be very much doubted that Knight’s case can stand close scrutiny.*⁵¹¹

Knight’s claim that *authentēin* has the meaning of “undifferentiated authority” also has been challenged by Wilshire who “... studied every instance of the verb from the TLG [Thesaurus Linguae Graecae] computer at the University of California and who came to the conclusion that *authentēin* does not mean “authority” in first century usage.”⁵¹²

More recently, Grudem (2006) has asserted that the meaning of *authentēin* is primarily neutral, “to exercise authority over.”⁵¹³ To support his claim Grudem appealed to a 1995 study by Baldwin. Grudem stated that Baldwin’s study is “... the most thorough study of the verb that had ever been done”⁵¹⁴ and that “... if egalitarians are going to find support for their argument ... they will have to find it in the examples cited by Baldwin. And the evidence is simply not there.”⁵¹⁵

Despite Grudem’s confidence in Baldwin’s study, the fact is that it has been critiqued by other researchers who have found that Baldwin simply reiterated inaccuracies contained in earlier studies by Knight without checking the primary sources for himself.⁵¹⁶ Furthermore, it has been found that Baldwin’s “... interpretation of the data [relating to *authentēin*] attempts to whitewash the

509 For example Hurley 1981, p. 202; House 1995, pp. 32, 162

510 Belleville 2001, pp. 134n107, 135; Belleville 2004b, pp. 214, 215; Belleville 2005a, pp. 84n121, 97

511 Giles 1985, p. 61

512 Pyles. It should be noted that Wilshire originally undertook an analysis of *authentēin* in 1988 which equated the word with “normal authority”, although in a follow-up analysis in 1993 he reached the opposite conclusion (Blomberg 2001, p. 362; Belleville 2005b, p. 201; Scholer). House (1995) cites Wilshire’s 1988 study as supporting Knight’s findings but makes no reference to his subsequent 1993 follow up analysis (p. 32). Schreiner (2005b) similarly cites Wilshire (1988) as supporting the view of *authentēin* as having a normal meaning of authority without mentioning the fact that he reached a different view in his 1993 analysis (p. 310n85).

513 Grudem 2006, p. 185

514 Ibid, p. 185

515 Ibid, p. 187

516 Belleville 2001, pp. 134n107, 135n108; Belleville 2004b, pp. 215 – 217; Belleville 2005a, p. 97

negative connotations found in its use” and that his “*arguments that the verb in v. 12 has no negative baggage is weak.*”⁵¹⁷ In addition, another writer’s analysis of Baldwin’s research has identified “... *three fatal errors in [his] presentation of the data: 1) he makes distinctions of word meanings in English that do not hold up in Greek, 2) his groupings of ancient citations are not actually representative of Greek usage, but are contrived to prove his hierarchical prejudices, and 3) in some instances his argument is made upon mistranslations of Greek.*”⁵¹⁸ It is notable that other researchers have reviewed the surviving usages of *authentēin* in ancient Greek literature from the period and, contrary to Baldwin, have found that “... *all known extrabiblical instances of authentēin (rare though they be) prior to the second century AD without exception have to do with power or domination.*”⁵¹⁹

However, it should be noted that Baldwin does recognise “... *the necessity of analyzing the context of each use of a word.*”⁵²⁰ Another Male Headship proponent, Schreiner (2005a) similarly recognises that “... *It is certainly possible in particular contexts that the term could have a negative nuance.*”⁵²¹ Certainly, as shown in section 3 of this study (Part A), one of the rules of biblical interpretation is that Context determines Meaning. Given that verse 12 is situated within a general pattern of positive and negative statements and that the verse itself prohibits certain behaviour while approving certain other behaviour,⁵²² this is strong contextual evidence regarding the negative nature of the particular behaviour being prohibited. The particular way *authentēin* was understood and used during the first century AD, in which there are instances of it being used only in a negative sense rather than in a neutral or positive sense, further emphasises the negative nature of the proscribed behaviour.

517 Padgett, p. 25. McCarthy (2008) notes that of the 82 examples of *authentēin* discussed in Baldwin’s study, only one precedes the letter to Timothy with the next occurrence being one century after the writing of the letter (and then, in that case, it was used in the context of astronomy). McCarthy (2008) proceeds to show that the Male Headship argument for *authentēin* in these instances as having a neutral or positive connotation cannot be sustained and concludes that it is more reasonable to understand the word as meaning to dominate rather than to exercise authority in a neutral or positive sense. Similarly, Osburn (2001) notes that the use of *authentēin* in these particular instances has the meaning “to domineer” (p. 82).

518 Osburn 2001, pp. 213 – 219

519 Belleville 2005a, p. 95

520 Cited in Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS) Authentēin Report 2005 (emphasis in text)

521 Schreiner 2005a, p. 108. Schreiner (2005b) also makes the claim, “*Three careful and technical studies have been conducted on authentēin, and all three demonstrate that the most natural meaning for the term is ‘to exercise authority’*” (p. 310). In a footnote, Schreiner (2005b) identifies the studies upon which he bases this claim: Knight, Wilshire (1988), and Baldwin (p. 310n85). However, basing his claim on these studies is problematic given that their conclusions have either been discounted or subsequently revised: Knight’s (refer footnotes 510, 511, 512 of this study), Wilshire’s (the results of which were overturned by his 1993 follow-up analysis [refer footnote 512 of this study]), and Baldwin’s (refer footnotes 516, 517, 518 and 519 of this study). Of Schreiner’s assertions Osburn (2001) notes, “*Schreiner says, ‘Two things are forbidden for a woman: teaching and exercising authority’. It is not unimportant that his argument is based upon the seriously flawed arguments of Baldwin and Kostenberger*” (p. 227). It will be recalled that Kostenberger’s arguments for a positive connotation of *authentēin* were assessed in section 10.6 of this study.

522 As noted previously in footnotes 475, 477 and 489 of this study.

Elsewhere, Grudem (2006) approvingly cites a 2000 study by Wolters which concluded that *authentēin* conveys the meaning of “master” in a positive or neutral sense without any pejorative connotations such as in “domineer”.⁵²³ However, as previously noted in this study, the TNIV provides a footnote alternative translation of 1 Timothy 2: 12: “*I do not permit a woman to teach a man in a domineering way*”. It is important to restate the point that this is not a novel rendering since, as was shown earlier in this study, “... *there is a basically unbroken tradition, stemming from the oldest version and running down to the twenty-first century that translates authentēin as ‘to dominate’ and not ‘to exercise authority.’*”⁵²⁴ Furthermore, in Belleville’s (2004) analysis, while she identified “master” as a meaning that *authentēin* had come to acquire during the Hellenistic period, it was “... *in the sense of the ‘mastermind’ of a crime rather than one who exercises authority over another.*”⁵²⁵ On the basis of her analysis Belleville concluded:

... *there is no first-century warrant for translating authentēin as “to exercise authority” and for understanding Paul in 1 Timothy 2: 12 to be speaking of the carrying out of one’s official duties. Rather the sense is the Koine “to dominate, to get one’s way.”*⁵²⁶

As well as arguing that the word *authentēin* does not have any negative connotations, Grudem (2006) disputes that Paul’s use of such an uncommon word has any significance.⁵²⁷ On this point even other Male Headship proponents do not agree. For example, Bowman (2001) has acknowledged that the word is unusual and rare and that Paul’s choice of such a word is significant.⁵²⁸ However, Bowman curiously proceeded to undermine her own assessment in this regard by concluding: “...*but we cannot be certain as to what the significance is. The simple phrase ‘to have authority over’ rather than ‘to usurp authority’ is probably best.*”⁵²⁹ In making this comment she especially cited the research of Knight⁵³⁰ the conclusions of whom, as noted earlier in this study, have been disputed.

523 Grudem 2006, p. 192. While Grudem approved of Wolters’ study, other writers do not necessarily concur. For example, McCarthy (2008) found that Wolter’s study “... *covered the cognates of authentēin and only referred summarily to authentēin.*” Interestingly, when asked further questions about his conclusions that *authentēin* should be understood in a positive or neutral sense without any pejorative connotations Wolters appeared somewhat more circumspect in his response: “... *I’ve puzzled long and hard over authentēin in BGU 1208 and in the Philodemus fragment [the two particular extra-biblical examples cited by some Male Headship proponents such as Kostenberger in support of their argument that *authentēin* has only a neutral or positive meaning]. Although most of the lexicographical authorities seem to give it the meaning ‘have authority over’ in those contexts, I don’t think anyone can really be sure. Most people ... are too sure about their conclusions in this regard*” (cited in McCarthy 2008).

524 Belleville 2005a, p. 86

525 Belleville 2004b, pp. 212, 213; also, Belleville 2005a, p. 83

526 Belleville 2004b, pp. 216 – 217

527 Grudem 2006, p. 194

528 Bowman 2001, p. 288

529 Ibid, p. 288

530 Ibid, p. 288n86. In the footnote Bowman acknowledged that “*Other authors have argued for differing meanings.*” However, she provided no rationale for why her particular conclusion “*is probably best.*”

Clearly, it is essential to consider the meanings of the words as they would have been understood in Paul's day as well as the context in which the words are found. Male Headship proponents fail to take account of the first century AD meaning and use of *authentēin* by asserting that it simply means "authority" in a mundane or routine sense. In so doing they ascribe a meaning to the word which did not arise until well after Paul's time.⁵³¹ They also fail to fully appreciate the negative context in which *authentēin* is found in 1 Timothy 2 which confirms the negative connotations underpinning its use in verse 12. The passage is more readily understood when key words such as *authentēin* are interpreted in the way that the original readers would have understood and used them.⁵³²

10.9 Verses 13 to 15: Adam, Eve and the women at Ephesus

Paul is the only biblical writer to refer to the Adam and Eve creation sequence in the context of a prohibition on a woman teaching a man.⁵³³ In order to understand his reasons for doing so it will be essential to observe the rules of biblical interpretation, such as Scripture interprets Scripture and Context determines Meaning, to ensure a correct understanding of his message and to avoid conclusions that were not intended. With this in mind the following points are relevant as the study into this passage continues:

- in the same way that a situation had arisen in the Ephesian church where Paul had to issue a corrective to men who were praying in an inappropriate manner (verse 8), so too he had to issue an instruction that a woman was not to teach a man in a particular (*authentēin*, domineering) way (verse 12);
- verses 13 to 15 must be interpreted in the context of verse 12 which prohibited a woman, not from teaching or exercising authority over a man (*exousia*), but from teaching a man in a domineering (*authentēin*) way;
- the message of verses 13 to 15 is directed to the women who were the subject of the prohibition in verse 12;
- verses 13 to 15 should be read in conjunction with, not in isolation from,

531 This constitutes the exegetical fallacy known as "semantic anachronism", a later meaning of a word being read back into earlier literature (Carson 1996, p. 33).

532 As has been noted previously in this study, this is consistent with a basic principle of biblical interpretation which is to "... interpret words in harmony with their meaning in the times of the author" and "... interpret a word in relation to its sentence and context" (Henrichsen and Jackson 1990, pp. 183, 186).

533 Belleville 2000, pp. 170, 193n55. If Adam's seniority in creation was as important and fundamental as Male Headship proponents assert, it is curious that no other writer from either the Old or New Testaments ever made reference to it. It is also curious that it was never used as the rationale to support male leadership in the Old Testament such as the male-only priesthood nor did it operate to prevent Deborah from being selected by God as a Judge of the Israelites. While "*everything in the Bible means something*" (Sumner 2003, p. 127), the fact that there is only one scriptural reference to the Adam and Eve creation sequence in the context of a prohibition on a woman teaching a man means that care needs to be taken with its interpretation to ensure consistency with other relevant Scriptures (NB: "*The sum of thy word is truth*", Psalm 119: 160 [RSV]).

verse 12;

- verses 13 to 15 would only have possible application to others more generally if they, too, were engaging in the specific behaviour proscribed by verse 12;
- there is no justification for extrapolating a wider application for verses 13 to 15 in the absence of the behaviour that is the subject of the prohibition in verse 12; and
- the meaning of verses 13 to 15 will be found by reading them against the background of the behaviour prohibited under verse 12 (a woman teaching a man in a domineering way) and in a manner that is consistent with other relevant Scriptures.

10.10 Verse 13: man's creation before woman

From verses 13 and 14 Male Headship proponents argue that the injunction in verse 12, which they assert prohibits a woman from teaching or exercising authority over a man, is based on Adam having been created before Eve as well as her role in the introduction of sin into the world.⁵³⁴ With respect to verse 13 specifically, one Male Headship proponent has stated that Paul uses Adam's prior creation before Eve "... *as a reason for men and women having different roles in the life of the New Testament church.*"⁵³⁵ Similarly, another Male Headship proponent has written, "*Men bear the responsibility to lead and teach in the church because Adam was created before Eve.*"⁵³⁶

Other Male Headship proponents have interpreted Paul's brief reference in verse

534 For example Schreiner 2001, p. 222; Blomberg 2001, p. 365; House 1995, pp. 44, 45; Knight 1985, p. 88; Hurley 1981, p. 202; Roberts 1964, pp. 23 – 24; Grudem 2006, pp. 35 – 36, 78, 167. Regarding verses 13 and 14, Clark (1980) considers that Adam's formation before Eve is "*possibly the main*" reason for the prohibition in 1 Timothy 2: 12 – 14 "... *since it is given first*" (p. 201). There has been some debate about the meaning of the word translated "for" (Greek: *gar*) at the beginning of verse 13. Some writers interpret it as providing the reason for prohibition in verse 12 (House 1995, pp. 58n61, 160, 162), while others consider it to be more explanatory in nature (Belleville 2004b, pp. 222 – 223; Belleville 2005a, p. 90n134). Scholars point out that *gar* can be used in both these senses (Bullinger 1975, p. 123; Robertson cited in Osburn 2001, pp. 227n56, 247n110). Given its context, this study understands verse 13 as providing the rationale for the prohibition in verse 12 – but not for the same reasons as argued by Male Headship proponents. In this regard this study has previously shown that given the meaning of *authentain* and its use in connection with *didasko* in verse 12, the rationale in verse 13 would only apply to a prohibition on a woman teaching a man in a domineering way, not "teaching or exercising authority over a man."

535 Grudem 2006, p. 21. One problem with this assertion is that in verses 12 – 15 Paul was not talking about "roles" in the Church; rather, he was addressing certain inappropriate conduct (teaching in a domineering manner). Also, such an assertion is contrary to the rule of biblical interpretation that Context determines Meaning.

536 Schreiner 2001, p. 203 (emphasis in text). As noted previously in this study, one major problem with such assertions is that verses 12 – 15 are concerned with what a woman may not do, not with what men may do. Thus they read more into the passage than it allows.

13 to the Adam and Eve creation sequence as meaning "... *that women are given a role of submission for this was their created purpose and it is the role in which she would be most fulfilled*,"⁵³⁷ while others have concluded from verse 13 "... *that Paul is grounding his prohibition in 'creation and the fall' establishing the headship or leadership role of the male and the subordinate or dependent role of the woman*."⁵³⁸

Such assertions by Male Headship proponents with respect to the meaning of verse 13 are highly problematic for several reasons. Firstly, such assertions are problematic because they read meanings into verse 13 about which the passage itself is silent. It should be noted that Paul often drew from the Old Testament to bolster his arguments (for example 1 Corinthians 10: 1 – 12). Because of its significant archetypal value⁵³⁹ Paul sometimes drew from the Adam and Eve account to illustrate, emphasise or reinforce the various points he made (for example Romans 5: 14; 1 Corinthians 6: 16, 15: 22, 45; 2 Corinthians 11: 3; Ephesians 5: 31). Consequently, his reference to Adam and Eve in verse 13 is not unusual. While verse 13 refers to Adam and Eve, that it does so because of some universal "order of creation" principle is a notion that needs to be read into the text rather than drawn from it. Furthermore, no universal inference about the priority of Adam over Eve should by necessity be drawn from verse 13 since elsewhere in the New Testament "first ... then" word constructions simply define a sequence of events in time or thought and nothing else (such as Mark 4: 28; 1 Corinthians 15: 46; 1 Thessalonians 4: 16 – 17; 1 Timothy 3: 10; James 3: 17).⁵⁴⁰ As has been observed: "*'First-then' defines a temporal sequence, without implying either ontological or functional priority*."⁵⁴¹

Furthermore, assertions by Male Headship proponents such as that "*Men bear the responsibility to lead and teach in the church because Adam was created before Eve*"⁵⁴² ignore the fact that nowhere in verse 13 does Paul actually say that Adam's prior creation provides the basis for male-only leadership and authority in the Church. To draw such a conclusion from the brief reference to the Adam and Eve creation sequence is to read more into the text than what is actually said. Also, to do so is to ignore its immediate context. As noted

537 Powell

538 Bingham 2009

539 An archetype is an exemplar of a particular person or thing from which important truths may be drawn: "*For Jews ... these narratives of distant figures could be taken as lessons for present behaviour*" (Goodman 2008, p. 191). The archetypal value of the Adam and Eve creation account particularly draws from the fact that despite the order of their respective beginnings (man first, woman second) there is no suggestion in the Genesis record of any hierarchical differentiation between them until the Fall. Indeed, from the outset both were given joint responsibility for ruling over the remainder of creation with the word used of the woman (*ezer kenegdo*) indicating that she was intended to be the man's equal partner in this enterprise (refer footnotes 293 and 294 of this study). As this study will show, Paul draws on this archetypal value to make his argument in verse 13. Arguments by Male Headship proponents that the man had authority over the woman from the time of Creation have been considered in section 8.5 of this study and found to be extremely tenuous.

540 Belleville 2001, pp. 129, 145; Belleville 2000, p. 193n55

541 Belleville 2004b, p. 222

542 For example Schreiner 2001, p. 203 (emphasis in text)

previously in this study, verse 12 is not concerned with what a man can do; it is concerned with what a woman should not do. Therefore, verse 13 must be read as providing the rationale for why a woman is not to teach a man in a domineering way, not for why men are the only ones who can teach and lead in the Church.

Secondly, such assertions are problematic because they are inconsistent with the rules of biblical interpretation. Particularly in accordance with the need for Scripture to be interpreted in light of other relevant Scriptures, verse 13 cannot be interpreted as having a meaning that is contrary to what is made plain elsewhere, notably Genesis 1 – 2. The problem with asserting that verse 13 represents a reference to a fundamental hierarchical principle based solely on the creation sequence of Adam and Eve is that Genesis itself does not actually provide or allow for such a conclusion to be drawn. In fact, the Genesis creation account provides for the exact opposite.⁵⁴³ As has been noted:

The account of the creation of male and female in Genesis 1 – 2 – which we take as a foundational theological statement of the Creator’s design and intention – affirms male and female as equal and complementary. Both are bearers, together, of God’s image (Gen 1: 26 – 27). Both are given the mandate to responsible sovereignty over the created order (Gen 1: 28). The creation of the woman is intended to rescue the man from his aloneness and to provide him with a complement (Gen 2: 18). Over against an ancient view that the gods played a trick on man by creating woman of inferior material, the creation account of Genesis affirms the woman to be of the same essence as man (“bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh,” Gen 2: 23). Thus the view that God intended the woman for a restricted role in home, church and society cannot be grounded in the order of creation.⁵⁴⁴

Moreover, as pointed out in section 8 of this study, the Genesis creation account explicitly states that the woman was created as the man’s exact counterpart.

543 It will be recalled that this study previously considered the arguments for the existence of an “order of creation” principle and found that there is no such God-ordained principle which prioritises men over women.

544 Kaiser *et al* 1996, p. 666; also, Belleville 2001, p. 141. Other writers note similarly. For example Grenz (1995) points out, “Viewed in its own context, the creation narrative does not explicitly indicate that a hierarchy of male over female was part of God’s original intention” (p. 161). Furthermore, Fee (2004c) notes, “...the Genesis narrative itself does not make Adam’s priority in creation a theological point” (p. 377) (emphasis in text). There are some Male Headship proponents who would also agree on this point. For example Hurley (1981) notes, “... the interpreter of the text can and must say that both men and women are to multiply and to rule over the creation as a joint task. The interpreter may not seek to read into the text any implications about the headship, subordination or equality of the sexes. To make Genesis 1 speak about such issues is a matter of prejudice rather than of extraction of textual meaning” (p. 206). Similarly, Bowman (2001) notes, “... man and woman were equally given God’s commission to be fruitful and multiply and to rule over the earth (Genesis 1: 28). No subordination of roles is expressed or implied in these verses. Each has been created in God’s image and each shares in the responsibility of ruling over the earth” (p. 268). While Grudem (2006, pp. 21 – 24, 72) and Schreiner (2001, pp. 205 – 206) argue that male leadership was mandated from the beginning of creation, it will be recalled that their arguments in this regard were considered in section 8.5 of this study and found to be extremely tenuous.

Even though the woman was created after the man this did not in any way alter the fact that she was specifically created as his equal (*ezer kenegdo*) and with him was authorised by God to jointly rule over the rest of creation (Genesis 1: 28, 2: 18, 23). There is no indication in the Genesis account that by being made from and after the man the woman was in any sense hierarchically subordinate to him, or that his prior creation *ipso facto* gave him authority over her or made him her leader. The only time that there is an explicit reference to the man ruling over the woman is from the time of the Fall (Genesis 3: 16) and even then, as section 7 of this study shows (Part A), the particular words used in the original Hebrew text make it clear that such a situation did not have God's approval.

Even one Male Headship proponent, Bowman (2001), while seeing in verse 13 "... *the implication is that Adam's chronological priority carried with it some degree of authority*", recognises that "... *the Genesis 2 text does not explain how this is true, although the concept of primogeniture may provide some explanation.*"⁵⁴⁵ Bowman's attempt to explain the absence of a hierarchical principle in Genesis 2 on the basis that the concept of *primogeniture* is inferred is highly implausible. With respect to this concept it will be recalled from section 7 of this study (Part A) that God and Jesus never took seniority of birth or position to be of any consequence when it came to the allocation of spiritual roles and responsibilities.⁵⁴⁶ Furthermore, Paul did not accept the universality of the concept of the primacy of the first over the second nor did he "... *use chronological priority as a universally self-evident argument.*"⁵⁴⁷ In fact, he specifically taught that the "order of creation" (man first, woman second) was not important for relations between Christians since all ultimately "come from God" (1 Corinthians 11: 11 – 12).⁵⁴⁸ The concept of *primogeniture* does not provide the explanation that Bowman is looking for since it did not exist at the time of creation and only became an accepted custom in human society after the Fall. Even then, it was not a custom by which God was bound (as indicated by passages such as 1 Samuel 16: 6 – 7, 17: 13 – 14 and Isaiah 55: 8 – 9).

Assertions by Male Headship proponents with respect to verse 13 are not a reasonable interpretation of the passage since they require meanings being read into the text about which the passage itself is silent. They also are highly problematic given that they do not take account of the rules of biblical interpretation including the need for Scripture to be understood in the light of other relevant Scriptures and for conclusions about the meaning of a particular

545 Bowman 2001, p. 289

546 As noted also by Hess 2004, p. 84

547 Keener 2001, p. 63

548 Of 1 Corinthians 11: 11 – 12 one Male Headship proponent, Hurley (1981) has observed: "*The theme of the inter-relatedness of the sexes stands out clear and strong: 'In the Lord, however, woman is not independent (choris) of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came out of (ek) man, so also man is born of (dia + genitive, 'though') woman. But everything is from God' (1 Cor 11: 11 – 12). The husband may not consider himself the ruler of his wife and abuse his authority. By God's design he is dependent on her for birth; they are interdependent by God's design*" (pp. 177 – 178). While Hurley approaches the passage from a Male Headship perspective, he nevertheless recognises that it teaches the interdependency of man and woman.

Scripture to be consistent with other relevant Scriptures.

If verse 13 was not intended to be understood in the way that Male Headship proponents assert, then how may it be interpreted and how does it provide the rationale for the prohibition in verse 12? Given that verse 12 prohibits a woman from teaching a man in a domineering way, the need to interpret Scriptures in light of their context means that verse 13 must be interpreted as providing support for this prohibition.⁵⁴⁹ Furthermore, the need to read Scripture against Scripture and to interpret Scripture in a way that is consistent with other relevant Scriptures makes it necessary to understand the meaning of Paul's brief reference to the Adam and Eve creation sequence, and its link with verse 12, in consideration of the broader Genesis record concerning the creation of man and woman, not in isolation from it.⁵⁵⁰ If approached in this way, verse 13 may be understood as providing the rationale for the prohibition in verse 12 on the basis that the behaviour in question (a woman teaching a man in a domineering way) was contrary to God's original intent for relations between woman and man.⁵⁵¹

549 Fee (2004c) agrees that, "Paul appeals to the Genesis narrative to support his not permitting a woman to teach a man in order to domineer over him" (p. 376). Osburn (2001) similarly notes, "The Greek *gar* [for] in 2: 13 indicates that the two following illustrations are intended to support the prohibition against domineering teaching by these women" (p. 247). Likewise, Davis (2009) observes, "The 'Adam was formed first' reference in 1 Tim 2: 13 can plausibly be understood as a context-specific response and corrective to a situation in which women were not acting respectfully toward men in the Ephesus congregation and are being rebuked for their (domineering) behaviour" (p. 10n10).

550 One Male Headship proponent, Bowman (2001) has suggested that in verses 13 and 14 Paul is using a "... rabbinic technique known as 'summary citation' to refer back to entire passages in Genesis 2 and 3" (pp. 288 – 289). In a footnote Bowman (2001) elaborates: "For example, when Jesus uses a single statement in Luke 17: 32 ('Remember Lot's wife!'), it recalls an entire pericope. To understand the implied warning it is necessary to recall the circumstances that caused Sodom's destruction (Gen 18: 22 – 19: 11), the flight of Lot and his family from the city (19: 12 – 25), and the sin of Lot's wife and its tragic results (19: 17, 26)" (p. 289n87). Another Male Headship proponent, Wenstrom (2011), supports Bowman's suggestion (p. 52). While Bowman espouses the Male Headship position, her suggestion regarding verse 13 being an example of the use of the "summary citation" literary device supports the proposition of this study that given the need to interpret Scripture in light of other relevant Scriptures it is reasonable to read and understand verse 13 and its link with verse 12 in consideration of the broader Genesis account of the creation of Adam and Eve.

551 It is important to note that "... what the rest of Scripture lifts up as normative is not Genesis 3: 16 but 1: 27 and 2: 23 – 24" (Belleville 2005a, p. 32; also, Belleville 2000, p. 104). One Male Headship proponent has also recognised that Paul "... uniformly appealed to the relation of Adam and Eve before the Fall rather than after it, to Genesis 2 rather than to Genesis 3" (Hurley 1981, p. 192) (emphasis in text). Paul's practice in this regard may be seen in the use of Genesis 2: 7, 24 to make his various points in 1 Corinthians 6: 16, 15: 45 and Ephesians 5: 31. While there are occasions when he referred to aspects from Genesis 3 (Romans 5: 14; 1 Corinthians 15: 22; 2 Corinthians 11: 3; 1 Timothy 2: 14), there is no example in which he drew from Genesis 3: 16 to make a point. (It will be recalled that section 9.6 of this study discounts any claim of 1 Corinthians 14: 34 being based on Genesis 3: 16). Accordingly, it is reasonable to understand Paul's message in verse 13 in light of God's original intent for relations between man and woman where despite their creation sequence (man first, woman second) both the man and the woman were joint and equal rulers over the rest of creation, not through the post-Fall lens of Genesis 3: 16 or any subsequent reference to the Old Testament custom of *primogeniture*. (It will be recalled that section 8 of this study considered the arguments of Male Headship proponents that the man had authority over the woman from the time of creation and found them to be extremely tenuous.) Understanding verse 13 as a means of reinforcing the prohibition in verse 12 on the basis that the proscribed behaviour was contrary to God's original intent for male/female relations is supported by the following quote: "Paul's

To reiterate what has been noted previously in this study, the broader Genesis account reveals that in creating woman God's intention was for her to be the exact counterpart of man. Despite being created after the man, there is no sense in the Genesis record or subsequently in either the Old or New Testaments that Eve was created to be subordinate to Adam or to domineer over him; she was created as his equal, to jointly rule with him over the rest of creation. In this regard this study has previously noted that the term used in Genesis 2: 18 to describe Eve as a helper fit for Adam (Hebrew: *ezer kenegdo*) meant "helper equal to him" or "helper corresponding completely to him."⁵⁵² Indeed, the reference in Genesis 2 to the woman being formed from the "rib" (Hebrew: *tsela*) of the man "... *actually refers to the side of the man, a part of the body that is neither above nor below him ... woman 'is a companion, one who is neither subordinate nor superior; one who alleviates isolation through identity.*"⁵⁵³ The Genesis 2 record shows that Adam also recognised Eve as his equal ("bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh"). This is not all for God intended that they should be "one flesh", an ideal that is reflected throughout the Scriptures (Genesis 2: 24; Malachi 2: 15; Matthew 19: 5; Mark 10: 8; 1 Corinthians 6: 16; Ephesians 5: 31). Even though the woman was created after the man, she was created out of the man (not from some other creature) to be "one flesh" with him as his equal partner in the joint role given to them by God (Genesis 1: 26 – 28). Thus it was inappropriate for a woman to teach a man in a domineering way and hence, the rationale for the prohibition in verse 12.⁵⁵⁴

appeal to remember that woman was created after man is not an appeal for male dominance and female subjection, but for these women in Ephesus to return to a complementary role... the verse has nothing to do with the 'order of creation' argument in which man is leader of woman by virtue of maleness. The function of the illustration is upon returning to an originally intended complementariness rather than to continue their troublesome 'domineering' mentality" (Internet 9). Similarly, Osburn (2001) notes, "V. 13 can be taken to comment on 'not domineering' in v. 12, simply stating that woman was created second for the purpose of being a meaningful complement. These Ephesian women, given their attitudes and actions, would not be fitting into their intended role..." (p. 228). The following quote also supports an understanding of verse 13 in light of God's original intent for relations between man and woman by highlighting the importance of reading it in conjunction with other relevant Scriptures, not in isolation from them: "The most straightforward interpretation, if one considers this passage without reference to other scripture, is that woman, by her position in the created order and her natural inclinations, is more likely to be deceived and therefore should 'learn in quietness and full submission'. If one considers other scripture, however, (especially Genesis 2) Paul's reference to creation may not be a reference so much to the order of creation (who came first) but rather to the role of woman as a complement to man (man was incomplete without woman and visa versa). Perhaps Paul sees the complementary relationship being destroyed as the women became dominant in Ephesus" (Internet 10).

⁵⁵² Brown, Driver and Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, cited in Greig 1999, p. 8; Grudem 2006, pp. 22, 76; also, Cunningham *et al* 2000, p. 96. From section 8 of this study it will be recalled that from the context of Genesis 1 – 2 there is no indication that the use of *ezer kenegdo* in that passage was intended to differentiate between the role/function of the first man and woman either in a familial or spiritual sense. Indeed, its use highlighted the lack of distinction that existed in this regard. Paul's writings reveal that he was thoroughly versed in the Old Testament Scriptures (for example Acts 22: 2 – 3; Philippians 3: 4 – 6). Accordingly, it would be highly unlikely that he would not have been aware of the meaning of *ezer kenegdo* in the context of Genesis 1 – 2 and its significance with respect to his reference in verse 13 to the Adam and Eve creation sequence.

⁵⁵³ Hess 2004, pp. 86, 86n27

⁵⁵⁴ Belleville (2004b) similarly observes: "If the sense of 1 Timothy 2: 12 is that women are not permitted to teach men in a domineering fashion, then 1 Timothy 2: 13 would provide the explanation: that Eve was

The question may be asked: Is this a reasonable interpretation of the meaning of verse 13? Given Paul's great respect for the Old Testament Scriptures and the high importance he placed on them (Romans 15: 4; 1 Corinthians 10: 11; 2 Timothy 3: 15) it is extremely unlikely that he would have disregarded the warnings about deviating from their message (Deuteronomy 4: 2, 5: 32, 12: 32; Joshua 1: 7, 23: 6; Proverbs 4: 27, 14: 12, 16: 25, 30: 5 – 6) in order to draw a meaning from the Adam and Eve creation sequence that is not substantiated in the broader Genesis 1 – 2 record.⁵⁵⁵ Moreover, it is highly unlikely that he would have intended for his readers to arrive at conclusions about the meaning of this verse that were contrary to the wider scriptural revelation or were otherwise contrary to his clear teachings elsewhere (such as 1 Corinthians 4: 6, 11: 11 – 12). Given his familiarity with the Old Testament Scriptures (Acts 22: 3), Paul would have been fully aware of the biblical principle: "*The sum of thy word is truth*" (Psalms 119: 160) (RSV). Accordingly, it is difficult to imagine him ever having engaged in the selective use and interpretation of Scripture to derive meanings and reach conclusions that were inconsistent with the overall scriptural record let alone intending his readers to do so in order to understand his message in verse 13.⁵⁵⁶

Therefore, it is indeed reasonable to interpret verse 13 as providing the rationale for the prohibition in verse 12 on a woman teaching a man in a domineering way on the grounds that such behaviour would have been contrary to God's original intent for the way women were to interrelate with men.

10.11 Verse 14: the woman's deception

One Male Headship proponent has described verse 14 as "... *Perhaps the hardest verse to understand in all of Paul's teaching on gender roles...*"⁵⁵⁷

created as Adam's partner (Gen 2: 24) not his boss" (p. 222) (emphasis in text). As there is no place for a domineering spirit in a "one flesh" equal partnership (note 1 Corinthians 12: 12 – 27), so a woman should not seek to domineer over a man in a teaching capacity.

⁵⁵⁵ In this regard note is made of Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 4: 2: "*we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God*" (NIV).

⁵⁵⁶ To put it another way, as an expert in the Old Testament Scriptures it is inconceivable that Paul would not have been aware of the meaning and significance of key terms such as *ezer kenegdo* as used in the Genesis 1 – 2 Adam and Eve creation account. It is far more likely that he was indeed aware of such matters and accordingly, intended for his readers to understand his reference in verse 13 to the Adam and Eve creation sequence in a way that aligned with, not contrary to, such meanings. It should be noted that on the odd occasion when Paul interpreted the meaning of an Old Testament incident in a way that was not specifically identified within the relevant passage (such as in 1 Corinthians 10: 4 where he understood the "rock" that accompanied the Israelites on their desert wanderings to be "Christ"), his interpretation was still consistent with the teachings of Jesus about the purpose of the Old Testament being a witness to Himself (Luke 24: 25 – 27, 44; John 1: 45, 5: 39 – 47; Acts 10: 43). Apart from such rare occasions, there is no instance where Paul denied or in any other way changed or contradicted the plain meaning of any Old Testament passage.

⁵⁵⁷ Blomberg 2001, p. 365. Another Male Headship proponent has stated, "*Let me acknowledge at the outset the difficulty of the verse. I believe the complementarian view stands on the basis of the clarity of verse 13 so that resolving the interpretation of verse 14 is not crucial for the passage as a whole*" (Schreiner 2001, p. 225). In response to this assertion, the question may be asked: If verse 14 is not

However, as the following discussion will show, discerning its meaning is only problematic if the rules of biblical interpretation are not employed, it is not read in the context of the behaviour that was prohibited in verse 12 and in light of what Paul continues to say in verse 15, and its application is extended beyond the situation it was originally meant to address. In fact, it is only when verse 14 is interpreted through the lens of “gender roles” rather than within the context of the particular inappropriate behaviour Paul was seeking to proscribe that any difficulty in understanding its meaning arises.

Generally, Male Headship proponents regard verse 14 to be a second reason for the prohibition in verse 12.⁵⁵⁸ Some commentators interpret the verse to mean that women are prohibited from the public teaching of men on grounds that they are supposedly more easily led into deception and false teaching.⁵⁵⁹ However, as noted previously in this study, the problem with this interpretation is that if a woman cannot be trusted to teach a man “publicly”, how can she be trusted to teach a man “privately”? Similarly, if a woman cannot be trusted to teach a man “publicly”, how can she be trusted to teach other women and children (including male children) which is said by Male Headship proponents to be permissible for a woman to do?⁵⁶⁰ Would it not be safer for a woman to be able to teach publicly

“crucial”, why is it there? This approach to verse 14 is inconsistent with the rule of biblical interpretation that “*everything in the Bible means something*” (Sumner 2003, p. 127).

558 For example Grudem 2006, p. 36; Schreiner 2001, p. 224; Bowman 2001, p. 288 Clark 1980, p. 201. However, Blomberg (2001) is one who does not regard it as a second reason for the prohibition in verse 12 (p. 367).

559 For example Guthrie (1976) states that Paul “... *may have had in mind the greater aptitude of the weaker sex to be led astray*” (p. 77). Similarly, Jamieson *et al* (1979) state, “*Being more easily deceived, she more easily deceives [Bengel], (2 Cor 11: 3). Last in being, she was first in sin – indeed, she alone was deceived. The subtle serpent knew that she was ‘the weaker vessel.’ He therefore tempted her, not Adam. She yielded to the temptations of sense and the deceits of Satan; he, to conjugal love. Hence, in the order of God’s judicial sentence, the serpent, the prime offender, stands first; the woman, who was deceived, next; and the man, persuaded by his wife, last (Gen 3: 14 – 19) ... [Regarding verse 15] Mental receptivity and activity in family life were recognised in Christianity as the destiny of woman. One reason alleged here by Paul, is the greater danger of self-deception in the weaker sex, and the spread of errors arising from it ... The case (Acts 21: 9) was doubtless in private, not in public*” (pp. 1358, 1359) (emphasis in text). The assertion by Jamieson *et al* that the case in Acts 21:9 (Philip’s four daughters who were widely known for their prophetic gifts) was “*doubtless in private, not in public*” is an assumption that needs to be read into the text and is not supported by other Scriptures which show that women did indeed prophesy “publicly” (1 Corinthians 11: 5, 12: 7 – 11, 14: 1 – 5, 22, 24, 26, 39). Furthermore, regarding their assertion that Eve was “more easily deceived”, it is noteworthy that in Romans 7: 11 Paul describes how “... *sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me ...*” The Greek word for “deceived” in this instance is derived from the word for “deceived” as used in 1 Timothy 2: 14 (Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Greek dictionary, # 1818, p. 29). In Hebrews 3: 13 Christians are encouraged to avoid being “hardened by sin’s deceitfulness”. The word for “deceitfulness” in this instance is also derived from the word used in 1 Timothy 2: 14 (Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Greek dictionary, # 539, p. 13). Thus, anyone can be deceived by sin; it is not a characteristic that is confined to Eve (or women) only. Finally, the meaning of the expression “weaker vessel” as used by Jamieson *et al*, which is drawn from 1 Peter 3: 7, will be considered in section 12 of this study.

560 Sumner 2003, p. 255; House 1995, p. 166. As noted earlier in this study, it would be highly illogical and inconsistent to conclude that women are not fit to teach men “publicly” because of a supposed predilection to deception yet trustworthy enough to teach children and other women. As Groothuis (cited in Keener [2001]) observes, “... *those who prohibit women from teaching men because ‘women are more easily deceived’ often allow women to teach other women – the very people they would most easily lead*

in order for any errors to be more readily exposed and corrected? As pointed out in section 5.3 of this study (Part A), such an interpretation is also contrary to the experience of history which shows men to be just as susceptible to false teaching as women. Furthermore, such a view is contrary to the Scriptures which attest that women can indeed be competent and trustworthy in transmitting the truth of God's Word to others (Proverbs 1: 8, 31: 26; 2 Timothy 1: 5, 2: 2, 3: 15). Consequently, it is not surprising that some Male Headship proponents have acknowledged the indefensibility of this interpretation.⁵⁶¹ Others, such as Schreiner (2001), who had once concurred with this view now acknowledge it as suggesting that women were created inherently defective,⁵⁶² which of course is contrary to the Scriptures (Genesis 1: 31; 1 Timothy 4: 4).

A variation of this view interprets verse 14 to mean that women are prohibited from the public teaching of men because their "*kinder and gentler nature*" would supposedly make them less inclined to expose doctrinal error while men would be more disposed towards rational, logical doctrinal analysis.⁵⁶³ Such views are not new and have their antecedents in the works of ancient authors like Philo of Alexandria, a contemporary of Paul, who opined that "... *since woman 'is more accustomed to be deceived than man' and 'gives way and is taken in by plausible falsehoods which resemble the truth,' the proper relation of a wife to a husband is epitomised in the verb 'to serve as a slave.'*"⁵⁶⁴ Not only have such views been found to be untenable,⁵⁶⁵ they are also contrary to the fact that there

into further deception!" (p. 39n17). Similarly, Grenz (1995) has remarked on "... *the absurdity of permitting women to teach impressionable children but not men who should possess the spiritual acumen to discern heretical statements*" (p. 219). Likewise Osburn (2001) notes, "*It seems odd that women would be presented as more easily led into heresy, yet still be entrusted with teaching the children(!)*" (p. 48).

561 For example Blomberg (2001) has stated, "... *an exegesis that sees Paul merely as claiming that Adam sinned without having been deceived in the manner Eve was deceived may be true to the Genesis account, but it again leaves Paul in the paradoxical position of favouring Adam because he sinned with his eyes wide open – a presumably less excusable situation and thus a greater character flaw than with Eve, who was tricked!*" (p. 366).

562 Schreiner (2001) states, "*I argued in a previous essay that perhaps Paul is suggesting that women are more prone to deceit than men, but this view has the disadvantage of suggesting an inherent defect in women...*" (p. 226).

563 For example Schreiner as endorsed by Grudem 2006, pp. 38 – 39; also, Clark 1980, pp. 203 – 204

564 Cited in Kaiser *et al* 1996, p. 670; also, Belleville 2000, p. 75

565 For instance, Groothuis (2002) points out that "... *if the intent of 1 Timothy 2:11 – 15 is to bar from church leadership those whose gender inclines them to tolerate deception and heresy, and if the transgressions of the first man and woman indicate the different proclivities of men and women in general, then it is men, not women, who should be denied positions of church leadership. Tolerating deception in another is precisely what Adam did, not Eve. Adam sinned in going along with woman's doctrinal error and failing to stand for what he knew directly from God to be true. It was the man, not the woman, who did the very thing a church leader must not do: he overlooked deception and declined to judge the error of someone whose favour he wanted to retain. Exemplifying what Doriani and Schreiner [the proponents of this particular view] regard as typically 'female' behaviour, the first man chose relational harmony over doctrinal purity—and the entire human race was plunged into sin and alienation from God. Although Doriani and Schreiner deny that their rationale entails women's intellectual inferiority, there can be no denying that a moral deficiency is evident in one who sees error in the church and fails to exercise responsibility to take a stand for the truth. If such behaviour does, in fact, occur naturally in women—or if for any reason Eve's moral failing should be regarded as typifying women in general—then women are, by virtue of their female nature, morally and spiritually defective (despite oft-heard traditionalist protestations to the contrary).*"

are many instances of women who have been fearless in confronting doctrinal error, such as Marcella (325-410 AD) who was acknowledged by the Latin scholar Jerome for her tenacity in this regard.⁵⁶⁶ Furthermore, Paul constantly warned all Christians to guard against being deceived by “empty words” and false teaching (Ephesians 5: 6; 2 Thessalonians 2: 3). He did not reserve his words in this regard for women only.

Another Male Headship interpretation of verse 14 is that it allegedly highlights how “... *the serpent took the initiative to tempt Eve rather than Adam, thereby subverting the pattern of male leadership.*”⁵⁶⁷ Apart from the fact that the relevant text is silent about the alleged “pattern of male leadership”,⁵⁶⁸ others have pointed out that “... *Eve was not deceived by the serpent into taking the lead in the male-female relationship. She was deceived into disobeying a command of God, namely, not to eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*”⁵⁶⁹

Similarly, another writer has observed, “... *the text nowhere suggests that the snake approached the woman in order to subvert the man’s authority over her. There is no mention by any of the characters of any such authority having been given. The challenge of the snake is not directed against the man’s authority. It is against God’s authority.*”⁵⁷⁰

Such observations are supported by a reading of Genesis 3: 11ff which shows that when God confronted the man and the woman His primary concern was that they had both disobeyed His command not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,⁵⁷¹ not with whether “... *the pattern of male leadership*” had been subverted. As shown in the previous discussion on verse 13, Paul often drew on the events of the creation story in order to make his various points. He did so because of the significant archetypal value of such events. Hence, his drawing on the deception of Eve in verse 14 was not unusual. In fact, there was one other occasion when Paul specifically referred to the deception of Eve, in 2 Corinthians 11: 3. In that instance it was applied to the whole church at Corinth, both men and women, whom Paul had feared were being “corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” in a similar way that Eve had been deceived into disobedience. Thus, in drawing on the Eve analogy it is clear

566 Belleville 2001, pp. 87, 111

567 For example Schreiner 2001, p. 226

568 It will be recalled that section 8.5 of this study considered Schreiner’s arguments for male leadership based on creation and found them to be extremely tenuous.

569 Belleville 2001, p. 129; also, Belleville 2004b, p. 222; Belleville 2005a, p. 91

570 Hess 2004, p. 89. Also, Osburn (2001) notes, “*The essence of the first sin in Eden is the desire for power (Gen 3: 5). Nothing suggests that they violated some so-called ‘divine order of male dominance’ – rather, their sin was disobedience and wanting to be like God (3: 5 – 6, 11)*” (p. 112).

571 While Eve was the first to partake of the forbidden fruit, it is important to recall that “... *in Gen 3: 1 – 7, the man and the woman sin together, the serpent addresses the woman with the plural, ‘you,’ and v. 6 says the man was present with the woman*” (Osburn 2001, pp. 228, 249). This point is important to note since there are some who argue that Eve was not in the company of her husband when she was tempted (for example Clark 1980, p. 30).

that Paul does not apply it to women alone, and that he uses it in relation “to anyone easily deceived.”⁵⁷² Its use in verse 14 does not infer anything adverse about the nature of women generally.

One other early interpretation of verse 14 that should be considered is the highly influential and enduring proposition that it disqualifies women from “public” teaching in the Church on the basis that they continue to bear responsibility for the sin of Eve. In referring to women generally the third century AD Church Father Tertullian stated: “Do you not know that you are (each) an Eve? The sentence of God on this sex of yours lives in this age: the guilt must of necessity live too. You are the devil’s gateway: you are the unsealer of that (forbidden) tree: you are the first deserter of the divine law: you are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed so easily God’s image, man. On account of your desert – that is, death – even the Son of God had to die.”⁵⁷³ This view reflected some early Jewish traditions which required women to walk in front of corpses at funerals because Eve was responsible for bringing death into the world, light the Sabbath lamps because Eve had brought darkness, and prepare the dough offering because Adam had been corrupted by his spouse. These requirements “... served as constant reminders that women still bore the stigma of Eve’s sin.”⁵⁷⁴ However, interpreting verse 14 in this manner is untenable for at least the following reasons.

Firstly, it gives a meaning to the passage that is not consistent with its immediate context. In this regard it will be recalled that verse 12 proscribes a particular type of teaching, “teaching in a domineering way”, not the generic act of “teaching”.

572 Keener 2001, p. 62; also, Belleville 2004b, p. 223; Fee 2004c, pp. 377 – 378; Kaiser *et al* 1996, p. 670. The desires which motivated Eve to disobey God’s command (Genesis 3: 6) are not gender-specific and are common to humanity (1 John 2: 15 – 17). Furthermore, it is important to recall Romans 7: 11 where Paul describes how “... sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me ...” The Greek word for “deceived” in this instance is derived from the word for “deceived” as used in 1 Timothy 2: 14 (Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Greek dictionary, # 1818, p. 29). In Hebrews 3: 13 Christians are encouraged to avoid being “hardened by sin’s deceitfulness”. The word for “deceitfulness” is also derived from the particular word used in 1 Timothy 2: 14 (Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Greek dictionary, # 539, p. 13). Thus, anyone can be deceived by sin; it is not a characteristic that is confined to Eve (or women) only. On this point one Male Headship proponent, Bowman (2001) agrees that, “Paul is not suggesting that women are more easily deceived than men or that they are less intelligent. Both Scripture and history witness to the ease with which both men and women are deceived in regard to doctrine” (p. 289). Similarly, Schreiner (2001) writes, “In the history of the church some have argued that women are less intelligent or more apt to be deceived than men. The idea that women are less intelligent is not taught elsewhere in Scripture...” (pp. 225 – 226). Likewise, Clark (1980) notes, “... Men as well as women are prone to characteristic defects” (p. 218).

573 Cited in Sumner 2003, p. 41 (emphasis in text); also, Kimball 2004, p. 477

574 Kroeger and Kroeger 1992, pp. 143 – 144. While not suggesting that women continue to carry the burden of Eve’s sin some contemporary Male Headship proponents such as Schreiner (2001) nevertheless assert that, “Women are forbidden to teach because Eve was deceived, and not Adam” (p. 224). Similarly, while Clark (1980) notes that Eve is not blamed for the Fall anywhere else in the New Testament (pp. 201 – 202) and that verse 14 does not state that the woman bears the main responsibility for the Fall (p. 202) he still writes, “... The verse rather states only that the woman was deceived. Being deceived was her role in the Fall, and that fact affects the appropriateness of women teaching and exercising authority” (p. 202).

Secondly, it is one thing to argue, as Male Headship proponents do, on the basis of Adam being created before Eve that men were always intended by God to assume the leadership role.⁵⁷⁵ However, Adam's prior creation was quite unlike Eve's deception in that while the former event resulted from divine deliberate intent, the latter occurred as a consequence of the exercise of human free will. Accordingly, it is difficult to conceive how Eve's deception could in any sense operate after the fact as a justification for male leadership when it was never part of God's original creation intent and if, as Male Headship proponents assert, the principle of male leadership had already been established as a result of Adam's prior creation.⁵⁷⁶ Indeed, Adam's prior creation alone should have obviated any need to rely on Eve's deception as a further justification particularly when, as will be shown shortly, there is a basic scriptural principle that individuals should not be punished or held responsible or accountable for the sins committed by others. Also, it is unclear how Eve's deception could be understood to justify the prohibition in verse 12 when there is no suggestion in the broader Genesis record of her having engaged, appropriately or otherwise, in teaching a man or that her sin was in any way associated with such activity.⁵⁷⁷

Thirdly, it gives a meaning to the passage that is not reflected throughout the Scriptures. Apart from the consequences of sin that are mentioned in Genesis 2: 17, 3: 3, 16, which are not stated to have ramifications with respect to spiritual function or service, the Scriptures are silent regarding the consequences of the particular sin of Eve and any implications of such for women generally. In fact, there is no indication in the broader Genesis record of any ban being imposed on women from teaching men as a consequence of Eve's sin.

Finally, it is contrary to the scriptural principle which holds that an individual is accountable for his or her own sins, not the sins of others (Exodus 32: 30 – 34; Numbers 5: 6 – 7; Deuteronomy 24: 16; 2 Kings 14: 6; 2 Chronicles 25: 4; Proverbs 3: 31 – 35; Ecclesiastes 12: 13 – 14; Isaiah 3: 10 – 11; Jeremiah 31: 29 – 30; Ezekiel 18: 2 – 20; Micah 6: 7 – 8; Matthew 12: 36 – 37; Mark 16: 16; John 3: 16; Romans 2: 6 – 11, 14: 10 – 12; 2 Corinthians 5: 10; Galatians 6: 7 – 8; Colossians 3: 25; Revelation 20: 12 – 13).⁵⁷⁸ Interpreting verse 14 to mean

575 It will be recalled that this study has previously discounted the order of creation argument for the primacy of man over woman.

576 Even one Male Headship proponent has noted, "*If a rule about the roles of men and women is based on the 'curses' that were given as a result of the Fall, then the rule should be reversed by the work of Christ ... Verses 14 – 15 do concern the Fall and its consequences, but they do not justify the difference in roles between men and women or prohibit women from teaching by appealing to the consequences of the Fall or to the 'curses'*" (Clark 1980, pp. 202, 203).

577 One Male Headship proponent has also observed, "*Nor do we need, in order to make sense of the passage, to hold that it presupposes that once Eve was deceived she began to teach Adam, nor that she used to teach Adam before the Fall but the privilege was taken away from her after the Fall, as some commentators do*" (Clark 1980, p. 203).

578 Although our actions can sometimes have adverse consequences for others, this does not mean that they are responsible or accountable for those actions. While death may have been introduced as a consequence of the sin of Adam and Eve (Genesis 2: 17, 3: 3), everyone now is subject to death not as punishment for Adam and Eve's sin but because we too have sinned (Romans 3: 23, 5: 12). Importantly, a fundamental tenet of Christian belief is that Jesus came not only to obviate but to reverse the spiritual

that women are forbidden from publicly teaching men because they carry some residual responsibility for the sin of Eve would be contrary to this principle. Accordingly, such an interpretation fails when measured against the rule of biblical interpretation that Scripture interprets Scripture. As noted previously in this study, some Male Headship proponents have also found it difficult to defend this proposition.⁵⁷⁹

The above discussion has shown that the various Male Headship explanations of verse 14 as a second reason for the prohibition in verse 12 are extremely tenuous since they do not comply with the rules of biblical interpretation. In particular, such explanations are inconsistent with the principle that Scripture should be used to interpret Scripture. Overall, there is no warrant for interpreting Paul's use of the Eve analogy in verse 14 to be an adverse inference about the inherent nature of women generally let alone as an endorsement of "male leadership".

If verse 14 was not intended to be understood in the way that Male Headship proponents assert then how may it be interpreted? Rather than being a second reason for the prohibition in verse 12, an alternative explanation of the meaning of verse 14 is that its purpose is to introduce Paul's main point in verse 15 (the meaning of which will be discussed shortly). This conclusion is supported by the fact that at the beginning of verse 15 Paul uses the Greek word *de* (translated as "but") which indicates that he intended for verses 14 and 15 to be read together rather than separately.⁵⁸⁰ Certainly, in terms of the consecutive flow of Paul's argument and the grammatical construction he used, verse 14 appears to be

consequences of sin, even death (John 3: 16, 11: 23 – 26; 1 Corinthians 15; 2 Corinthians 5: 17; Galatians 3: 28, 6: 15; 1 John 2: 2, 3: 8, 4: 9 – 10). As to passages such as Exodus 20: 5 and Deuteronomy 5: 9, which at first glance might appear to suggest that children could be punished for certain sins of their parents, it has been noted, "*As for the commandment that has the sins of the fathers visiting the children to the third and fourth generations, we can only observe that the text clearly teaches that this happens when the children repeat the motivating cause of their parents' sin – that is, they too hate God. But when the children love God, the effect is lovingkindness for thousands of generations ... God's grace is balanced by the last part of Exodus 34: 7, which warns that [God] does not leave the guilty unpunished.*" *The reverse side of the same coin that declares God's mercy and his love speaks of his justice and righteousness. For the wicked persons who by their actions tend to second their father's previous motions by continuing to sin boldly against God as their fathers did, with no repentance, this text again warns that the chastisement of God will be felt down to the 'third and fourth generation.'* However, note carefully that the full formula includes the important qualifier 'of those who hate me.' But whenever there is love, the effect is extended to thousands of generations" (Kaiser et al 1996, pp. 178 – 179). This approach to understanding passages such as Exodus 20: 5 and Deuteronomy 5: 9 is consistent with the rules of biblical interpretation that Scripture interprets Scripture and Scripture should not be interpreted in such a way as to contradict other Scripture.

579 Refer to footnote 561 of this study.

580 The word translated "but" at the beginning of verse 15 is the Greek word *de* which is an "... *adversative conjunction, carefully to be distinguished from kai or te ('and' or 'both');* *de, generally marks a contrast, and an otherwise concealed antithesis*" (Bullinger 1975, p. 123). Thayer (1979) notes that *de* is used by way of opposition and distinction and is added to statements opposed to a preceding statement (# 1161, p. 125).

more naturally linked with verse 15 than it is with verse 13.⁵⁸¹ That verses 14 and 15 are so linked is further indicated by the use of the singular “she” at the beginning of verse 15 in the context of “she will be saved through the childbirth” in reference back to the “woman” discussed in verse 14 and the remediation of her sin.⁵⁸² Moreover, the positive sense of verse 15 counterbalances the more negative subject matter of verse 14.⁵⁸³ Thus, there are clear grammatical and contextual links between verses 14 and 15 which makes it reasonable to read them as a pair, not separately or in isolation from one another.

Apart from the foregoing indications to the link between verses 14 and 15, it should be noted that there is no justification to read verse 14 separately from verse 15 since verse divisions were not included in the original text.⁵⁸⁴ Paul would never have intended for his message in verse 14 to be impeded by such an artificial construct and read in isolation from its immediate context.

Thus, if read in context and in consideration of other relevant Scriptures it is reasonable to understand the primary purpose of verse 14 as providing the introduction to Paul’s main point in verse 15. However, even if verse 14 had been intended to operate as a second reason for the prohibition in verse 12, as with verse 13 it would only function as such on a woman teaching a man in a

581 Support for this conclusion comes from a Male Headship proponent, Blomberg (2001) who has proposed that “... perhaps 1 Timothy 2: 14 is not meant to provide a second rationale for Paul’s proscription at all. The *gar* is not repeated, verses 13–14 are linked to each other solely with a *kai*, while verses 14–15 are in a mildly adversative relationship to one another, as supported also by the postpositive *de* at the beginning of verse 15” (p. 367). More recently, Blomberg (2005) has written, “... [verse 14] does not begin with a ‘for,’ merely an ‘and’ (*kai*), while verses 14 and 15 are linked more closely with a *de* (“but”), suggesting a mild contrast. Having alluded to Genesis 2 in verse 13, it would have been natural for Paul to think next of Genesis 3 and the fall of Adam and Eve, along with God’s subsequent punishment of the first couple. In essence, verse 14 then functions to set up verse 15 by recalling that things got worse before they got better” (pp. 171–172). Schreiner (2005b) has cited three criticisms made by Mounce of Blomberg’s proposal including that verses 13 and 14 are naturally linked by the Greek word translated “and” (*kai*) (p. 315n99). However, in Schreiner’s citation of Mounce’s criticisms no mention was made of the significance of the Greek word *de* at the beginning of verse 15 which provides the connection between it and verse 14. It is noted that Blomberg (2001) has previously replied to Mounce’s objections (p. 367).

582 It should be noted that the words “she” and “the” appear in the original Greek text of verse 15. The meaning of the expression, “she will be saved through the childbirth”, will be discussed in the next section of this study.

583 Grudem (2006) observes, “Paul ends the chapter on a positive and reassuring note” (p. 41n9). Similarly, Osburn (2001) remarks that verse 15, “... provides the positive conclusion to the negative statements in vv. 11–14” (p. 230; also, p. 251). Groothuis (2004) likewise notes, “Thus Paul concludes his stern warnings regarding Eve and the Ephesian women on a more positive, encouraging note.”

584 Chapter and verse divisions were not part of the original New Testament writings and were only introduced in the centuries following their composition. As noted by Viola and Barna (2008): “In the year 1227, a professor at the University of Paris named Stephen Langton added chapters to all the books of the Bible. Then in 1551, a printer named Robert Stephanus (sometimes called Robert Estieene) numbered the sentences in all the books of the New Testament. According to Stephanus’s son, the verse divisions that his father created do not do service to the sense of the text. Stephanus did not use any consistent method. While riding on horseback from Paris to Lyon, he versified the entire New Testament within Langton’s chapter divisions. So verses were born in the pages of holy writ in the year 1551” (pp. 228–229).

domineering way. It would have no relevance to a situation, “public” or “private”, where a woman taught a man in accordance with the attitudes and values promoted by Jesus (Matthew 20: 25 – 28; Mark 10: 42 – 45; Luke 22: 25 – 26).

10.12 Verse 15: “she”, “they”, “childbearing” and “salvation”

Verse 15 has been regarded as a very difficult passage to understand.⁵⁸⁵ It could be taken to have very different meanings depending on how it is interpreted. For instance, is its message that women will be “kept safe” during childbearing or that they will be “saved” (in the sense of attaining eternal salvation) through the bearing of children?⁵⁸⁶ Adding to the uncertainty is that some Bible translations render the Greek word at the beginning of verse 15 either as “woman” or “women” (contrary to the original Greek text which actually commences the verse with the singular “she” followed by the plural “they”).⁵⁸⁷ Furthermore, while Bible translations variously render the relevant Greek word as “childbirth” or “childbearing”, in the original Greek text the word actually means “*the childbearing*”. Male Headship interpretations of the verse’s reference to “childbearing” as being representative of “... *the general scope of activities in which a Christian woman should be involved*”⁵⁸⁸ only obscure its real meaning and result in an understanding that Paul did not intend. As the following discussion will show, a far more plausible understanding of the verse is possible when it is read in context and in consideration of other relevant Scriptures.

As noted above, verse 15 is generally interpreted by Male Headship proponents as being representative of what a woman’s primary concern should be: family duties rather than teaching or governing the church, which they regard as being the prime concerns of men.⁵⁸⁹ Based on this verse Grudem (2006), for example, claims that women were created for one particular role: “*Women are not to teach or govern the church, but God has given them a special responsibility, the awesome responsibility of bearing and raising children.*”⁵⁹⁰ Grudem (2006) proceeds to claim that:

Paul means that a woman will be “saved” – she will continue to work out the results of her salvation – “through childbearing,” that is, through being obedient to God in the various tasks and roles that He calls her to, rather than attempting to teach or govern the church, a role God has not called women to ... So the point of 1 Timothy 2: 15 is that women are not eternally lost because of Eve’s sin, but they will be saved and will experience the outworking of their salvation throughout their Christian lives if they follow the roles God has given to them and

585 Sumner (2003) cites various writers who have made this observation (p. 257).

586 Belleville 2000, pp. 165, 167; Hurley 1981, p. 221

587 Although, the actual Greek word for “she” is reflected in some English translations such as the New King James Version while the TNIV contains a footnote to this effect.

588 Bowman 2001, p. 290

589 For example Roberts 1964, pp. 24 – 25; Hurley 1981, p. 223; Bowman 2001, p. 290; Grudem 2006, pp. 40, 41

590 Grudem 2006, p. 40

*continue in faith and obedience ... the main point of verse 15 is still clear: Though Eve sinned, salvation for women is still possible ...*⁵⁹¹

If “childbearing” is required of women then what is the fate of those, including some faithful Christian women, who for whatever reason have never experienced motherhood? Grudem (2006) attempts to rationalise this problem for his argument by making the following statement:

*Paul understands that not all women will be able to have children ... But [in 1 Timothy 2: 15] Paul is speaking of “childbearing” as a representative example of how a woman should be obedient to God’s calling on her life and fulfill the role or roles God has called her to, whether that includes bearing and raising children, or showing ‘hospitality’ (1 Timothy 5: 10), or caring for the afflicted (v. 10), or managing their households (v. 14), or ministering through “supplications and prayers” (v. 5), or training younger women (Titus 2: 4 – 5), or any mixtures of these or other callings. Paul takes “childbearing” as one obvious and representative example of a woman’s distinctive role and calling from God.*⁵⁹²

One problem with rationalising verse 15 in this manner is that it requires the presumption being read into the passage that “service” roles and functions, such as showing hospitality and caring for the afflicted, are the primary domain of women when, in fact, such responsibilities are enjoined upon Christians irrespective of gender (Matthew 25: 31 – 46; Romans 12: 13; Hebrews 13: 2; 1 Peter 4: 9). In addition, such rationalisations fail to take into account that Paul elsewhere did not consider domesticity to necessarily be the ultimate ambition of the believer (1 Corinthians 7: 8, 25 – 28, 32 – 40).⁵⁹³ While he may have

591 Ibid, pp. 41, 41n9. It is important to reiterate what has previously been noted in this study that any suggestion that women continue to bear responsibility for the sin of Eve is refuted by Scriptures such as Exodus 32: 30 – 34; Numbers 5: 6 – 7; Deuteronomy 24: 16; 2 Kings 14: 6; 2 Chronicles 25: 4; Proverbs 3: 31 – 35; Ecclesiastes 12: 13 – 14; Isaiah 3: 10 – 11; Jeremiah 31: 29 – 30; Ezekiel 18: 2 – 20; Micah 6: 7 – 8; Matthew 12: 36 – 37; Mark 16: 16; John 3: 16; Romans 2: 6 – 11, 14: 10 – 12; 2 Corinthians 5: 10; Galatians 6: 7 – 8, Colossians 3: 25 and Revelation 20: 12 – 13 which show that as a general principle each person is accountable for his or her own sins, not the sins of others.

592 Ibid, p. 40 (emphasis in text). In response to such statements the question may be asked: How can verse 15 be teaching that “childbearing” is a “... *representative example of how a woman should be obedient to God’s calling*” then or now when, as shown by passages such as 1 Corinthians 7: 8, 25 – 28, 32 – 40, it was not normative (mandatory) even for all Christians during the first century AD?

593 As also noted by Belleville 2000, pp. 115, 167. A counter argument might be made that Paul’s advice to the Corinthians was an exception to the rule given “the crisis” that they were facing (1 Corinthians 7: 26). In response to any such argument, it is notable that Jesus originally made the same point that domesticity was not the ultimate goal of the believer (Matthew 19: 12; Luke 10: 38 – 42, 11: 27 – 28). Furthermore, any attempt to categorise Paul’s advice to the Corinthians as an “exception to the rule” would be contrary to the rule of biblical interpretation that “... *everything in the Bible means something*” (Sumner 2003, p. 127). It also would be ignoring the fact that other reasons were mentioned for Paul’s advice to the Corinthians (such as the need for them not to be distracted from the Lord’s work). The fact that Paul’s advice to the Corinthians differed from that which he gave to the women of the Ephesian church (1 Timothy 2: 15, 5: 11 – 15) means that even on the same subject he could give differing advice depending on the particular circumstances of the people to whom he wrote. From this it is reasonable to conclude that 1 Timothy 2: 15 was not intended as a universal principle which was to be applicable to all women irrespective of time or culture. Indeed, if it had been a universal principle Paul would have expected it to

instructed the young women at Ephesus to marry and have children, this was because in their particular case he wanted them to be kept busy (see 1 Timothy 5: 11 – 15). Overall, such rationalisations of verse 15 are problematic because they ignore the weight of evidence that women actively worked with Paul in the propagation of the Gospel message (for example Romans 16: 3 and Philippians 4: 3) and were not confined by him to performing domestic/auxiliary activities only.⁵⁹⁴

As women, like men, are able to access salvation only on the basis of faith through the Grace of God and the sacrifice of Jesus (Romans 1: 16 – 17; Galatians 2: 16; Ephesians 1: 7; 2: 8 – 10), there is no warrant for interpreting verse 15 to mean that women may be saved “... *if they follow the roles God has given to them*”⁵⁹⁵ such as by bearing children. Since the intent of the passage is to deal with inappropriate behaviour in the Ephesian church rather than to delineate general male-female roles, verse 15 must be understood as being a continuation of the discussion in verses 12 to 14 and be concerned with the particular women at Ephesus. Therefore, the key to its meaning lies within the context of the passage itself.

Regarding the singular “she” found in the original Greek text at the beginning of verse 15, one Male Headship proponent has suggested that it “... *is probably generic, referring to the female gender as a whole.*”⁵⁹⁶ However, interpreting “she” in this manner deviates from the rule of biblical interpretation to “... *never to depart from the plain, literal sense, unless it implies an absurdity.*”⁵⁹⁷ It is also contrary to the immediate context of the passage (verse 14) which shows that Paul was talking about Eve, not women generally. Understanding “she” in verse 15 as being a reference to Eve is important in interpreting the meaning of verse

have applied to the Corinthians even in spite of the “crisis” they were facing (as he did on other occasions, note 1 Corinthians 4: 17, 7: 17, 11: 16 for example). Thus, the primary application of verse 15 was to the women of the Ephesian church and its advice was not automatically mandatory for, or relevant to, women outside of that community, then or now. Another instance when Paul’s views or advice either differed from or modified previously given instructions was in relation to food sacrificed to idols. In Acts 15: 28 – 29, 21: 25, the Apostles in Jerusalem had identified the need for Gentile Christians to abstain from food sacrificed to idols. Much later, eating such food was still regarded as a taboo in some Gentile Christian communities (Revelation 2: 14, 20). Paul was aware of the Apostles’ instruction in this regard, although it appears that he personally was more relaxed about whether one ate such food or not (Romans 14: 14, 20; 1 Corinthians 8: 4, 8, 10: 25 – 26, 30; Colossians 2: 16; 1 Timothy 4: 3 – 5; c.f. Mark 7: 18 – 19). While he was careful to advise Gentile Christians not to cause a “weaker brother” to stumble by what they ate or drank (Romans 14: 13 – 23; 2; 1 Corinthians 8: 9, 13, 10: 31 – 33), he also advised them not to question the provenance of food placed before them and to not eat it only if someone raised an issue about it having been offered in sacrifice to idols (1 Corinthians 10: 27 – 29).

594 As also noted by Sumner 2003, p. 241

595 As asserted by Grudem 2006, p. 41. Another Male Headship proponent, Clark (1980) disagrees with such a view by pointing out that “... *the notion that childbearing is salvific for women would indeed be at odds with the central teaching of the New Testament that salvation is through Jesus Christ*” (p. 206). Certainly, Jesus never endorsed childbearing as having any inherent “salvific” function or value (Luke 11: 27 – 28). Accordingly, verse 15 should not be interpreted in any way that would contradict the position advocated by Jesus in this regard.

596 Blomberg 2001, p. 367

597 Sumner 2003, p. 209

15 and its intended application.

The meaning of the reference “she shall be saved through childbearing” becomes clearer when the word “childbearing” is read as being preceded by the word “the” (as is found in the original Greek text). If “the” is included, it is far more likely that Paul intended the first part of the verse to be understood as “But she will be saved through the childbearing”. Given that in verse 14 Paul had been concerned with the consequences of deception and sin it is reasonable to conclude, in light of this context, that in verse 15 he would be more concerned with the need for spiritual redemption than with promising all women physical safety during the process of childbearing.⁵⁹⁸

Of the significance of the words “the childbearing” Cunningham *et al* (2000) have pointed out that the reference is unique and not found elsewhere in the New Testament. Furthermore, rather than being a verb the Greek word is a noun preceded by the definite article (“*the* childbearing”) which points to one particular childbearing, that of Jesus.⁵⁹⁹ Similarly, Hurley (1981) has noted that while the expression is unusual it still could be a reference to the birth of Jesus given that Paul has “... *been discussing Eve and the fall. It would not be surprising for him to turn in his thinking to the remedy for the fall. His words would then be interpreted as meaning, ‘Eve will be saved from the curse through the birth of the promised child, Jesus, and other women who exhibit obedient faith will similarly be saved.’*....”⁶⁰⁰

A number of Bible translations reflect this meaning. For example, the International Standard Version contains a footnote that this part of verse 15 can be rendered “*saved through the birth of the Child.*” Similarly, the New English Bible and the RSV both contain a footnote to this effect. The Bible for Today (Contemporary English Version) contains a footnote that this section may be rendered “*saved by the birth of a child (that is, by the birth of Jesus).*”

Given Paul’s focus in verse 14 on Eve’s contribution to the events of the Fall, his statement in verse 15 that “she shall be saved through *the* childbearing” is evocative of the first messianic prophecy that was made shortly after she sinned about the role of her “seed” in defeating evil (Genesis 3: 15; 1 John 3: 8). Certainly, in fulfilment of this prophecy Jesus was “born of a woman” (Paul’s own

598 In ancient times childbearing was a highly dangerous undertaking and the physical safety of women could not be guaranteed (Pederson 2006, p. 82). As has been noted, “*Only within the last fifty years have most of the dangers associated with childbirth been overcome. Before then childbirth was sometimes a hazardous event in the lives of women; and many succumbed, Christians and non-Christians alike*” (Kroeger and Kroeger 1992, p. 171). Osburn (2001) similarly notes, “*The statement that ‘the woman will be saved through childbirth,’ is translated incorrectly in NIV as, ‘women will be kept safe through childbirth.’ Not only does experience show that this statement is incorrect, but ‘safe (saved)’ is shown to refer to Christian salvation by the following phrase, ‘if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety’ (NIV)*” (p. 251).

599 Cunningham *et al* 2000, p. 224

600 Hurley 1981, p. 222. Another Male Headship proponent who has noted that this as a possible interpretation of verse 15 is Clark (1980, p. 206).

words [Galatians 4: 4]) in order to bring salvation to all who have faith in Him (Isaiah 7: 14, 9: 6; Matthew 1: 21; Luke 1: 26 – 38, 2: 11 – 21; John 3: 16, 18: 37; Romans 2: 14 – 16, 3: 25 – 26; Galatians 3: 8, 4: 4 – 5; Philippians 2: 7 – 8; Hebrews 9: 15, 26 – 28; Revelation 12).⁶⁰¹ While His death and Resurrection were essential in securing salvation, Jesus would never have become the Saviour of humanity had He not been born first. It is notable that there were some who looked to His birth as a sign from God that redemption was close at hand (Micah 5: 2; Matthew 2: 1 – 11; Luke 2: 8 – 38). Indeed, His birth was heralded as the cause for celebration and great joy for all people (Luke 2: 10 – 11). Moreover, Jesus' subsequent human experience is fundamental to His role as the Saviour (Philippians 2: 6 – 9; Hebrews 2: 14 – 18, 4: 14 – 16, 5: 7 – 10).⁶⁰² In fact, His physical incarnation is so important that it was necessary for some New Testament writers to specifically repudiate an early heresy which taught that Jesus had not “come in the flesh” (John 1: 14; 1 John 4: 2 – 3, 10; 2 John 7). Therefore, in view of the principle that “... *everything in the Bible means something*,”⁶⁰³ use of the word “the” in connection with “childbearing” in verse 15 has a significance that should not be overlooked or minimised in any way.

In proceeding to use the plural “they” from the second part of verse 15 Paul is again applying the lesson of Eve to the Ephesian women who are the subject of the prohibition in verse 12. In continuing his point about the “woman” and her fall into sin in verse 14 Paul's message in verse 15 is that as “she”, despite her sin, could look forward to the hope of salvation as a result of the birth of the promised Saviour (Genesis 3: 15; Galatians 4: 4), so too the women in question could look forward to the same hope “*if they continue in faith, love and holiness*”

601 It is notable that while the actions of one woman were instrumental in bringing sin into the world, it was through another woman that the Saviour was brought into the world: “*Eve sinned, but another woman, Mary, brought the Saviour. This view was widely held by the church fathers*” (Pyles). In this regard, from the second century AD Christian writers began to compare Mary with Eve. Justin Martyr is the first who is known to have contrasted Eve and Mary. Furthermore, in drawing on Paul's theme in Romans where Jesus was identified as the “second Adam”, Irenaeus in his work titled *Against Heresies* suggested that Mary was the new Eve since, in contrast to Eve, Mary was obedient thereby making possible the door of salvation being opened to humanity (Matkin 2008, pp. 180 – 181). With respect to these points Groothuis (2004) notes, “*Paul's reference to 'the childbearing' in verse 15 seems to evoke the promise of redemption God gave to Eve in Genesis 3: 15. While the woman Eve was deceived by Satan when she failed to submit to God's true word, the woman Mary heard and believed the word of the Lord to her, and so through her the Christ child was brought into the world.*”

602 While Jesus lived on earth as a male, it is interesting that in a number of key passages that refer to His humanity (such as 1 Timothy 2: 5) the word used to describe Him is *anthropos* (meaning “human”) rather than *aner* (meaning “male”). The reason for this was to show that Jesus is the Saviour of all people irrespective of gender. As noted by Grenz (2004): “*The great declarations of the incarnation in the New Testament emphasise that Christ became human, not that he became male ... for the church fathers, the focus on the inclusiveness of Jesus' humanity was a theological necessity based on an important theological principle: what the Son did not assume in the incarnation he could not redeem*” (p. 281). Cunningham *et al* (2000) make a similar point (p. 210).

603 Sumner 2003, p. 127. As noted previously in this study, the principle that everything in the Bible means something is confirmed by passages such as Isaiah 55: 11.

with propriety (TNIV).⁶⁰⁴ His proviso in this regard is consistent with other scriptural teachings about the need for Christians to continue persevering in the faith (Matthew 10: 22, 24: 13, 25: 1 – 13; Mark 13: 13; Luke 9: 62; Romans 1: 17, 5: 4, 11: 22; 2 Corinthians 6: 4; Galatians 5: 6; Philippians 2: 12; 2 Timothy 2: 10 – 12, 4: 7 – 8; Hebrews 12: 1 – 8, 14; 2 Peter 3: 17 – 18; Revelation 2: 3, 10; also, Joshua 23: 14 – 16).⁶⁰⁵ It is notable that such attributes, to which all Christians are called and not just women (1 Corinthians 13; 2 Corinthians 7: 1; Ephesians 6: 16; 1 Thessalonians 4: 7, 5: 8; 1 Timothy 2: 2; 2 Timothy 1: 9; Titus 2: 12; Hebrews 12: 14; 1 Peter 1: 15 – 16), are the antithesis of the spirit that would motivate a person to teach someone else in a domineering manner.

Thus, from the context of the passage it is evident that verse 15 is primarily a message for those women who were subject to the prohibition in verse 12. As God wants all people to be saved (Romans 3: 23 – 26; 1 Timothy 1: 12 – 16, 2: 4), Paul's message to these women is that despite their misconduct they could still look forward to the hope of salvation provided they cultivated faith, love and holiness in their lives. As noted earlier in this study, verse 15 would only have direct relevance to other women, then and now, if they too had been engaging in the particular behaviour that Paul prohibited, that is, teaching a man in a domineering way.⁶⁰⁶

10.13 Final observations on 1 Timothy 2: 12 – 15

A lot of material has been covered in section 10 of this study so a recap would

604 Some Male Headship proponents have also recognised that “the hope of salvation” is the thought that was intended by Paul to be understood as applying to both “she” and “they” in verse 15. For example, Hurley (1981) notes that the verse could be understood as meaning, “*Eve will be saved from the curse through the birth of the promised child, Jesus, and other women who exhibit obedient faith will similarly be saved*” (p. 222).

605 As also noted in Internet 11. One Male Headship proponent, Grudem (2006) has also acknowledged this point (p. 41). The particular words used by Paul in verse 15 indicate the need for perseverance on the part of the women in question:

- “If” – Greek *eao*; “expresses a condition of uncertainty, with an assumption of some small amount of contingency or probability, where experience will show whether the thing is really so or not. In verse 15 it is used in the Aorist tense, which may be in most cases translated by the future perfect” (Bullinger 1975, p. 396). Some English translations such as the Jerusalem Bible and the New Revised Standard Version render “if” in verse 15 as “provided”. In other words, the women who were subject to the prohibition in verse 12 had the hope of salvation “provided” they remained in faith, love and holiness with propriety.
- “Continue” – Greek: *meno*; “to remain, abide” (Bullinger 1975, p. 184). The same word is used in 2 Timothy 3: 14.

606 This conclusion is consistent with the following observations: “*Whenever we share comparable particulars (i.e. similar specific life situations) with the first-century hearers, God's Word to us is the same as his Word to them*” (Fee and Stuart 2003, p. 75), and similarly: “*A basic hermeneutical principle is that if the same situation exists today, then the passage should be applied directly as it was then*” (Bowman 2001, p. 291). In terms of the ongoing applicability of this verse to women generally Osburn (2001) writes, “... *wherever there are misinformed, unreliable, and domineering women attempting to teach Christian truth, the ancient admonition of Paul to Timothy has direct application. However, nothing is said in this text about informed, reliable, and gentle women teaching – either in church or out, either on religion or not, either to men or women, either to young or old. No biblical text has been so misused to legislate so many prohibitions that stifle so much service by so many people*” (p. 252).

be timely. Based on the preceding discussion the following facts can be ascertained about the meaning of 1 Timothy 2: 12 – 15.

Rather than being a routine piece of correspondence, the letter of 1 Timothy was written to deal with a range of problems that had arisen in the Ephesian church.⁶⁰⁷ The church at Ephesus existed within a wider society that highly valued the primacy of the feminine, particularly as it was expressed through the popular cult of Artemis. It would not be too difficult to imagine such values having an influence on at least some of the Ephesian Christians in the same way that secular culture can influence some Christians today. In this letter Paul provided a series of correctives and remedies designed to address the various problems and difficulties facing the Ephesian church.⁶⁰⁸ Moreover, his words in this regard such as the need to pray without anger and the prohibition on *authentēin* teaching would have been intended to apply irrespective of setting (public or private).

Contrary to assertions by Male Headship proponents, 1 Timothy 2: 12 does not delegate to men the sole prerogative to teach or exercise authority in the Church. The verse is not concerned with what men may do; rather, it addresses a particular behaviour that should not be engaged in by a woman.⁶⁰⁹

In verse 12, rather than using the standard word for “authority” (*exousia*) Paul used *authentēin*, a word which during the first century AD had well attested negative (domineering) connotations. The arguments of Male Headship proponents that this word meant authority in a normal, legitimate sense are not supported by the research into the meaning of the word or by the overall context of verse 12. It is important to note that this is the only time in the entire New Testament when any type of prohibition is placed on the teaching activities of women. In this case Paul used this particular word *authentēin* to describe the type of teaching that he prohibited a woman from undertaking with a man – teaching in a domineering way.⁶¹⁰

Paul’s use of *authentēin* rather than *exousia*, and his linking of *authentēin* with *didaskein* (thereby explaining the type of teaching being undertaken⁶¹¹), is a strong indication that he was responding to a particular situation that had been troubling for the Ephesian church. In fact, it would have been highly unusual for

607 Belleville 2001, pp. 120 – 121; Bowman 2001, p. 287; Blomberg 2001, p. 358

608 Belleville 2004b, p. 206

609 Fee (2004b) similarly notes that “... *Paul’s concern in 1 Timothy 2: 9 – 15 is not with the men but with the women*” (p. 252n22) (emphasis in text). It has been observed that it would also have been inappropriate for men to have engaged in the particular proscribed behaviour (Sumner 2003, p. 249; Belleville 2001, p. 139; Belleville 2005a, p. 101; Osburn 2001, p. 252).

610 As noted previously in this study, this point is recognised in the TNIV which acknowledges in a footnote that the passage could be translated: “*I do not permit a woman to teach a man in a domineering way.*” This is not a new or novel translation since it has historical precedents as shown in sections 10.7 and 10.8 of this study.

611 That is, *authentēin* teaching: “*I do not permit a woman to teach a man in a domineering way*” (TNIV, footnote, alternative rendering for 1 Timothy 2: 12).

him to have used such a word given its overtly negative overtones had its use not been indicative of a dysfunctional situation within that church.

Once verse 12 is understood as prohibiting a woman from teaching a man in a domineering manner, and if verses 12 and 13 and verses 14 and 15 are read as pairs within this overall context, the intent of Paul's message becomes clear.

While the reasons which led to the making of the prohibition in verse 12 are not now apparent, they would have been familiar to Timothy as the original recipient of the letter. For Paul, the reasons why the women in question were teaching men in a domineering manner were not important otherwise he would have mentioned them. What mattered more to him was that they should stop engaging in such behaviour since doing so contravened God's original intent for the relationship between women and men.

Contrary to the claims of Male Headship proponents,⁶¹² there is no suggestion in 1 Timothy 2: 13 that male-only leadership in the Church is mandated by virtue of Adam's prior creation to that of Eve nor does the verse give any suggestion that the man's prior creation gives men any special priority over women. In fact, Paul elsewhere stated that the order of creation (man first, woman second) does not give men any such priority (1 Corinthians 11: 11 – 12). Furthermore, arguments by some Male Headship proponents that the prohibition in verse 12 is based on a universal order of creation principle as expressed through the Old Testament custom of *primogeniture*, as well as the alleged inherent inability of women to discern and refute false teaching,⁶¹³ have been seen in this study to be extremely tenuous.

As noted earlier, verse 12 is concerned with what a woman should not do, not with what men can do. Therefore, within this context it is reasonable to understand the primary purpose of verse 13 as providing the rationale for why a woman should not engage in the particular proscribed behaviour (that is, teaching a man in a domineering manner). In this regard Paul briefly refers to the Adam and Eve creation sequence. In accordance with the rule of biblical interpretation that Scripture should be interpreted in consideration of other relevant Scriptures it is necessary to go back to the broader creation account in Genesis in order to understand his intent for doing so. Given that: (1) his practice when referring to Adam and Eve was to draw from Genesis 2 and aspects from Genesis 3 other than Genesis 3: 16 and (2) the only indication in Genesis 1 – 2 is that while the woman was created after the man she was nonetheless created as his exact counterpart rather than his subordinate, verse 13 may reasonably be understood as supporting the prohibition in verse 12 on the grounds that the proscribed behaviour was contrary to what God had originally intended for the woman/man relationship.

612 For example Schreiner (2001) claims, "*Men bear the responsibility to lead and teach in the church because Adam was created before Eve*" (p. 203) (emphasis in text).

613 For example Grudem 2006, p. 39; House 1995, pp. 164 – 165

In this regard God had created the woman to be the man's equal partner, to be "one flesh" with him, and for them to jointly rule over the rest of creation (Genesis 1: 27 – 30, 2: 18, 23 – 24).⁶¹⁴ As noted above, there is no suggestion in Genesis 1 – 2 that the woman was created to be subordinate to the man in a hierarchical sense nor is there any indication that she was created to domineer over him. Consequently, it is reasonable to interpret verse 13 as providing the rationale for the prohibition in verse 12 on the basis that a woman teaching a man in a domineering way was contrary to God's original design for how He intended woman and man to interact.⁶¹⁵ That is, rather than having the meaning "*Men bear the responsibility to lead and teach in the church because Adam was created before Eve,*"⁶¹⁶ Paul's message in verse 13 is that a woman should not teach a man in a domineering way since woman was created to be man's equal partner, not "*his boss.*"⁶¹⁷

In relation to verse 14, some Male Headship proponents assert it to be a second reason for the prohibition in verse 12. However, any notion that Paul's reference to Eve's deception by Satan in this verse is suggestive that women generally are less competent or able than men in resisting deception, or that the woman was more culpable than the man in the introduction of sin into the world, or that the primary functions of women are confined to the "domestic" rather than the "public" sphere would be contrary to the plain meaning of other Scriptures (for example 2 Corinthians 11: 3; Romans 5: 12, 19; 1 Corinthians 7: 8 – 9, 32 – 40; Matthew 19: 12; Luke 10: 38 – 42, 11: 27 – 28).

Paul's reference to Eve in verse 14 was not intended to suggest that there is a defect in the inherent nature of women let alone as an endorsement of male leadership. It is notable that he did not reserve use of the Eve analogy for women only. Paul constantly warned all Christians against being deceived by "empty words" and false teaching (Ephesians 5: 6; 2 Thessalonians 2: 3) and he used the Eve analogy to make a point about anyone, male or female, who was

614 It will be recalled that this study previously noted how the word used in Genesis 2: 18 (Hebrew: *ezer kenegdo*) meant "*helper equal to him*" or "*helper corresponding completely to him*" (Brown, Driver and Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, cited in Greig 1999, p. 8; Grudem 2006, pp. 22, 76; also, Cunningham *et al* 2000, p. 96).

615 That verse 13 implicitly reflected this deeper underlying creation principle is discussed earlier in section 10 of this study. To interpret the meaning of Paul's brief reference to the Adam and Eve creation sequence in verse 13 in consideration of the broader Genesis 1 – 2 creation account is consistent with the rules of biblical interpretation that Scripture interprets Scripture and that difficult or unclear passages should be interpreted in light of the totality of the Scripture's teachings on a particular subject.

616 As is argued by Schreiner (2001, p. 203) (emphasis in text)

617 Belleville 2004b, p. 222. Interpreting verse 13 to mean that "*Men bear the responsibility to lead and teach in the church because Adam was created before Eve*" (Schreiner 2001, p. 203 [emphasis in text]) fails to take account of the rules of biblical interpretation such as Scripture interprets Scripture. In this regard Genesis 1 – 2 does not support any conclusion that woman was created to be hierarchically subordinate to man; rather she was created as his equal partner and joint ruler over the rest of creation. To interpret it as meaning that woman was created to be hierarchically subordinate to man is also inconsistent with the rule of biblical interpretation pertaining to Context determines Meaning. In this regard 1 Timothy 2: 12 is not concerned with what men can do, it relates to what a woman should not do; that is, teach a man in a domineering way. To interpret verse 13 as meaning that men are the designated leaders in the Church because Adam was created before Eve is to ignore this context.

easily deceived (2 Corinthians 11: 3; 1 Timothy 2: 14). In any event, where is the consistency in the Male Headship argument that Adam's prior creation and Eve's sin disqualifies women from teaching men "publicly" yet the same rationale does not function to disqualify a woman from teaching a man "privately" or from teaching other women and children? Would it not be safer for women to teach publicly to enable any "errors" to be more readily identified and corrected? If the so-called "order of creation" principle is God-ordained then it should have applied to women throughout the Scriptures, but the case of Deborah indicates that this was not so. God would not have intended for any universal, divinely sanctioned principle to apply in one time and place and not another since this would conflict with a fundamental, unchanging aspect of His nature – consistency (Numbers 23: 19; Psalms 102: 27; Malachi 3: 6; Hebrews 1: 12, 13: 8; James 1: 17). Essentially, Male Headship arguments that verse 14 supports a ban on the public teaching of men by women ignore the overwhelming weight of evidence of other Scriptures in which no gender caveat is placed in this regard.

To assert verse 14 to be a second reason for the prohibition in verse 12 would also be contrary to the overall scriptural principle which holds that a person is responsible and accountable for their own sins, not the sins of others (Exodus 32: 30 – 34; Numbers 5: 6 – 7; Deuteronomy 24: 16; 2 Kings 14: 6; 2 Chronicles 25: 4; Proverbs 3: 31 – 35; Ecclesiastes 12: 13 – 14; Isaiah 3: 10 – 11; Jeremiah 31: 29 – 30; Ezekiel 18: 2 – 20; Micah 6: 7 – 8; Matthew 12: 36 – 37; Mark 16: 16; John 3: 16; Romans 2: 6 – 11, 14: 10 – 12; 2 Corinthians 5: 10; Galatians 6: 7 – 8; Colossians 3: 25; Revelation 20: 12 – 13). Furthermore, grammatical and contextual indications would suggest that verse 14 is more naturally coupled with verse 15 than with verse 13.⁶¹⁸ Consequently, it is more reasonable to understand the purpose of verse 14 as providing the introduction to Paul's main message of hope in verse 15.⁶¹⁹

In this regard, Paul highlights that while the "woman" (Eve) had been deceived, "she" nevertheless could look forward to the hope of salvation as a result of "the childbearing", that is, the coming of the Saviour who had been promised from the time of her fall into sin (Genesis 3: 15; Romans 2: 14 – 16, 3: 25 – 26; Galatians 4: 5; Hebrews 9: 15, 26 – 28; 1 John 3: 8, 4: 10; Revelation 12). Without minimising the vital importance of the death and Resurrection of Jesus, the Scriptures attest that the redemptive hope of humanity would never have been realised had it not been for Jesus first being born and His subsequent human experience (Isaiah 7: 14, 9: 6; Micah 5: 2; Matthew 1: 21; Luke 1: 26 – 38, 2: 10 – 21; John 1: 14, 18: 37; Galatians 4: 4 – 5; Philippians 2: 7 – 8; Hebrews 2: 14 – 18, 4: 14 – 16, 5: 7 – 10; 1 John 4: 2 – 3; 2 John 7). Thus Paul's use of the

618 As also noted by one Male Headship proponent, Blomberg (2001, 2005), the grammatical links between verses 14 and 15 are strong (refer footnote 581 of this study).

619 It should be reiterated that even if verse 14 was to be understood as a second reason for the prohibition in verse 12, as with verse 13 it would only serve to reinforce the prohibition on a woman teaching a man in a domineering way, "... *not teaching per se*" (Belleville 2004b, p. 223). It would have no relevance to a situation where a woman taught a man, privately or publicly, in a way that accorded with the attitudes and values advocated by Jesus (Matthew 20: 25 – 28; Mark 10: 42 – 45; Luke 22: 25 – 26).

expression “*the* childbearing” had particular resonance in the context of his reference to Eve in verse 14 since it was reminiscent of the promise following her fall into sin regarding the role of her “seed” in bringing about the defeat of evil (Genesis 3: 15; Galatians 4: 4; 1 John 3: 8).⁶²⁰

In continuing his message Paul indicates that just as “she”, despite her sin, could look forward to the hope of salvation as a result of the coming of the Saviour, so too the women to whom the prohibition in verse 12 had been directed (“they”) could look forward to the same hope provided that they “continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.” Two points may be made about this message. Firstly, in encouraging the women to conduct themselves with faith, love and holiness Paul highlighted how such attributes, to which all Christians are called (1 Corinthians 13; 2 Corinthians 7: 1; Ephesians 6: 16; 1 Thessalonians 4: 7, 5: 8; 1 Timothy 2: 2; 2 Timothy 1: 9; Titus 2: 12; Hebrews 12: 14; 1 Peter 1: 15 – 16), are the antithesis of the spirit that would have motivated them to teach in a domineering way. This emphasises how the behaviour which was prohibited in verse 12 was indeed negative in character, not positive or neutral as asserted by Male Headship proponents. Secondly, Paul’s message in verse 15 is consistent with other scriptural teachings about the need for Christians to persevere in the faith (Matthew 10: 22, 24: 13, 25: 1 – 13; Mark 13: 13; Luke 9: 62; Romans 5: 4, 11: 22; 2 Corinthians 6: 4; Philippians 2: 12; 2 Timothy 2: 10 – 12, 4: 7 – 8; Hebrews 12: 1 – 8; 2 Peter 3: 17 – 18; Revelation 2: 3, 10; also, Joshua 23: 14 – 16). As God wants all people to experience salvation (1 Timothy 1: 12 – 16, 2: 4; Romans 3: 23 – 26; 2 Peter 3: 9), verse 15 thus represents an encouraging and optimistic way for Paul to conclude the corrective that began in verse 12.⁶²¹

Again, it is important to make the point that the prohibition in verse 12 applies only to the situation of a woman teaching a man in a domineering way. This means that there is no prohibition on a woman exercising her gifts, talents and abilities in a positive sense, such as for extending the Gospel message, either “publicly” or “privately”.⁶²² Indeed, as shown in section 5 of this study (Part A),

620 It is important to recall that Paul is not instructing them that they need to have children in order to ensure their eternal salvation. Even though he subsequently directed the young women at Ephesus to get married and have children (1 Timothy 5: 14) this was because he wanted them to keep busy (see 1 Timothy 5: 11 – 15), not because they needed to do so in order to receive eternal life. That the bearing of children was not Paul’s mandated requirement for all women everywhere is indicated by the differing advice he gave in 1 Corinthians 7: 8, 25 – 28, 32 – 40 about marriage. One Male Headship proponent has also observed, “... *the notion that childbearing is salvific for women would indeed be at odds with the central teaching of the New Testament that salvation is through Jesus Christ*” (Clark 1980, p. 206). The final word on this point should go to Jesus, who never endorsed childbearing as having any inherent “salvific” function or value (Luke 11: 27 – 28). Accordingly, verse 15 should not be interpreted in any way that would contradict His teaching in this respect.

621 As noted previously Grudem (2006) observes, “*Paul ends the chapter on a positive and reassuring note*” (p. 41n9). Also, Osburn (2001) remarks that verse 15, “... *provides the positive conclusion to the negative statements in vv. 11 – 14*” (p. 230; also, p. 251). Groothuis (2004) likewise notes, “*Thus Paul concludes his stern warnings regarding Eve and the Ephesian women on a more positive, encouraging note.*”

622 This conclusion is consistent with a basic principle of hermeneutics that, “*The commandments of the Bible are authoritative for all people. But biblical examples, unless supported by a command, are not ...*”

during the time of the early Church there is strong evidence that women did so and with Paul's encouragement (for example Romans 16: 3, 6, 7, 12; 1 Corinthians 11: 5, 10, 12: 7 – 11, 14: 1 – 5, 22, 24, 26, 39, 16: 16; Philippians 4: 3). The importance of the role played by teachers in the early Church is evident from passages such as Romans 15: 14, Ephesians 5: 19, Colossians 3: 16, 2 Timothy 2: 2 and Hebrews 5: 12. Women with deep spiritual insight, knowledge and understanding would be particularly qualified to fill the role of teacher. There are instances in the New Testament that amply demonstrate the abilities of women in this regard (such as Luke 1: 46 – 55; Acts 18: 26; 2 Timothy 1: 5, 3: 15). People with such abilities have a responsibility to use them to edify and encourage the entire Church (1 Corinthians 12:7ff; 14: 3ff; Colossians 3: 16; Hebrews 10: 24 – 25).⁶²³

The Old Testament Scriptures were used and highly valued by the early Church (1 Timothy 4: 13; 2 Timothy 3: 15ff). This is an important point given that the Old Testament records a number of positive instances of women exercising authority, teaching, communicating God's Will, and discharging leadership functions in various settings (Judges 4: 4ff, 5: 7; 2 Kings 22: 14ff; 2 Chronicles 34: 22 – 28; Proverbs 1: 8, 31: 26, 30 – 31; Micah 6: 4). Such precedents would not have gone unnoticed by the early Christians with respect to the legitimate role of women in the life, worship and organisation of the Church.⁶²⁴

Despite the foregoing discussion the question may still be asked: Does Paul's proscription in verse 12 still have application today? Given the particular meaning and use of *authentēin* during the first century AD, it would be contrary to the rules of biblical interpretation to insist that such a specific proscription had direct applicability beyond the behaviour it was originally meant to address (that is, a woman teaching a man in a domineering way).⁶²⁵ Unless the same behaviour that warranted the original corrective was evident, the contemporary message to be drawn from verses 12 – 15 is not about the remedy that Paul

The believer is free to do anything that the Bible does not prohibit ... The Bible sets boundaries on what cannot be done, not on what can be done. All things are lawful unless specifically prohibited (Henrichsen and Jackson 1990, pp. 162, 163) (emphasis in text). Two points are relevant to these observations. Firstly, in relation to the observation that biblical examples need to be accompanied by a command in order to be binding: if this was not the case then all churches would be obliged to follow, for example, the precedent set in Mark 14: 13 – 15 and Acts 1: 13 – 14 and always conduct their meetings in an upper room! Secondly, in relation to the observation that all things are lawful unless specifically prohibited: this observation is supported by passages such as Romans 3: 20, 4: 15, 5: 13 and 7: 7 which suggest that where no law has been given (i.e. no prohibition has been issued), no sin can be imputed.

623 Payne (2008) points out that the Greek word for the expression "each one" in 1 Corinthians 14: 26 encompasses men and women while the Greek word for "you" in Colossians 3: 16 is plural, meaning that it was addressed to the whole church at Colossae including women (p. 248).

624 Also noted by Jacobs 1998, p. 243

625 This conclusion is consistent with the following observations: "Whenever we share comparable particulars (i.e. similar specific life situations) with the first-century hearers, God's Word to us is the same as his Word to them" (Fee and Stuart 2003, p. 75). Similarly: "A basic hermeneutical principle is that if the same situation exists today, then the passage should be applied directly as it was then" (Bowman 2001, p. 291). Accordingly, it would be highly inappropriate to apply the particular remedy in the absence of the behaviour for which it was originally prescribed (that is, a woman teaching a man in a domineering way).

prescribed; rather, it is about learning from the mistakes of the past and ensuring that the particular behaviour that made the proscription necessary in the first place is not repeated (Romans 15: 4; 1 Corinthians 10: 1 – 11; Hebrews 4: 6, 11).

11. Ephesians 5: A model for male/female relationships generally?

The NIV translates Ephesians 5: 22 – 24 as follows:

Wives, submit 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, of which he is the Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Some Male Headship proponents interpret this passage as providing a model for general male/female relationships in the Church with men leading and women following.⁶²⁶ However, is this interpretation reasonable? Before considering this question further it is important to recall the impact of Hellenistic culture on attitudes during the first century AD in which women were generally not treated on the same level as men. As one writer has noted:

... the Greeks thought very little of women and treated them largely as chattels. Women had no place in public life. The purpose of a wife was the production of legitimate offspring; other women or men served for pleasure. Sexual expression in Greece was not as restricted as it was among the Jews, for instance. A man's wife was, of course, for him only, but extramarital activity on his part was fully expected and institutionally provided for through both male and female prostitutes. Ancient Rome was no less male-oriented than ancient Greece, but had a different, more restrained attitude toward sexuality. Women were firmly subject to the authority of their father and passed from that to the authority of their husbands ... As the New Testament period approached, the dominant Roman culture saw a progressive improvement in the lot of its women ... the effect of the improved lot of wealthy and noble women may not have been very great among the poorer classes. In such classes women were generally more integrally involved in the daily lives of their husbands, but had less access to education and fewer opportunities for independent lives ... The amelioration of the lot of wealthy Roman women can be paralleled among the wealthy women of Greece. It is unlikely, however that the women of lower rank in Greece and in Asia Minor were not as much benefited as their Roman counterparts, for the basic Greek attitude toward women was poorer. The major cities to which Paul travelled were of sufficient size and commercial activity that the new status of Roman women was likely to have affected them.⁶²⁷

626 For example Schreiner 2001, pp. 210, 211, 218; Grudem 2006, pp. 31, 49 – 50; House 1995, p. 176

627 Hurley 1981, pp. 75, 76; also, Pederson 2006, p. 93. It should be noted that while there were some improvements in the status of Roman women during the first century AD, there still were many areas of inequity between men and women such as the need for women to have a male guardian when performing important transactions like making a will (Belleville 2000, pp. 91, 96).

The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BC) taught that husbands should command their wives and rule over them. He believed that *“it is precisely because ‘the male is by nature superior, and the female inferior, [that] the one rules, and the other is ruled.’”*⁶²⁸ His view was that a woman is *“a kind of mutilated male ... Females are imperfect males, accidentally created by the father’s inadequacy or the malign influence of a moist south wind.”*⁶²⁹

Aristotle articulated a highly influential model for basic societal relationships – husband over wife, father over child, master over slave – now known as the Aristotelian family code. Subsequently, his *“... threefold household theory about the tyrannical rule of master over slave, the aristocratic rule of husband over wife, and the monarchical rule of father over children [was] spread by his student Alexander the Great throughout the Mediterranean world and later intermingled with the Roman Empire, creating what we now call Roman Hellenism.”*⁶³⁰ Consequently, most Hellenized people thought similarly to Aristotle about women.⁶³¹

From around the second century AD onwards the leadership of the Church became increasingly influenced by Greek ideas, especially in relation to women.⁶³² This influence is typified by the testimony of second century AD Church Father Clement of Alexandria who wrote that Greek philosophy was divinely inspired and that it prepared the mind for the Christian message.⁶³³ A prominent Church Father of the third century AD, Tertullian, referred to women in the following way: *“Do you not know that you are (each) an Eve? The sentence of God on this sex of yours lives in this age: the guilt must of necessity live too. You are the devil’s gateway: you are the unsealer of that (forbidden) tree: you are the first deserter of the divine law: you are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed so easily God’s image, man. On account of your desert – that is, death – even the Son of God had to die.”*⁶³⁴ Tertullian’s attitude towards women would not have raised eyebrows in a culture thoroughly inculcated with the views promoted by Aristotle.

It was against the backdrop of prevailing Hellenistic views and attitudes that Paul wrote his letter to the Christians at Ephesus. Given the dominant cultural impact

628 Groothuis 2004, pp. 301 – 302

629 Cited in Drane 1999, p. 168

630 Browning 2004, p. 4; also, Marshall 2004, p. 186; Torjesen 1995, p. 60; Goodman 2008, pp. 104 – 116

631 Bristow

632 Sumner 2003, p. 46nn30, 31; Trombley 1985, pp. 201ff; Torjesen 1995, p. 114; Viola and Barna 2008, pp. 61, 91, 117, 202. One Male Headship proponent, Clark (1980) has also noted, *“Writings from the early Fathers contain a great deal of teaching on men and women and not all of it is the clear handing on of a tradition going back to Christ and the apostles. Much of the Fathers’ teaching on men and women concerns the nature of men and women and the nature and role of sex in the Christian life, points which have drawn much interest in recent years. They are also the points which were most influenced by Greek thought, precisely because the questions posed were not so easily answered from scripture and universal tradition alone”* (p. 318).

633 Walker 1983, p. 72

634 Cited in Sumner 2003, p. 41 (emphasis in text); also, Kimball 2004, p. 477

and influence of the Aristotelian threefold household theory with its emphasis on the basic societal relationships of husband/wife, father/child and master/slave it is no coincidence that Paul focussed on the same three relationships in his letter.⁶³⁵ However, far from approving the Aristotelian approach to these relationships and encouraging the Ephesian Christians to adopt it in their dealings with one another, Paul fundamentally challenged it and in so doing radically reinterpreted the views and attitudes that had pervaded the culture of his day.⁶³⁶

Given the preceding background, a number of points may be made about Ephesians 5: 22 – 24. Firstly, contrary to arguments by Male Headship proponents that the passage can be interpreted as providing a model for relationships generally in the Church between men and women, the fact is that it is referring to the marriage relationship only. That the marriage relationship is unique from all other human relationships is confirmed by 1 Corinthians 7: 2ff: “*each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband*”. There is a mutuality and an exclusivity in marriage that is not common to other familial or social relationships. For this reason the Scriptures repeatedly describe marriage as a “one flesh” relationship (Genesis 2: 24; Malachi 2: 15; Matthew 19: 5; Mark 10: 8; 1 Corinthians 6: 16; Ephesians 5: 31). No other interpersonal relationship is described by the Scriptures in this way. Thus, to interpret Ephesians 5: 22 – 24 as having application beyond the marriage relationship is to read more into the passage than it allows.⁶³⁷

Secondly, while Male Headship proponents argue that by using the word

635 It should be noted that the message in Ephesians 5: 21 – 6: 9 is reiterated in Colossians 3: 18 – 4: 1 albeit in a shortened form. While this section of the study confines its discussion to Ephesians 5: 21 – 25, the need to interpret Scripture in light of other relevant Scripture means that the same points would be applicable to the corresponding passage in Colossians.

636 Browning 2004, pp. 4, 6 – 7, 133; Belleville 2000, pp. 120 – 121; Bristow. It is important to highlight that in the Ephesian passage and its Colossian counterpart Paul's purpose was to challenge the fundamental components and tenets of the prevailing Aristotelian family code, not to endorse them as appropriate values and standards by which Christians should live and relate to each other. Not only did he reinterpret prevailing cultural expectations about the relationship between husband and wife, he also challenged and reinterpreted prevailing social norms about the relationship between father (parent)/child and master/slave. While the Aristotelian family code held that in each relationship the former party was superior to the latter, Paul urged Christians in the former category to treat members of the latter with the highest degree of love, respect and civility (for example, his encouragement elsewhere for Philemon to treat his runaway slave Onesimus as a Christian brother and not in accordance with the expectations of the time). Paul's approach ran counter to accepted Aristotelian wisdom under which “... *the inferior member of the pair, who is inferior in not providing goods to the superior equal to those provided by the superior, should love the superior more than he or she is loved by the superior in order to equalise the relation*” (Roberts 2009, p. 100). While some ancient pagan Romans are known for the love that they proclaimed for their wives (Pederson 2006, p. 86; D'Ambra 2007, pp. 76 – 78), the cultural norms of the day did not expect or require them to do so (Stone 1996, p. 68; D'Ambra 2007, pp. 76, 77). Thus, Paul was unique in that he advocated for husbands to actually put love into practice with their spouses.

637 In the context of Ephesians 5: 22 the voluntary, loving submission of the wife is to her own husband, not to any other man. Some Male Headship proponents such as Grudem (2006) acknowledge this (p. 115), although Grudem curiously still suggests that the husband/wife relationship provides the model for male/female relationships in the Church (2006, pp. 31, 49 – 50).

translated “head” (Greek: *kephale*) Paul was designating men to lead and women to follow be it in marriage or male/female relationships generally, it is evident that Paul did not subscribe to such views. For one thing, if he had intended the passage to convey a hierarchical understanding he could have used the unmistakable Greek word for authority, *exousia* (or a relevant cognate) or even *arche* (for ruler, commander, chief as used in passages such as Luke 19: 2, 47). That he did not do so is highly instructive. In any event, he elsewhere taught that wives and husbands have specific (equal) authority within the marriage relationship. On this point it has been observed:

*[1 Corinthians 7: 1 – 5] is a significant passage for those advocating exclusively male leadership, given that they argue the male-female relationship in marriage is basic to the proper role relationship of men and women in the church. First Corinthians 7: 4 begins, ‘The wife does not have authority over [exousiazei] her own body but yields it to her husband.’ Then it continues, ‘In the same way, the husband does not have authority [same verb] over his own body but yields it to his wife.’ Thus in the most intimate aspect of marriage the authority of husband and wife is equal.*⁶³⁸

Similarly, it has been noted:

*The only place where the word authority [exousiazo from exousia] appears in the New Testament regarding the relationship between a husband and wife is here, and it’s used twice. It literally says that the husband has authority over his wife’s body and that she has authority over his body! So, the only time the New Testament mentions authority in relation to marriage, it is made mutual.*⁶³⁹

Also, it will be recalled from section 9.7 of this study that in encouraging the married women at Corinth to direct their questions to their own husbands (1 Corinthians 14: 35) Paul used the Greek word *eperotao* which denotes that the questioner is on the same footing, familiarity or equality with the one from whom he seeks an answer.⁶⁴⁰ *Aiteo*, which indicates that one who is lesser asks one who is greater a favour, is a word that could have been used in this instance, but it was not. *Eperotao* virtually means to demand from an equal.

Furthermore, in 1 Corinthians 7: 5 three very important words are found that impact on decision-making arrangements in any marital relationship: “by mutual consent”. Of these words it has been observed: “*Paul’s statement is quite straightforward – decisions in the marriage are to be arrived at by mutual agreement.*”⁶⁴¹ This approach does not accord with the view advanced by some Male Headship proponents that wives should always obey their husbands⁶⁴² and that “... *in every decision that involves the husband and wife ... the responsibility*

638 Liefeld 2004, p. 262 (emphasis in text)

639 Cunningham *et al* 2000, p. 156

640 Vine n.d., pp. 81 – 82

641 Belleville 2000, p. 117

642 For example Schreiner 2001, p. 214; also, as noted by Davids 2004, p. 224

*to make the decision rests with the husband.*⁶⁴³ Nevertheless, the Scripture is clear that a marriage should operate by common consent, not by male fiat. For one writer: "... *the mutuality argued for in 1 Corinthians 7: 1 – 16 stands all by itself in the literature of the ancient world. For Paul the structures as such are irrelevant because 'this world in its present form is passing away' (1 Cor 7: 31).*"⁶⁴⁴ Paul's view in this regard is contrary to the Aristotelian family code which was based on the assumption that "... *the male is by nature fitter for command than the female.*"⁶⁴⁵ While the meaning behind Paul's use of *kephale* in verse 23 will be discussed shortly, in accordance with the rules of biblical interpretation its use in this instance cannot be interpreted in a way that conflicts with his indications elsewhere such as in 1 Corinthians 7: 4 – 5. Indeed, on this point it should be noted that there is no scriptural evidence to suggest that husbands have ever received a delegation from God to exercise unilateral authority over their wives.⁶⁴⁶

Thirdly, in line with the rules of biblical interpretation it is important to consider the overall context of verses 22 to 24. Specifically, the context is Ephesians 5: 21 – 6: 9 with verse 21 setting the scene for the verses that follow.⁶⁴⁷ The NIV translates verse 21 as follows: "*Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*" The verses thereafter explain how each one was to submit to the other (verse 33 summarises the discussion from verses 22 to 32 on wives and husbands). Far from condoning male leadership over women, the context highlights that this passage is expounding the virtues of mutual submissiveness. As one writer has observed: "*The linking of wifely submission to the command that believers submit themselves to one another out of reverence for Christ (not because of societal place or position) is new. This makes the wife's submission merely one example of mutual submission (and the husband's love another example). The lack of a verb in Ephesians 5:22 reinforces this. The text merely reads: 'wives to your husbands.'* Most translators supply the word submit from verse 21."⁶⁴⁸ While some Male Headship proponents have argued otherwise,⁶⁴⁹

643 For example Grudem 2006, p. 26. Interestingly, Grudem (2006) proceeds to state, "*Therefore, male headship makes a difference every day in the marriage relationship. This is not because the husband is wiser or a better leader or a better decision maker, but because that headship is part of the God-given role for the husband. It is part of God's good design for the marriage relationship*" (p. 26). The question arising from such a comment is: Why would God ordain "male headship" but then not ensure that all husbands would have the necessary innate ability to lead? In the Scriptures, God never allocated tasks or responsibilities to His people for which they had not been previously prepared (for example, Moses [Exodus 3: 10ff], Isaiah [Isaiah 6], Jeremiah [Jeremiah 1: 4 – 10], and Paul [Acts 9: 6, 16]).

644 Fee 2004d, p. 181

645 Browning 2004, p. 7; also, Groothuis 2004, pp. 301 – 302

646 Belleville 2000, pp. 80, 114, 158; Belleville 2001, pp. 145 – 146; Nicole 2004, p. 358; Fee 2004b, p. 374; Belleville 2005a, p. 31; Sumner 2003, pp. 86, 163

647 Sumner 2003, pp. 156 – 159; Osburn 2001, pp. 129 – 130, 155 – 156; Hurley 1981, p. 140

648 Belleville 2000, p. 121; also, Belleville 2001, p. 133; Belleville 2005a, pp. 92 – 94; Osburn 2001, pp. 130, 168

649 For example Grudem 2006, pp. 119 – 120. Despite verse 21 some Male Headship proponents have also suggested that as the leaders, husbands are not required to submit to their wives. For instance, Schreiner (2001) has asserted, "*Nor do the Scriptures ever call on husbands to submit to their wives*" (p. 212; also, Grudem 2006, p. 117). Quite apart from the fact that the Scriptures contain no indication that

the addition of the reciprocal pronoun *allelois* (“to one another”) makes it clear that Paul is talking about mutual submission.⁶⁵⁰ Again, this approach is contrary to the Aristotelian family code in which nothing like the idea of mutual submission can be found.⁶⁵¹

Verses 22 to 24 are followed by verses 25 to 33 where a husband is not only instructed to love his wife (something which the culture of the time generally did not expect or require⁶⁵²), but also to give himself for her and to nourish and care for her in the same way “as Christ does the Church” (verses 25, 29 [note: Paul’s message in this passage was evidently intended for Christian husbands; non-believing husbands would have been far less likely to positively respond to such an appeal]). This latter point helps to explain the meaning Paul ascribed to the word translated “head” (*kephale*) in verse 23.⁶⁵³ The position of wives in the first century AD was such that they were often highly dependent on their husbands for protection, support and social status.⁶⁵⁴ The age difference between husbands and wives in which men were generally much older than their wives,⁶⁵⁵ combined with the fact that many women would have lacked genuine financial independence,⁶⁵⁶ tended to reinforce the dependency of a wife on her

husbands have been granted a delegation from God to unilaterally exercise authority over their wives, Schreiner’s argument would result in the paradox that a husband is subject to every believer (verse 21) except his own wife (Sumner 2003, p. 159). Schreiner’s (2001) assertion, “... *nor do the Scriptures ever call on husbands to submit to their wives*” (p. 212), is inconsistent with his subsequent acknowledgement about the meaning of 1 Corinthians 7: 3 – 5 that, “... *the husband ultimately does not have authority over his own body and that the wife has authority over his body*” (p. 214).

650 Belleville 2001, p. 132; Beck and Blomberg 2001b, p. 313; Belleville 2005a, pp. 92 – 95; Marshall 2004, pp. 196 – 197. It should be noted that one Male Headship proponent has also understood Ephesians 5: 21 “... *not as a general statement of specifics for the wives, children, and servants, but as a general principle to be incorporated into all relationships ... in line with Phil 2: 3, ‘let each of you regard one another ...’ and 1 Pet 5: 5, ‘clothe yourselves with humility toward one another ... the command given to husbands to love their wives is but another way of calling them to mutual submission’*” (Knight cited in Osburn 2001, pp. 161 – 162, 170). Osburn (2001) similarly notes, “... *the ‘mutual submission’ that is the focus of Eph 5: 21 is typical of NT teaching elsewhere (Matt 20: 26 – 28; Phil 2: 3; 1 Pet 5: 4 – 5)*” (p. 259).

651 Browning 2004, p. 7

652 Stone 1996, p. 68; D’Ambra 2007, pp. 76, 77. As noted in footnote 636 of this study, Paul’s instruction to the Ephesian Christians in this regard was contrary to prevailing Aristotelian norms for relationships between husband and wife, father and child, and master and slave under which “... *the inferior member of the pair, who is inferior in not providing goods to the superior equal to those provided by the superior, should love the superior more than he or she is loved by the superior in order to equalise the relation*” (Roberts 2009, p. 100).

653 It should be noted that of ancient writers, Paul is unique in his use of *kephale* as a metaphor for the husband/wife relationship (Fee 2004a, p. 150n26). Indeed, the word “... *is never used in extra-biblical ancient Greek in a male-female context*” (Johnson 2009, p. 42).

654 Alston 1998, pp. 289ff; Trombley 1985, pp. 26ff; Fee 2004a, p. 154; Fee 2004c, p. 376n15

655 Alston 1998, p. 292; Marshall 2004, p. 199; D’Ambra 2007, pp. 13, 46, 76; Fox 1986, pp. 48, 344, 367. Belleville (2000) notes that the marriageable age for Jewish women was 12 while for Greek and Roman women it was 14 to 16 (p. 161). Fee (2002) notes that the average age of a man when he married was 30 and a woman’s age was less than 18 (p. 6).

656 Alston 1998, pp. 293, 295; D’Ambra 2007, p. 3; Hurley 1981, p. 76. While there were some exceptions, Thompson (2006) notes that under the Roman practice of *tutela* or guardianship, “... *the wife was still regarded merely as a piece of property completely under the control of her husband ... they were still legally bound by repressive measures, such as laws compelling them to marry, and by the institution of tutela which subjected all women living in the empire to the financial control of men*” (pp. 92, 94). Of

husband.⁶⁵⁷ Accordingly, the far more likely meaning of *kephale* in this passage is that of the husband being the source and provider of his wife's necessities (note verse 29; also Ephesians 4: 15 – 16 and Colossians 2: 19 where the notion of "source" is implicit in the use of "head").⁶⁵⁸ Understanding *kephale* in verse 23 as meaning "source" rather than "leader" would also be consistent with Paul's other metaphorical uses of the word where the "head" did not automatically assume authority, position or priority (1 Corinthians 12: 12 – 27; Ephesians 4: 15 – 16; Colossians 2: 19).⁶⁵⁹ Some Male Headship proponents have recognised that the way *kephale* is used in verse 23 would involve the idea of "source".⁶⁶⁰

Therefore, the overall context of the passage can be seen not to contain any support for understanding "head" as it is used in verse 23 to mean "leader" or "one in authority over another". It is also important to note that the verse states that the husband is the "head of the wife", not the "head of the home". In this regard Sumner (2003) points out that nowhere do the Scriptures indicate that the husband is the head of the house, only that he is the head of his wife. Also, Sumner notes that Ephesians 5 makes the point that the only person a husband is "one flesh" with (and thus able to be the "head" of) is his wife and no one else,

Jewish society Goodman (2008) notes that whatever a wife earned belonged to the husband and that "... women could indeed gain a certain financial independence, but only under male supervision" (p. 224).

657 The dependency of wives on their husbands, especially in an economic sense, continued for many centuries. While the situation in this regard has gradually been changing in Western societies particularly since World War II, it is often the case, especially when women are not engaged in full time employment such as during the childbearing and childrearing stages of life, that many still find themselves economically dependent on their husbands.

658 Siddons 1980, p. 73; Belleville 2001, pp. 138, 139; Fee 2004a, pp. 149, 154; Groothuis 2004, p. 313. As highlighted in section 8 of this study, "source" was a valid meaning of *kephale* ("head") in the first century AD. Belleville (2000) notes, "*There is perhaps no clearer indication that kephale means source in these verses than Paul's statement that 'we [the church] are members of his [Christ's] body, that is, his flesh and his bones.'* The allusion to Genesis 2: 21 – 23 and the creation of the woman from the rib of the man is unmistakable, and so is the notion of source" (p. 126). One Male Headship proponent, Hurley (1981) has noted that in passages such as Ephesians 4: 15 and Colossians 2: 19 *kephale* would mean "source" (pp. 165, 166). Similarly, Clark (1980) acknowledges that Ephesians 4: 16 is a "likely example" of *kephale* as conveying the idea of "source" (p. 84).

659 As noted earlier in this study, the fact is that for Paul the head was not the only, nor was it the most important, part of the body available for use as a metaphor: "*While the idea of the head as the decision-maker of the human body was current in the first century, it is absent in Paul. For Paul it is the heart, not the head, that is the seat of the human will. It is the heart that makes decisions (1 Cor 7: 37), the heart that believes (Rom 10: 9 – 10), the heart that becomes foolish and darkened (Rom 1: 21) or wise and enlightened (Eph 1: 18), and the heart on which the law is written (Rom 2: 15)*" (Belleville 2000, pp. 125 – 126). Likewise, Clark (1980) notes, "*For the Hebrews (and New Testament writers generally), the head of the human body was not the seat of the thought processes. Thinking took place in the heart*" (p. 83).

660 For example Schreiner (2001), while asserting that "head" in this passage means "authority", also states "... *there may be an idea of source as well, since husbands are to nourish and care for their wives, just as Christ has tenderly loved the church*" (p. 213) (emphasis in text). On the other hand, Grudem (2006) claims that the meaning "source" makes no sense in passages like Ephesians 5: 23. He states, "*I am not the source of my wife in any meaningful sense of the word 'source'. And so it is with all husbands and wives ... it makes the verse into nonsense*" (p. 125). Yet elsewhere in his book Grudem writes that modern readers need to bear in mind what the meaning would have been for the original reader (for example, pp. 35 – 36, 115, 116, 117, 119, 120). To be consistent, the same approach should apply also to the meaning of "head" in Ephesians 5: 23, the nuances of which would have been understood by first century AD readers as referring to the husband as the primary provider for his wife.

not even any children they might have.⁶⁶¹ While children are required to obey their parents (Ephesians 6: 1; Colossians 3: 20), such a requirement has nothing to do with “headship”.

Paul’s instructions to husbands in verses 25 to 33 completely contradict the premises underpinning the Aristotelian family code: “*Nothing similar to this can be found in Aristotle or, for the most part, in other pagan philosophical writings on marriage and family.*”⁶⁶² Fee (2002) has observed, “*So what in the end is it that makes our present text so radically countercultural? What Paul obviously did not do was to demolish the structures and create new ones. What was radical lay in his urging those who are filled with the Spirit and worship Christ as Lord to have totally transformed relationships within the household.*”⁶⁶³

Some Male Headship proponents have nevertheless argued that submission necessarily involves obedience on the part of the wife to the husband. In justifying such a claim they point to Sarah who was “obedient” to her husband Abraham (1 Peter 3: 5 – 6).⁶⁶⁴ However, on this point it has been observed:

*... it is interesting that the command to ‘obey’ appears explicitly in Paul’s instructions to children and slaves (Ephesians 6: 1, 5) but not in his commands to women ... it is not entirely obvious that ‘submit’ as Paul uses it must include the concept of ‘obey’. It certainly can, as with Peter’s reference to Sarah, but that it must is open to question. And even in 1 Peter, Peter cannot be claiming that submission always entails obedience, since these Christian women had almost certainly defied orders to convert to or retain their husbands’ non-Christian religious commitments.*⁶⁶⁵

It should be noted that while there are instances recorded where Sarah obeyed her husband (Genesis 12: 13, 18: 12, 20: 5, 13), there are also instances recorded of Abraham obeying his wife (Genesis 16: 1 – 3, 21: 9 – 12).⁶⁶⁶ In the

661 Sumner 2003, p. 168

662 Browning 2004, p. 7. It should be reiterated that Paul’s instructions to the Ephesian Christians in this passage were contrary to prevailing Aristotelian norms for relationships between husband and wife, father and child, and master and slave under which “... *the inferior member of the pair, who is inferior in not providing goods to the superior equal to those provided by the superior, should love the superior more than he or she is loved by the superior in order to equalise the relation*” (Roberts 2009, p. 100).

663 Fee 2002, p. 8

664 For example Schreiner 2001, p. 214. It should be noted that 1 Peter 3: 5 – 6 does not say that Sarah was submissive to Abraham because of any God-given authority he had over her. This is an assumption that needs to be read into the passage. While the Mosaic Law did not exist during the time of Sarah and Abraham, it is noteworthy to recall that not only was this Law given by God but also that “... *nowhere in the Mosaic law is the wife explicitly commanded to obey her husband. Nor do any regulations exist for dealing with a disobedient wife (as exist for dealing with disobedient children; eg Exod 21: 15, 17)*” (Belleville 2000, p. 80).

665 Beck and Blomberg 2001b, p. 315

666 Davids (2004) notes that “... *the word translated ‘obey’ in 1 Peter 3: 6 is actually used in the LXX [the ancient Greek translation of the Scriptures, the Septuagint] in Genesis 18: 6, to refer to Abraham’s ‘listening to, heeding’ Sarah. So while the Greek Bible used by Peter and these churches never speaks of Sarah’s ‘obeying’ Abraham, it does refer to his ‘obeying’ her*” (p. 232n36). It has elsewhere been

latter instance, he was even encouraged by God to do so! Furthermore, it is clear from 1 Peter 3: 1 – 2 that the author’s intent behind verses 5 and 6 was to ensure the advancement of the Gospel message, not because women were created in order to show “submissive obedience” to men. As the culture of the time emphasised the “submissive wife” (consistent with the Aristotelian family code), Christian women would have a better chance of converting their unbelieving husbands if they continued to conform to such social norms.⁶⁶⁷ Even so, given his own standards (Acts 5: 29) it is reasonable to assume that Peter would not have intended for the women to mindlessly obey their husbands in everything, particularly when it came to spiritual matters.⁶⁶⁸ Again, this would have been contrary to the prevailing Aristotelian family code under which “... a woman was expected to follow the religious choices of her father and, after marriage, her husband.”⁶⁶⁹

Some Male Headship proponents have reasoned that if a husband is the “head” of his wife in a hierarchical sense, then this must mean that the husband “*ranks higher*” than the wife.⁶⁷⁰ In response to such reasoning it is important to note the meaning of the Greek word which is translated “submit” (*hupotasso*):

*Hupotasso never means obey nor is the word obedience used of the husband-wife role. Hupotasso is a Christian virtue void of the meaning of delegated subjugation; rather, it means a willing submission. It is never forced, compulsory or demanded; it is always voluntary and motivated by agape love. Hupotasso is a Spirit-filled, Spirit-controlled believer taking the second seat rather than the first, submitting to others rather than lording it over others. It’s having the mind of Christ (Phil 2: 6 – 7)...*⁶⁷¹

In Ephesians 5: 21 the word *hupotasso* is used in the Middle or Passive Voice. This means that the submission is undertaken voluntarily by the one who is submitting, it is not something that is done to them (as would be the case had the word been used in the Active Voice sense). In the Active Voice it is used as

observed, “The translation ‘my master’ in the NIV is unfortunate in that it implies that Peter is thinking about women as slaves. In fact, he is following the Greek translation of the Old Testament in using *kyrios*, or ‘lord’, which may mean simply the respectful ‘sir’ or could imply superior status such as ‘my lord’ would imply in traditional British usage. When Peter refers to the master of a slave, however, he uses a different term, *despotes* (1 Pet 2: 18)” (Kaiser *et al* 1996, p. 712).

667 Davids 2004, pp. 227, 229. It is important to note that while Ephesians 5: 25 – 33 is addressed directly to Christian husbands, the context for 1 Peter 3 is inclusive of non-believing husbands (verses 1 to 2). In the 1 Peter 3 passage, the writer encouraged the Christian wives who were married to non-believing husbands to interact with them according to the Aristotelian norms of their society in order to win them to Christ. For the Christian husbands, the writer had a different message (verse 7), one which aligned to Paul’s reinterpretation of the fundamental tenets of the Aristotelian family code (in particular, “husband over wife”) (see section 12 of this study).

668 As also noted by Kaiser *et al* 1996, p. 711; Davids 2004, p. 229; Beck and Blomberg 2001b, p. 315
669 Davids 2004, p. 226; also, Pederson 2006, p. 95

670 As noted by Sumner 2003, p. 145. It will be recalled that this study has previously considered the arguments for the use of “head” in passages such as 1 Corinthians 11: 3 and Ephesians 5: 23 as having a hierarchical sense and found them to be extremely tenuous.

671 Trombley 1985, p. 150

a military term to describe how one would submit to a commanding officer or as a conquered enemy would submit to a victor. But in the Middle or Passive Voice (non-military use), such as in verse 21, its usage is much less severe. It denotes a choice on the part of the one submitting.⁶⁷² Such free choice does not exist in a hierarchical, military context (Matthew 8: 9; Luke 7: 8).⁶⁷³ Thus in a marriage relationship the voluntary submission of a wife to her husband is not in response to his supposed “higher rank” or his “authority over” her, but in response to her love for him and out of her reverence for Christ (verse 21). Similarly, a husband will voluntarily submit to his wife by providing for her needs and loving her as much as he loves himself. The respective responses of the husband and wife one to the other are set against the backdrop of mutual submission (verse 21).⁶⁷⁴ Submission in this context may be understood as referring to: “*submission in the sense of voluntarily yielding in love.*”⁶⁷⁵ Under the Aristotelian family code wives were expected to submit and be obedient to their husbands on account of their deemed secondary status. However, by using *hupotasso* in the Middle/Passive Voice rather than the Active Voice, Paul deliberately and unequivocally challenges and repudiates such expectations and presumptions by highlighting that submission in a Christian sense is a willing, voluntary choice. It is a gift given out of love by one to another. As such it cannot be demanded, forced or imposed.⁶⁷⁶

It has been noted that New Testament writers do not apply the Greek verb *hypakouo* (“to obey”), such as is found in Ephesians 6: 1 (children to parents) and verse 5 (slaves to masters) to the husband and wife relationship.⁶⁷⁷ Instead, they use words that denote a voluntary deferring to the wishes of an equal: “*The*

672 Vine n.d., p. 1109; Belleville 2000, p. 159; Belleville 2001, p. 109; Sumner 2003, pp. 169, 170; Viola 2008, p. 210; Osburn 2001, p. 167; Bristow

673 One Male Headship proponent has acknowledged, “*Complementarians have too often made the mistake of envisioning the husband-wife relationship in one-dimensional terms, so that any idea of mutuality and partnership is removed, and wives are conceived of as servants (or even as slaves) of husbands. Such a militaristic conception of marriage is foreign to the biblical perspective, and 1 Corinthians 7: 3 – 5 reminds us that mutuality also characterises the marriage relationship*” (Schreiner 2001, p. 214).

674 As also noted by Belleville 2000, p. 118; Belleville 2001, p. 109; Osburn 2001, pp. 168 – 171. Again, nothing like this is found in the Aristotelian family code.

675 Arndt and Gingrich 1979, p. 848

676 Indeed, the whole notion of marital hierarchy is contrary to the “one flesh” ideal that is espoused throughout the Scriptures (Genesis 2: 24; Malachi 2: 15; Matthew 19: 5; Mark 10: 8; 1 Corinthians 6: 16; Ephesians 5: 31). The “one flesh” concept allows no scope for either husband or wife to consider themselves ‘higher in rank’ than their spouse (note 1 Corinthians 12: 14 – 26).

677 Fee 2004a, p. 154n35; Liefeld 2004, p. 259n11. It is interesting that one Male Headship proponent, Grudem (2006) uses the same words “subject to” to describe the relationship between wife/husband, children/parents and slaves/masters (p. 115). He does not point out the difference between *hupotasso* and *hypakouo* let alone the significance of the former word’s use in the Middle Voice. In fact, he states categorically that *hupotasso* is “... always used of submission to an authority ... it is never used to speak of a reciprocal relationship between persons but always signifies one-directional submission to an authority” (pp. 117, 120). On the first point such a connotation is more likely conveyed when the word is used in the Active Voice rather than the Middle Voice. On the second point, Grudem uses research by O’Brien for his source (p. 119). However, such interpretations have been questioned on the basis that the Greek word *allelois* (“to one another”) “... cannot bear any other lexical meaning but a reciprocal one” (Belleville 2001, p. 132; also, Belleville 2005a, pp. 94 – 95; Marshall 2004, pp. 196 – 197).

distinction is an important one. Obedience can be willingly or unwillingly given. It can also be demanded by someone of a person in a lesser position (for example, by one's boss). Submission, on the other hand, is the voluntary act of a free agent."⁶⁷⁸ Some Male Headship proponents also recognise this point.⁶⁷⁹

Thus, Ephesians 5: 22 – 24 should be understood with this meaning in view, not as an authorisation for the imposition of male authority over women either in the marriage relationship or in the Church. Within a household there may be areas where a husband and wife agree to have different functions; however, such differences do not mean that one is necessarily higher in rank than the other. Their respective roles are complementary, like "opposite sides of the same coin". One is no more important, or "higher in rank", than the other simply because of the way the division of labour has been mutually determined.⁶⁸⁰ As noted previously in this study, there is nothing about the Middle/Passive Voice sense of *hupotasso* such as how it is used in Ephesians 5: 21 which implies a higher/lower ranking or a hierarchical, military-style arrangement in a marriage relationship.⁶⁸¹

In concluding this section of the study it is instructive to consider the following observation with respect to the implications of the Christian notion of submission:

*Submission is a mutual function where one yields personal preferences to the other (where principles are not involved). It isn't a once-for-all act but an ongoing attitude, the result of being a new creature in Christ and Spirit-filled. I repeat, don't confuse submission with servility, or headship with lordship. A word of caution is necessary here. Christ has absolute authority and control over His Church – the Church He purchased with His own blood and brought into existence by His resurrection. But His absolute authority isn't a function of His headship but of His lordship. When we confuse the function of "head" with the position as "lord", chaos follows. Both Christ and man are called heads, but man is never called lord. We obey Christ as our Lord, knowing He never demanded obedience or submission. He said, "If you love me, keep my commandments". If you don't love Him then you won't keep His commandments! He wants our obedience to be an expression of our love for Him. A man is never lord of anyone, including his wife, even though pagan gentiles do exercise authority and lordship over one another. Jesus said it would not be so among His disciples! Don't equate man's headship with Christ's lordship.*⁶⁸²

678 Belleville 2001, p. 109

679 For example Schreiner 2001, p. 214; Blomberg 2001, p. 355

680 In the division of household tasks and labour, rather than such matters being determined on the basis of male leadership and female submission, members of the respective genders should be able to agree to specialise in different tasks and functions according to their respective skills and abilities. Interestingly, there is evidence from the ancient world that this was the approach taken in relation to the allocation of household management tasks (Torjesen 1995, pp. 55 – 56, 80 – 81).

681 This is the connotation that would arise if the word was utilised in the Active Voice but as this section of the study has shown, this sense was not used in Ephesians 5: 21.

682 Trombley 1985, p. 154

Everything Paul knew about the Gospel message he learned directly from Christ (Galatians 1: 12). Therefore, in this matter Paul would not have advocated a position that was contrary to what Jesus had taught previously (Matthew 20: 25 – 28; Mark 10: 42 – 45; Luke 22: 25 – 26).

In consideration of the preceding material it is reasonable to conclude that there is no support in Ephesians 5: 22 – 24 for the view that the passage provides a model for male leadership over women generally let alone that it establishes the hierarchical ordering of husband over wife. From the overall context of the passage it is clear that what Paul advocated was the concept of voluntary mutual submissiveness with his intention being that this approach should be taken as the basis for all interpersonal relationships between Christians (verse 21).

12. 1 Peter 3: What does the “weaker partner” reference mean?

The NIV translates 1 Peter 3: 7 as follows:⁶⁸³

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

What does this reference to the wife being the “weaker partner” mean? Is it suggesting that wives are in some way inherently defective and less capable than their husbands? Certainly, there were some Jewish rabbis who taught that women inherently were inferior to men.⁶⁸⁴ Some early Church Fathers taught similarly. For example, Epiphanius of Salamis (Cyprus) (c.315-403 AD) interpreted Genesis 3: 16 to mean that woman had an inferior nature because it was her fate to be ruled rather than to rule.⁶⁸⁵ More recently, Jamieson *et al* (1979) have asserted, “*Being more easily deceived, she more easily deceives [Bengel], (2 Cor 11: 3). Last in being, she was first in sin – indeed, she alone was deceived. The subtle serpent knew that she was ‘the weaker vessel.’ He therefore tempted her, not Adam.*”⁶⁸⁶ However, such views clearly conflict with

683 It is important to recall that while Ephesians 5: 25 – 33 is addressed directly to Christian husbands, the context for 1 Peter 3 is inclusive of non-believing husbands (verses 1 to 2) (Kaiser *et al* 1996, pp. 710 – 714). From the passage it seems to be accepted by Peter that the non-believing husbands in question would most likely not be dealing with their wives in the same way “as Christ loves the Church” (Ephesians 5: 25). This is why he encouraged the Christian wives who were married to non-believing husbands to interact with them according to prevailing Aristotelian social norms so as to create the best possible opportunity for winning them to Christ (verses 1 to 4; c.f., 1 Corinthians 7: 14, 16). However, in verse 7 he has a different message for Christian husbands (their identity as such is indicated by his concern for their prayers), one which more closely aligned to Paul’s vision for the husband/wife relationship under his reinterpreted Aristotelian family code (Ephesians 5: 21 – 33; Colossians 3: 18 – 19).

684 *Ibid*, p. 44; Siddons 1980, pp. 39ff. The first century AD Jewish historian Josephus stated that women were inferior in every respect (Belleville 2000, p. 190n6).

685 Torjesen 1995, p. 45. Other early Church Fathers with similar views included Augustine, Tertullian, and Aquinas (Kimball 2004, pp. 476 – 477).

686 Jamieson *et al* 1979, p. 1358 (emphasis in text). Clark (1980) also identifies the view which “... would understand weakness in reference to the fact that Eve was deceived. ‘Weakness’ would then mean the woman’s susceptibility to deception, perhaps especially spiritual deception” (p. 93). As mentioned earlier

the message of Genesis 1: 26 – 27, 31 where God was pleased to make both man and woman in His image and to delegate control and responsibility over the rest of creation to them both. Such views are also contrary to passages such as Romans 3:23, 5: 6 and 2 Corinthians 11: 3 which indicate that susceptibility to deception and sin is a characteristic of people generally and is not confined to members of one gender only.

It has also been argued that the use of the expression “weaker partner” in 1 Peter 3: 7 is simply a reference to the physical differences between men and women.⁶⁸⁷ While men are generally physically stronger than women it is not necessarily the case that every woman will be physically weaker when compared to every man. In any event, possession of physical strength is not a reliable indicator of moral, spiritual or character strength. History is replete with instances of “physically weak” women who were moral or spiritual giants. For example, mention could be made of the courage displayed by Jesus’ female disciples in remaining by His side when most of His male disciples fled following His arrest.

Nevertheless, the passage is clear: it is talking about husbands and wives, not men and women in general, which means that what is being said with respect to the “weaker partner” applies only in the marital context. In order to gain an accurate understanding of the meaning of this expression it will be important to apply the rules of biblical interpretation as outlined in section 3 of this study (Part A) and consider the context of the passage as well as the societal beliefs and practices of the time relating to marriage.

For all practical purposes Roman women, by the end of the first century AD, “*entered marriage in virtual equality with their husbands*” and held a position within the household that was on par with them.⁶⁸⁸ However, there were still many areas of inequity as a result of the Roman legal system treating women as being in a subordinate position to their spouse.⁶⁸⁹ On this point it has been observed:

Roman law held women by nature to be both the weaker sex (infirmitas sexus)

in this study, it is noteworthy that in Romans 7: 11 Paul describes how “... *sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me ...*” The Greek word for “deceived” in this instance is derived from the word for “deceived” as used in 1 Timothy 2: 14 (Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Greek dictionary, # 1818, p. 29). Furthermore, in Hebrews 3: 13 Christians are encouraged to avoid being “hardened by sin’s deceitfulness”. The word for “deceitfulness” is also derived from the word used in 1 Timothy 2: 14 (Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Greek dictionary, # 539, p. 13). Thus, anyone can be deceived by sin; it is not a characteristic that is confined to Eve (or women) alone. As to Jamieson *et al’s* assertion that Satan knew that Eve was the ‘weaker vessel’ which is why he tempted her and not Adam it is important to recall that “... *in Gen 3: 1 – 7, the man and the woman sin together, the serpent addresses the woman with the plural, ‘you,’ and v. 6 says the man was present with the woman*” (Osburn 2001, pp. 228, 249).

687 Knight 1985, p. 8; Belleville 2000, p. 114

688 Belleville 2000, p. 91

689 Ibid, pp. 74, 91; Alston 1998, pp. 290 – 292, 296 – 297; Thompson 2006, p. 128; Pederson 2006, p. 94

*and mentally frivolous (levitas animi), that is, lacking in seriousness. This concept of female nature justified the legal authority of a father over a daughter (patria potestas) and the authority of a husband over a wife (manus). In both cases the woman, regardless of her age, was effectively a minor and needed a male to represent her in legal transactions.*⁶⁹⁰

Also, there were a variety of Roman legal measures which were specifically enacted to provide protection for the interests of married women on the basis that “... *the woman would be the weaker party in any relationship, an assumption which seems generally to have been true.*”⁶⁹¹

Under the Jewish legal system a woman was regarded as a minor for her entire life and as such was required to be under the control of her father, husband, eldest son or nearest male relative.⁶⁹² If married, a woman was regarded as the legal property of her husband.⁶⁹³ While married women had certain rights, there were also significant marital inequities, most noticeably in relation to divorce.⁶⁹⁴ The Old Testament Law was designed to provide certain protections to women who were divorced by their husbands and to ensure that the reasons for doing so were valid (Deuteronomy 21: 10 – 14, 24: 1 – 4).⁶⁹⁵ However, by the first century AD men were divorcing their wives for a wide variety of reasons without having to pay the Kethubah financial contract.⁶⁹⁶ For example, “... *if a woman ate in the street, drank greedily in the street, or suckled her baby in the street, she could be divorced. If she gossiped, spun in the moonlight, left her hair unfastened, spun in the street with her armpits uncovered, or bathed in the same place as men, she could be divorced. If she was childless for a ten-year period her husband could put her away.*”⁶⁹⁷

While a Jewish man could divorce his wife for almost any reason, a woman was effectively unable to divorce her husband irrespective of the provocation.⁶⁹⁸ Not

690 Torjesen 1995, p. 43; also, Pederson 2006, pp. 93, 94. Apart from needing a male guardian in order to perform important transactions, another area of inequality between husband and wife in Roman society was “... *adultery ... For women it was a legal offence. If convicted, they lost half of their dowry and were exiled. Husbands, on the other hand, did not face any legal consequences. Also, while a husband was obliged to divorce an adulterous wife, the wife was merely permitted to do so*” (Belleville 2000, p. 91; also, Alston 1998, p. 291; Baker 2007, p. 178).

691 Alston 1998, p. 292

692 Siddons 1980, p. 41; Goodman 2008, pp. 224, 225, 230, 231

693 Siddons 1980, p. 41

694 Belleville 2000, pp. 79 – 81

695 The “bill of divorcement” mentioned in Deuteronomy 24: 1 was designed to protect the property rights of a divorced woman. The bill of divorcement compelled the husband to surrender his claim on her dowry.

696 Siddons 1980, p. 42; Belleville 2000, p. 80; Trombley 1985, pp. 26, 37 – 38; Brown 1986, p. 506; Siddons 1980, p. 41; Fox 1986, p. 353. The Kethubah was a premarriage contract which provided that the wife would receive a certain amount of money in the event of divorce or her husband’s death (Siddons 1980, p. 42; Goodman 2008, p. 225).

697 Trombley 1985, p. 37; also, Spencer 2004, p. 128

698 Trombley 1985, p. 38; Goodman 2008, pp. 226, 227; Barnett 2009, p. 99; Fox 1986, p. 353; Pederson 2006, p. 83. Although a woman could petition a court to force her husband to grant her a divorce, the final decision was still in the hands of the husband (Siddons 1980, p. 100; Belleville 2000, p. 81).

only did Jesus not condone, He in fact roundly condemned the practice of Jewish men divorcing their wives for reasons that were inconsistent not only with the requirements, but also the spirit, of the Law (Matthew 5: 32, 19: 3 – 9).

Under Roman law, while a woman theoretically could divorce her husband, she might need the permission of her *pater* or *tutor* to do so (and these guardians may not give their consent). Furthermore, if she was not already financially independent, divorce could see a woman losing her possessions (thereby rendering her homeless).⁶⁹⁹ Also, under both Roman and Jewish law a divorced woman could lose contact with any children she had, with the father automatically assuming responsibility for their custody.⁷⁰⁰ A divorced woman was highly disadvantaged since marriage was the only vocation that was really open to women of that time.⁷⁰¹

Divorce was clearly not a viable option for a married woman in the ancient world since she would not have been on the same legal footing with her husband and would not have enjoyed the same legal rights as he did. While she might have possessed certain legal rights, it is evident that his were stronger and therefore more readily enforced.

The people to whom Peter addressed his letter came from those parts of the Roman Empire that were influenced by Hellenistic culture (1 Peter 1: 1). As noted earlier in this study, Hellenism very much regarded women as being secondary to men. Peter's original readers would have been entirely familiar with such attitudes. However, in this passage he overturns the basis for legalities and attitudes, be they Roman, Jewish or Hellenistic, which held a woman to be the "weaker partner" in the marriage relationship by exhorting husbands to treat their wives with respect since they were in fact "joint heirs" with them of the promises of God.⁷⁰² As has been observed:

*Peter ... recognises that in the cultures with which he was dealing, the wife was disadvantaged in the relationship, almost always physically and often legally and socially as well. He therefore counsels the husband to live like Jesus and to take his physical and social advantage and use it to make his wife the equal she really is in God's eyes.*⁷⁰³

699 Alston 1998, p. 291; Goodman 2008, pp. 214, 226, 227

700 Goodman 2008, pp. 214, 227; Pederson 2006, p. 95

701 Siddons 1980, p. 42; D'Ambra 2007, p. 47

702 Similar to Paul's directions in Ephesians 5: 22 – 6: 9 and Colossians 3: 18 – 4: 1 as highlighted in section 11 of this study, Peter's message to Christian men in this instance countered prevailing Aristotelian expectations for the husband and wife relationship under which the wife as "... *the inferior member of the pair, who is inferior in not providing goods to the superior equal to those provided by the superior, should love the superior more than he or she is loved by the superior in order to equalise the relation*" (Roberts 2009, p. 100).

703 Kaiser *et al* 1996, p. 714. While approaching 1 Peter 3: 7 from a Male Headship perspective Hurley (1981) similarly agrees that its use of the term "weaker partner" is a reference to the power differentials existing between husbands and wives in that society and that its message addresses the need for Christian men not to treat their wives as the cultural conventions of the time may have expected: "Peter's

In concluding this section of the study the following points may be highlighted. Firstly, while it would be advisable for modern-day husbands to take note of the counsel in 1 Peter 3: 7, it is evident that the primary purpose of the passage was to promote certain values and attitudes in first century AD (Christian) husbands towards their wives so that nothing would hinder their prayers. Secondly, the passage contains no adverse indication that would cause the inherent nature of women to be questioned.⁷⁰⁴ Thirdly, there is nothing in the use of the expression “weaker partner” that would support any suggestion of there being a divinely-approved hierarchical ordering of husband over wife.⁷⁰⁵ Consequently, there is no justification for the passage ever being used to limit the role of women in the Church and ministry or to doubt their innate ability and suitability to participate fully in the life, worship and organisation of the Church.

13. Conclusion

This study has found that in the early Church of the first century AD no distinction was made between men and women in the allocation and exercise of spiritual and ministry gifts and abilities. Indeed, gender was neither identified as a consideration in this regard nor were limitations imposed on the type of setting in which an individual’s gifts and abilities could be exercised (viz., “public” vs. “private”). What mattered most was that those who possessed such gifts and abilities would use them to build up and edify the Church. There are notable instances of faithful Christian women during the New Testament period exercising gifts and abilities. In fact, there is strong evidence from this period of women functioning as apostles, prophets, teachers, ministers and leaders.

In some quarters nowadays it is fashionable to regard the Apostle Paul as the quintessential misogynist and arch defender of patriarchy. However, this view of Paul is entirely undeserved with this study finding no evidence that would justify or support such an understanding. Indeed, what the study has found is that Paul

expression ought to then be interpreted either as indicating the physical weakness of a wife as compared to her husband or as pointing to her weaker position with respect to authority. Either reading indicates that men are to be aware of and respond considerately to the situation of their wives. Although commentators have generally preferred the physical reference, a reference to authority fits context more naturally and makes more sense. It would seem unlikely that Peter would be saying, ‘Remember that she is physically weaker and cannot lift as much as you’, or ‘Remember that she cannot take as much beating as you’. It is quite likely that he would say, ‘Remember that hers is the subordinate position and don’t abuse your stronger position of authority’ ... Peter’s instruction to husbands calls for consideration of the wife’s weaker position of authority, but also stresses the equality of the partners before God. In his day, as in ours, there was tendency for those in strong positions to despise or look down upon those in weaker ones ... Peter speaks against this by reminding the men of the fact that their wives are equally heirs of God’s gift of life” (p. 156).

704 On this point one Male Headship proponent has also commented: “Some have suggested that [“weaker partner”] means that women are less intelligent or morally capable. Neither the words themselves nor the context offers the least support for such a view” (Hurley 1981, p. 156).

705 As noted earlier in this study, there is no scriptural evidence to suggest that husbands have ever received a delegation from God to exercise unilateral authority over their wives (Belleville 2000, pp. 80, 114, 158; Belleville 2001, pp. 145 – 146; Nicole 2004, p. 358; Fee 2004b, p. 374; Belleville 2005a, p. 31; Sumner 2003, pp. 86, 163).

highly valued women and actively encouraged them to fully utilise their God-given gifts, skills and abilities for the benefit of the Church and in spreading the Gospel message. Notably, he frequently worked alongside women to achieve these very ends. Also, he strongly exhorted Christian men not to treat women in the way that would have been accepted or expected under the cultural conventions of the time (i.e., as secondary beings).

This study has given extensive consideration to Paul's writings in 1 Corinthians 11: 3 – 16 (particularly verse 3), 14: 26 – 40 (particularly verses 34 to 35) and 1 Timothy 2: 12 – 15 which have been interpreted by Male Headship proponents to mean that only men are divinely appointed to lead and exercise authority in the Church with women confined to the performance of auxiliary functions. However, what the study has found is that when these passages are understood in accordance with the well-established rules of biblical interpretation, they do not prohibit or preclude faithful Christian women from actively participating and sharing with men in the life, worship and organisation of the Church. Two points in particular may be highlighted.

Firstly, the passages lack explicit, divine endorsement that Church leadership and ministry is a male-only prerogative. As noted in relation to 1 Timothy 2: 12 – 15, the concern in this passage is with a unique and unusual situation then apparent in the church at Ephesus – as indicated by the presence of the uncommon Greek word *authentain* – which called for Paul to expressly write about what the women of the Ephesian church should not do (viz. teach a man in a domineering way), not what men can do. Indeed, the passage is completely silent about the claimed male-only Church leadership role. Similarly, 1 Corinthians 14: 27 – 35 specifies and proscribes several unedifying behaviours by certain members of the church at Corinth (i.e., tongue speakers, prophets, married women) during their Assemblies. Regarding verses 34 to 35, the particular concern is with married women who had breached an important prevailing social protocol by asking questions during church gatherings of men other than their own husbands, thereby causing offence to others and bringing their own morality into question. Not only is the passage not concerned with the active participation of women generally in other respects during the church's gatherings – which from the overall context of the passage was permitted, indeed encouraged – but it contains absolutely no mention of the alleged exclusive Church leadership role of men. Likewise, there is no indication from 1 Corinthians 11: 3 – 16 that only men were anointed by God to hold leading positions in the Church. While Male Headship proponents focus on the Greek word *kephale* (translated as “head”) in verse 3 and insist that it establishes the man's leading role, the contextual and other indicators are strong that the meaning Paul intended to convey by using this word was “source”. This understanding (“head” as “source”) is not novel, having historical precedents and even some contemporary usages. In any event, the overall context of the passage shows that Paul's primary concern was not with establishing gender hierarchies but with articulating the reasons why the women of the Corinthian church should observe another important prevailing cultural norm (viz. the

wearing of head coverings) when participating in congregational worship activities. To wear a head covering was a practice which a respectable woman in that society was expected to follow whenever she appeared in public. As Paul did not want the Christian women of Corinth to cause offence to others or give misleading signals about their morality, so he encouraged them to observe this particular social convention during church gatherings. Notably, the only time the Greek word for “authority” (*exousia*) is mentioned in the context of 1 Corinthians 11: 3 – 16 is in verse 10 where Paul’s use of the word in its active sense indicated that complying with this practice provided the women themselves with the authority to participate and engage in the church’s corporate worship activities. Thus, since 1 Corinthians 11: 3 – 16, 14: 26 – 40 and 1 Timothy 2: 12 – 15 contain no mention, or give no indication, of male exclusivity for Church leadership roles they cannot be regarded as an approval or delegation from God for only men to exercise authority and leadership in the Church.

Secondly, when the rules of biblical interpretation are taken into account and consideration is given to other relevant Scriptures in which no gender caveats or distinctions are mandated, the situational rather than universal nature of 1 Corinthians 11: 3 – 16, 14: 34 – 35 and 1 Timothy 2: 12 – 15 quickly becomes evident. Although general principles relating to appropriate Christian conduct can be perceived to underlie these passages, such as the need for Christians to conduct themselves in an edifying and respectful manner and not to cause offence to others (Romans 14: 19; 1 Corinthians 10: 32), the principles are applied in such a way as to delineate particular remedies that specifically cater to the issues and problems – outlined in the previous paragraph – then confronting the Christian communities in question. Consequently, while the principles’ broad nature ensures their continued relevance, it is inappropriate for the particular remedies to be applied in circumstances where the original issues and problems (and consequently the need for the remedies) do not exist. Even in the first century AD it was not standard for situational advice to one Christian community to necessarily apply to the circumstances of another. This is evidenced, for example, by the differing (targeted) advice Paul gave about marriage in 1 Corinthians 7 and 1 Timothy 5: 11 – 14. Thus, a contemporary application of the particular remedies prescribed in 1 Corinthians 11: 3 – 16, 14: 34 – 35 and 1 Timothy 2: 12 – 15 should only be considered in the event of the recurrence of the original issues and problems the remedies were designed to address.

The study also gave consideration to the argument of some Male Headship proponents that the husband’s “headship” of his wife (with the assumption being that “headship” implies “having authority over”) provides a model for relationships generally between Christian men and women. However, in examining relevant passages (viz. Ephesians 5: 21 – 33 and 1 Peter 3: 1 – 7) the study found that the passages neither substantiate such arguments nor do they even make this link. In fact, what the study found was that the passages operated primarily to mitigate the impact of cultural attitudes engendered under the prevailing Aristotelian family code which held women to be secondary to men and promoted the “aristocratic rule” of husband over wife. Furthermore, the study

found that the references to “head”, “submission” and “weaker partner” in such passages were not suggestive of support for a God-ordained hierarchical ordering of husband over wife. Indeed, what is striking is the lack of an explicit delegation from God for husbands to unilaterally “exercise authority” over their wives. It is important to note that for Paul, contrary to the accepted social conventions of the time, wives held equal status with their husbands (for example refer to 1 Corinthians 14: 35 – definition of “ask”). Again, contrary to prevalent cultural norms, the only time Paul specifically mentioned “authority” in the context of the marriage relationship was when he referred to the mutual authority of husband and wife (1 Corinthians 7: 4). The clear New Testament ideal then is for the relationship between marriage partners to be based on a voluntary, mutual submissiveness, not on a hierarchical, one-way exercise of authority by one over the other. If there is any model that applies to male/female relationships generally in the Church it is that God similarly intends for Christian men and women to be mutually submissive towards one another with no hierarchical ordering between them (Matthew 20: 25 – 28; Mark 10: 42 – 45; Luke 22: 25 – 26; Ephesians 5: 21; Philippians 2: 5 – 7).

As children of God, Christians are heirs of the Kingdom and priests in His service (Romans 8: 16 – 17; 1 Peter 2: 5, 9; Revelation 1: 6, 5: 10, 20: 6). Setting up functional/role differentiations and hierarchies among Christians on the basis of gender divides and distinguishes between the heirs and priests of the Kingdom in ways that God has neither sanctioned nor condoned.

From this study of the Scriptures it is evident that faithful Christian women may, indeed they should be encouraged to, exercise their various gifts and abilities to build up and edify the Church. The Church will be all the more effective in its ministry when its members, regardless of gender, are able to fully use their gifts and abilities in its service. On the basis of the research conducted for this study, it is reasonable to conclude that anything less was never God’s intention.

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APPENDIX**Artemis of the Ephesians**⁷⁰⁶

Acts 19. Artemis of Ephesus was a tremendously popular deity; in fact, the Greek traveler Pausanias stated that she was the god (dess) most worshiped in private devotions in the Mediterranean world. Her cult idol was unusual – a still, elongated body with legs bound together in mummy-like fashion. The upper half of the front torso was covered with protuberances resembling human breasts, so that she was sometimes called the “many-breasted Artemis.” She wore a necklace of acorns, for the oak tree was sacred to her, and on her breastplate appeared the signs of the zodiac. On her head rose a high crown, often topped with the turrets of the city of Ephesus. This crown may have concealed a meteorite “which fell from heaven” (Acts 19: 35). Frequently her skirt was decorated with rows of animals, an indicator of fertility, and along the sides were bees, depicted as both actual insects and as priestesses (“honey bees”), adorned with crowns and wings. Artemis herself was known as the queen bee, and her castrated priests were called “drones.”

Her image, said to possess particular sanctity, appears on coins, papyri, wall paints, reliefs, statuettes (cf.v.24) and in larger statuary. Some 50 stone statues of Artemis have been excavated at ancient sites in widely separated parts of the ancient world. It was said that six magical words were inscribed upon the image of the Ephesian Artemis, although these have never been found. Incantations in the name of Artemis were said to have had a powerful force (v.19), a claim attested by magical papyri.

The first idol to Artemis was said to have been carved of wood and set in an oak tree at Ephesus by the Amazons. The sanctuary was soon surrounded by a village as it became a site of pilgrimage. On the site one temple succeeded another in size and splendour, until the final shrine was considered one of the wonders of the ancient world. Thousands of personnel served within the immense confines of the sanctuary, and huge sums of money were entrusted to the keeping of Artemis. As a result the temple complex became the major banking centre of Asia.

Not only was Artemis the guardian deity of Ephesus, but she also figured as saviour goddess in inscriptions. The dead were entrusted to her care, and she was thought to have lent her assistance to women in childbirth. Secret rituals known as “mysteries,” portraying both birth and death, initiated her devotees.

The book of Acts (19: 23 – 41) records the first of many confrontations between the followers of Christ and those of Artemis. At last the cause of Christ prevailed: The great temple was demolished and the cult statues were hidden.

706 Extract from Archaeological Study Bible, p. 1808