

WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

Part I —Women’s Positions in the Church

A Response to

“The Biblical Role of Women”

Doctrinal Study Paper by

United Church of God

an International Association

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PROLOGUE

Why I Wrote This Paper

I would like my readers to understand what motivated me to write this paper. By way of introduction and background, I attended Rutgers University in New Jersey and graduated from Ambassador College in Big Sandy in 1968, after having attended both the Bricket Wood and Pasadena campuses.

I then married my husband, Ozzie Engelbart, and we served in the ministry of the Worldwide Church of God and United Church of God for a total of 32 years pastoring many churches until his death in March of 2000.

One Sabbath several years ago, my daughter and her husband, (who is not “in the church”) attended services with me. During the course of the sermon, he turned to her and said: “You would be good at this,” meaning giving sermons. She responded that she couldn’t. Confused, he asked why, and she told him that in our church women are not allowed to preach. Now, both my daughter and her husband are attorneys. My daughter is a commercial litigator who has argued in court many times on behalf of Fortune 500 companies and is an exceptional speaker. Her husband could not believe his ears and told her that he could not understand how she could belong to a church that treats women as inferior.

A year or so later, after I had already moved to Dallas, she and I were riding in the car when the subject came up again. She told me what her husband had said and asked me why in our Church, women couldn’t be ministers, couldn’t give prayers, and couldn’t even lead songs or be ushers. I gave her the standard reply and the standard scriptures — I Cor. 14 and I Tim 2 — with the standard explanations. She was unsatisfied with those answers; it just didn’t make sense to her that God would give talents and gifts to people but refuse to let them use those talents and gifts in His service. I told her that I knew it was hard to understand, but that’s what the Bible says, and we do what the Bible says. But I also told her I would look into the Greek New Testament – its original language – to see if I could find out exactly what was prohibited and any indications as to the reasons why.

I began by checking out I Timothy 2:12, the main scripture that seemingly forbids women to teach and have authority over men. I examined this scripture in the Greek Received Text. The phrase “have authority over a man” or, as the King James Version says, “usurp authority,” was the Greek word “*authentain*.” *Authentein* was used only in this one passage in the entire Bible, while the usual word for authority, “*exousia*,” was used literally hundreds of times in the New Testament. Why did not Paul use this normal word for authority?

I also discovered the phrase “usurp authority” is not in the Greek at all, but *was added to the English by the King James Version translators*. I found that *Strong’s Concordance* says *authentain* meant “to act of oneself,” and this was the first definition listed. I had to ask the next question: “What did “acting of oneself” have to do with “usurping authority” and how would this prevent women from teaching?

I found other significant inconsistencies when comparing various translations of the Bible with the Greek Received Text. For example:

- The placement of Aquila's name before Priscilla in Acts 18:26, when the Greek puts Priscilla first.
- The translation of the Greek masculine word *diakonos* as “servant” when applied to Phoebe in Rom 16:1, while in all other scriptures where this same word is used to describe men, such as Paul and Timothy, it is translated “minister.”
- The change of Nympha, a woman, into Nymphos, a man.
- The change of Junia, whom Paul calls an apostle, into Junius, a man.
- The change of Stephana, a woman, into Stephanos, a man.
- The statement that women cannot have authority over men in I Tim 2:12, when Deborah, the Old Testament judge and prophet had God-given political, military, and religious authority over all of Israel, which included all men and her husband.
- The statement that women cannot teach men in I Tim 2:12, and yet Priscilla taught the gifted evangelist Apollos, “a man mighty in Scriptures.”

These are just some examples of mistranslations in scriptures relating to women I uncovered in my research. And they have serious implications relative to church doctrine and the men and women of our church membership. For more information on these and other mistranslations, please refer to Appendix C.

I have also discovered:

- why historically there is such a bias against women as evidenced in our Bible translations;
- when and where this bias originated; and
- why the biases still exist in our churches today.

Please read Appendix D for additional information on this subject.

As a result of this initial research and the surprises it revealed, I decided to do an even more thorough study of the Bible, especially the Greek and Hebrew texts, in order to determine what God really teaches about women in the church and in the marriage relationship. I wanted to know exactly what the Bible said women could or could not do. I proceeded to purchase more than thirty books on the subject and conducted countless hours of research on the Internet. The information in this paper is largely the result of this three-year — and still on-going — study.

Tina Engelbart

CHAPTER 1 — IN THE BEGINNING ...

NOTE: This document is in response to the UCG doctrinal study paper entitled “The Biblical Role of Women” published in December 2005, and it follows that paper’s general outline with quotes of the paper’s main points in italics. In the interest of timeliness and brevity, however, I have divided the research into two parts. This one, Part I, is “Women’s Position in the Church.” The second part is “Women in the Family,” which will follow later.

A Team of Equals

There was a divine purpose behind the Genesis creation – to create the family of God. But humanity has corrupted and distorted this understanding. When God made the first man and woman, He created a one-flesh relationship, a unity. He did not make a hierarchy of man over woman. Nevertheless, much of the theology and practice of the Christian churches with regard to women over the centuries has been based on the distorted view, rather than God’s original plan. And it all started here in the beginning.

Both Adam and Eve Rule

Genesis 1:26-27 (NKJV)¹ – Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion [*Young’s Literal Translation* says: “and let them rule” over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, over the cattle, over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Emph. added).

What facts do these verses bring out?

- Man and woman equally bear the image of God.
- Both man and woman equally to rule over the earth

So God gave man and woman the same responsibilities. They are:

1. Be fruitful and multiply
2. Fill the earth and subdue it
3. Have dominion (rule) over every living thing – but not over each other.

He gave them joint rule and joint responsibility. God did not say that Adam was to have dominion over Eve or rule over her, or be her head; or that Adam was to have dominion over the earth and Eve was to help him. He didn’t say Eve was to have the babies and Adam was to rule the world. They were to work together as a team of equals over all creation.

¹ The New King James Version Bible will be used throughout the paper unless noted otherwise.

Gen 2:18 – “Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone: I will make a helper comparable to him.’” (*The King James Version* translates this phrase: “a help meet for him” – meet meaning suitable).

Genesis 2 further reveals that after Adam names the animals, which were made out of the ground, he sees that there was no one like him and he was alone. And God said that this was not good — it was the only thing “not good” that He created. God then formed Eve out of Adam’s side. Unlike the animals, she was made from the “same material as he.” God made a “helper fit for him” in every way.

Eve, the Helper?

The UCG paper interprets the description of Eve the “helper” as support for the hierarchy in roles. It states:

This detailed account of man’s creation refers to Eve as a “helper.” The context shows that Eve’s role was supportive of Adam’s and that his was the leadership role.” (Emph. added).

The actual wording of the passage, however, provides the proper context for how we should view Eve’s role. And the original text nowhere uses the term or the concept of “helper” as support of Adam’s leadership role in describing her:

[T]he customary translation of the two words *ezer kenegdo* as, “helper fitting him” is almost certainly wrong. Recently, Rabbi David Freedman has pointed out that the Hebrew word *ezer* is a combination of two roots: “-z-r,” meaning “to rescue, to save,” and g-z-r meaning “to be strong.”²

It is not good that the man should be alone] *wdbl lebaddo*; only himself. I will make him a help meet for him; *rze wdgkn ezer kenegdo*, a help, a counterpart of himself, one formed from him, and a perfect resemblance of his person. If the word be rendered scrupulously literally, it signifies one like, or as himself, standing opposite to or before him. **And this implies that the woman was to be a perfect resemblance of the man, possessing neither inferiority nor superiority, but being in all things like and equal to himself.** As man was made a social creature, it was not proper that he should be alone; for to be alone, i.e. without a matrimonial companion, was not good.³ (Emph. added.)

The word “helper” – Heb. *ezer genegdo* – in the Old Testament NEVER means “subordinate” or “under authority of.” The word “*ezer*” appears in the [Old Testament] 21 times. Most of the references are to God as our “helper” When used of God the term means “strength” or “power.” In the few instances where “*ezer*” is used of someone other than God, the context indicates the meaning is something like “ally.” The proper

² David Freedman, “Woman, A Power Equal to Man,” *Biblical Archeology Review* 9 (1983), 56-58.
<http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/best/bswbBestSubPage.asp?PubID=BSBA&Volume=9&Issue=1&ArticleID=6>

³ Adam Clark Commentary on Gen.2:18, Power Bible CD 4
<<http://www.godrules.net/library/clarke/clarkegen2.htm>>

description of Eve in Gen. 2:18 is “a strength or power or partner equal and corresponding to him.”⁴ (Emph. added).

The Septuagint was the translation of Hebrew scripture into Greek around 285 B.C. It was the scripture from which Christ, the apostles, and New Testament writers quoted, and it translates verse 2:20’s *ezer kenegdo* into the parallel word of Greek, *boethos homoios*. *Homoios* means “of the same nature, like, similar.” Lexicographers have described *homoios* in the following terms: “[H]omoios also signifies equality in force and equality in rank.”⁵ In Genesis 2:20 *homoios* signifies: “*equally great or important, as powerful as, equal (to).*”⁶

The English word helper, of course, has an entirely different connotation than either the Hebrew word *ezer kenegdo* or the Greek word *boethos homoios*. “Helper” or “help meet” suggests, as the UCG paper claims, a supportive or subordinate role. But it is a meaning that is foreign to the original text. Rather than suggesting a subordinate role for Eve, Gen 2:18’s declaration that Eve was made “a power and strength” for Adam indicates full equality with him. Remove the mistranslation of “helper” for *ezer kenegdo*, and there is no way to get a differentiation of roles — Adam the leader and Eve the helper — from this scripture.

And, as mentioned above, the purpose Eve was created as an *ezer kenegdo* was not to assist Adam in his work, but to alleviate his loneliness, as Adam Clark so aptly brought out.

Consequences of Adam and Eve’s Sin

Farther along in the creation account, we find that Eve was deceived by the serpent, but Adam deliberately chose to sin. It is noteworthy that Eve did not have to search for Adam to give him the fruit. He was with her through the entire discourse with the serpent: “...she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.” (Gen 3:6). (Emph. added.) So Adam, who was at her side throughout this whole conversation, did nothing to warn her as her alleged head, or protect her, or exercise the authority he supposedly had over every living thing, including the serpent – and Eve. He certainly did not in any shape or form “*exercise the kind of loving leadership that God originally intended for Adam to exercise in his role as a husband*” as stated by the UCG paper quoted on page 5.

Because of Adam and Eve’s sin, all of their relationships were ruined:

- Between Adam and Eve on the one hand, and God on the other — they were expelled from the Garden and His presence;
- Between humans and nature — the ground was cursed, and they had to toil to produce food; and
- Between Adam and Eve — now he would rule over her, whereas before they were equal.

⁴ Berkeley and Alvera Mickelsen, *Studies on Biblical Equality*, Christians for Biblical Equality, 15.

⁵ Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1224.

⁶ Walter Bauer, *Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 569.

The UCG paper makes the following conclusion after discussing the results of Adam and Eve's sin:

Gen. 3:16 describes a major change in the husband-wife relationship: "Your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you." The phrase "your desire shall be for your husband" forecasts a change in Eve's approach toward her husband.

Of the last two lines of Genesis 3:16, the Nelson Study Bible offers a paraphrase: "You will now have a tendency to dominate your husband"... (Emph. added).

The quoted paraphrase is scripturally inaccurate in two ways. First of all, the word "desire" is a wrong translation of the Hebrew word *teshuqua* and gives it a wrong meaning. Secondly, even if it weren't wrongly translated, "desire for your husband" in no way can turn into "tendency to dominate your husband." Again, looking at the original Hebrew, the word for desire is "*teshuqua*," and in all translations before 800 A.D. it is translated "turning." Furthermore, the Septuagint translates "*teshuqua*" into the Greek word "*apostrophe*" or "turning away." Essentially, this verse is saying is that Eve would turn away from God (and toward her husband); as a consequence of that turning, her husband will rule over her.⁷ (Emph. added).

The UCG paper goes on to state:

[We] need to consider what is meant by "he shall rule over you." The likely explanation is that this refers to the predicted power struggle, from the male side of the relationship. The expression "rule over" refers to domination, not the kind of loving leadership that God originally intended for Adam to exercise in his role as a husband. So, God is telling Eve that the consequence of this sin would be an oppressive form of ruling over her. (Emph. added).

This conclusion is erroneous for three reasons. First, the underlined phrase rests on the premise that God originally intended for Adam a leadership role over Eve. As shown above, this premise is incorrect. The clearest implication of God allowing Adam to rule Eve after the sin is that he was not her ruler prior to the sin.

Second, the phrase, "he shall rule over you," is rendered in all ancient translations as, "he will rule over you." The word "shall" denotes a command, while the word "will" denotes a foretelling of events. Thus, the phrase "he will rule over you," is God telling Eve how it will be for her in Satan's world from that time on.

Notice that God does not command Adam to rule over her. But He tells Eve of the effect on her as a result of their sin. If God didn't command Adam to rule Eve – which He didn't – then Adam must have taken the rule for himself. Or as F. F. Bruce explains: "...in our sinful human condition, the man exploits the woman's natural proclivity towards him to dominate and subjugate her. Subjugation of woman, in fact, is a symptom of man's [the male's] fallen nature."⁸ (Emph. added).

⁷ Katherine C. Bushnell, *God's Word to Women* (Peoria, IL: Jolliff, no date), 62.

⁸ F. F. Bruce, "Women in the Church: a Biblical Survey," 27 Feb 2006, <http://www.cbeinternational.org/new/free_articles/ffbruce.shtml>.

Third, the word translated as “rule” is the Hebrew word “*mashal*.” According to *Strong’s Concordance*, *mashal* means, “to rule, reign, have dominion, be governor, have power.” It does not necessarily mean oppressive rule, but ordinary rulership, and it includes benign ruling. For example,

Gen. 1:18 – “God set the sun “to rule (*mashal*) over the day....” Gen. 24:2 – “And Abraham said to the oldest servant of his house, who ruled (*mashal*) over all he had....”

Notably, the rulership or “dominion” that Adam and Eve were to have over the earth is the Hebrew word *radah*, which *Strong’s Concordance* translates as “to tread down, *i.e.*, subjugate.”

In short, Eve’s “curse” was that women would be under men’s rule, including the benign, even “loving” rule that we espouse for husbands over wives in the Church. But this was a deviation from what God originally intended.

Ever since that time, men’s domination of women has been treated as a law given and a curse imposed on women. In reality, it is not a commandment handed down, but a prophecy, a warning of what the relationship would be between husbands and wives. Male domination with female subjection is not part of God’s divine order in creation, but a consequence of the fall.⁹

But does it have to be that way now—men ruling over women? One could say that if God made man’s rule over woman a commandment (which it wasn’t), didn’t He then wind up rewarding Adam for his rebellion? What about men? Shouldn’t they all be farmers now because Adam’s penalty was to toil the cursed ground to secure food?

So is man ruling over woman God’s intent and the standard prescription for marriage from this time on? The answer is an unqualified no as the following reasons show:

First, this instruction appears nowhere else in the Old Testament. Nowhere is the wife commanded to obey her husband, nor is the husband commanded to rule his wife – nowhere in the Old Testament. Second, it is informative to see which Genesis scriptures are referred to in the New Testament. Note is made of Adam’s rebellion nine times. Note is made of Eve’s deception twice. Man ruling over woman or woman’s desire for her husband, or the husband’s headship over his wife is not cited at all because there are no scriptures that say that to cite. In I Tim. 2:13, 14 Paul makes the statement, “For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived fell into transgression.” Paul is stating historical fact. But he makes no conclusions based on those statements such as “therefore the husband is over the wife.”

⁹ Mary Audrey Raycroft, *Releasing the Life of the Word*, God’s Word to Women Website, 19 March 2005, <<http://www.godstowomen.org/studies/articles/raycroft.htm>>.

Aside from the above stated references, here are the other Genesis scriptures quoted in the New Testament: “And the two shall become one flesh” is explained by Jesus twice (Mat. 19:5 and Mark 10:7-8); and by Paul also twice (I Cor 6:16 and Eph. 5:31). Four times the New Testament goes back to the beginning, to when Adam and Eve were created, and emphasizes the one-flesh principle in Genesis 2. Man’s rule in Gen. 3:16 is never mentioned. Both Jesus and Paul taught a marital one-ness, not a hierarchical two-ness.

In conclusion, no statement in Genesis’ creation account entitles men to exercise authority or leadership over women. If God had intended a hierarchy of men over women or husbands over wives, Genesis is the place He would have stated that law in no uncertain terms. The concept behind the phrase “he shall rule over you” is a description of the way it would be in Satan’s world; it was never God’s desire for His children.

CHAPTER 2 — WOMEN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Even though there were more female leaders mentioned in the Old Testament (Miriam, Isaiah's wife, and others), in the interest of brevity this chapter will focus on only two women, Deborah and Huldah, in contrast with what was discussed in the UCG doctrinal paper. Abigail and the Proverbs 31 Woman will be examined in Women in the Bible, Part II, Women in the Family.

Deborah

Deborah held a singularly high position in the Old Testament — the only female ruler of Israel mentioned in the Bible. Her role, however, has been greatly deemphasized by many Christian denominations, including ours.

The UCG paper infers the following lesson from the story of Deborah:

She viewed herself “as a mother in Israel” (Judg. 5:7). This particular analogy can be instructive to us concerning feminine leadership. A woman who is both a wife and a mother submits to her husband, and yet she definitely is an authority figure to her children... God instructs children to obey the father and the mother (Prov. 1:8 “...the law of your mother) (Emph added).

The paper's conclusion is not supported by the biblical text. Nowhere does it state Deborah submitted to her husband, and children are never mentioned. Furthermore, the stated supposition is a non sequitur: if the extent of Deborah's leadership reached only to her children, her husband would have been in the rulership position over Israel, not her. This, then, cannot be the correct inference.

What do the scriptures tell us? Deborah held the three highest positions in the entire land of Israel. She was a judge, a prophet, and commander-in-chief. In the era of Judges, a person in the position of judge was the ruler of Israel. She summoned Barak, exerting the God-given authority she had over him and the armies of Israel. Saying, “a mother in Israel” is about Deborah being an authority figure to her children utterly ignores those facts. It also does not take into account the actual Hebrew words used to describe her.

The Hebrew for “mother in Israel” is *em Yisrael*, or only the two words, “mother Israel.” The preposition between the two words had to be added by the translators, and many Hebrew versions translate the phrase as “Mother of Israel.” Of course, that gives an entirely different sense to the text.

“Mother of Israel” is a title. Golda Meir was called “Mother of Israel” when she was Prime Minister. In a similar fashion, George Washington is commonly referred to as the “Father of Our Country.” No one would assume this phrase means that George Washington was a father figure

to his children. The same is true for the Semitic usage of the title Mother of Israel. It means “female chief — or a female ruler of the tribe of Israel.”¹⁰

The UCG paper further extrapolates from Deborah’s example a supportive, complementary role for women with respect to their husbands:

Additionally, a woman can lead all people, men and women alike, by her example. If she is married, hers is a supportive role that complements her husband’s role, but doesn’t usurp it.” (Emph. added).

A woman can lead only by example (which is what the above sentence infers)? Again, this statement ignores the Biblical description of Deborah’s administration. She did not lead “by example,” nor was hers a “supportive” or “complementary” role to her husband’s. She led by command. She alone led the entire nation (which, by definition, included her husband), commanded an army, and handed down judicial decisions — all because God gave her the authority to do so.

It is instructive to understand that Deborah did not rule in a time of peace. Things were chaotic in Israel. They were oppressed by the Canaanites under Jabin for 20 years. The roads were too dangerous to travel and village life had ceased, until Deborah arose as mother of Israel. She summoned Barak as commander-in-chief and ordered him to deploy the troops at Mt. Tabor. They had 10,000 men with no spears and no shields (Judg. 4:6; 5:8). Sisera, King Jabin’s general, had 900 chariots of iron and a multitude for an army (Judg. 4:3, 7). Deborah and Barak were greatly outnumbered, but God gave them victory. And God blessed Deborah’s actions and rulership by giving Israel peace for 40 years.

To say she only led “by example” is to ignore the text and trivialize what she did. She was a ruler who ruled over other rulers and princes of the tribes of Israel (Judg. 5:9, 15). She commanded her general and went into battle with him. She was not subordinate to any man.

In an attempt to summarize Deborah’s position as political and military commander, the UCG paper says:

“She did not usurp leadership for herself but carried out God’s instruction to tell Barak to perform his task.

Deborah did not have to usurp leadership because God gave her the authority to command Barak and his army. Acts 13:20, 21 – “And after that he [God] gave unto them judges And afterward they asked for a king” In his commentary on this verse, Albert Barnes explains that judges were those “who were raised up in an extraordinary manner to administer the affairs of the nation, to defend it from enemies, etc.”¹¹ (Emph. added).

¹⁰ Bushnell 286.

¹¹ Alfred Barnes. *New Testament Commentary*.

The question is would God have placed Deborah into the highest position in the land if He were against female leadership? Some in the past have posited that Deborah became judge over Israel because there were no competent men in the country at that time, and God, therefore, had to resort to using a woman. This was not the case. Barak was not only a competent man; he is listed among the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11:32. He did not refuse to go to war without Deborah because he was a coward. On the contrary, he knew Deborah was a prophet of God, and he wanted her at his side to have God's protection over their army as he went into battle. Perhaps his name is listed among the heroes of faith because he followed and obeyed the God-appointed leader of Israel at that time, despite the fact that the leader was a woman.

As an end note, Deborah's Song is one of the oldest pieces of literature extant. And the song of victory this woman sang became a part of scripture — and this scripture was written by a woman.

Huldah

Huldah was a prophetess in Jerusalem during the time of King Josiah. The male prophets, Jeremiah (2 Chron. 35:25), and Zephaniah (Zeph. 1:1), were her contemporaries. (2 Kings 22:1-23:25; 2 Chron. 34:1-35:19).

Huldah's story begins when the high priest at the time, Hilkiah, while determining what temple damages needed repair, found what seemed to be a book of the law with an astonishing message from God. But Hilkiah could not be sure it was what it purported to be. He showed the scroll to King Josiah, who tore his clothes in response to what he read. But the king had to be sure that the message was an authentic communication from God. So the king commanded the high priest, the scribe, and his servant, “[g]o inquire of the Lord for me . . . concerning the words of this book.” (2 Kings 22:13). They went to Huldah the prophetess, wife of Shallum, and she identified the book as the true Word of God, which, she said, must be believed and obeyed or the country can expect dire consequences:

2 Kings 22:15-17 – “Then she said to the king's entourage, 'Tell the man [*i.e.*, the king] who sent you to me, 'Thus says the Lord: Behold, I will bring calamity on this place and on its inhabitants — all the words of the book which the king of Judah has read — because they have forsaken me and burned incense to other gods...' So they went back and brought the word of the Lord, which Huldah told them, to the king.”

King Josiah acted on Huldah's advice and as a result, he and Judah were spared. He rid the temple of the idols, removed the idolatrous priests, destroyed the shrines of the high places, and made a covenant with God to keep His commandments with all his heart and soul “to perform all the words of the covenant that were written in the book.” (Chron. 23:3).

Arlene Swidler says of this historic passage:

Josiah as king and ruler of the Jewish People **accepted Huldah's evaluation of the scroll as the authentic word of Yahweh** and entered into a covenant with Yahweh to follow all the commandments and decrees in the Scroll. **This marks the first time any of the Hebrew Scriptures were officially recognized as authentic.** Josiah's acknowledgement of the Book of the Law, then, represents the first beginnings of our biblical canon.

And **the authority to pass judgment on this initial entry into the canon was given to a woman.** At the beginning of the Bible we find Huldah; in her we discover the first scriptural authority, **the founder of biblical studies.**¹² (Emph. added).

Of Huldah, the UCG paper states:

“The king, the high priest and counselors appealed to her and her word was accepted by all as a message from God. She powerfully spoke the words that God inspired her to speak and people trusted her godly insight.”

All true, although it wasn't only the people who trusted her godly insight, but the country's male leaders. So how, then, does it follow that a woman cannot have God-given authority over men on religious matters? If that were the case,

- Why did the king not inquire of Jeremiah or Zephaniah?
- Why did the king not send the high priest to Huldah's husband?
- Why did the king not order Huldah to come to him?
- Why did he go to a woman to authenticate the Book of the Law in the first place?
- Why didn't the king have the high priest or scribe authenticate the Book of the Law?

Lessons to Draw from the Old Testament

The UCG paper arrives at the following four conclusions ostensibly based on the Old Testament accounts of Deborah and Huldah:

1. As wives they offered wise counsel and support to their husbands.

Not once in these examples was that the case. Nothing in the scriptures state that either Deborah or Huldah offered wise counsel to their husbands.

2. As mothers they trained key leaders.

This obviously is in reference to Deborah as “mother of Israel.” As mentioned before, however, that title has nothing to do with children, but with leading a country, and an army, and winning a war. Again, children have nothing to do with this.

¹² Arlene Swidler, “In Search of Huldah,” *The Bible Today*, Nov. 1978, 1783 (emph. in orig.)

3. *Godly women served as leaders in a way that did not usurp authority from men, but rather enhanced and supported the leadership of men. Scripture does not indicate competition between male and female leadership.*

Deborah and Huldah did not have to “usurp authority from men.” (The phrase is a mistranslation from I Tim. 2:12 which will be explained later in the paper). They were given the authority by God; authority recognized by the men of Israel, Barak and King Josiah included. There is not even the suggestion of “competition” between male and female leadership, either in these two examples, or in any example of the Old Testament. The simple fact is that Deborah and Huldah exercised God-given authority over men.

4. *There is no difference between men and women in regard to their spiritual potential.*

In the examples of Deborah and Huldah, there is no reference to spiritual potential. If we are speaking of spiritual potential only, then there is no way Deborah could have held the three highest positions in physical Israel. This was the case in a strongly patriarchal society, yet neither Deborah nor Huldah’s example is spoken of as an exception.

There is no scripture in the Old Testament that demands submission from women, or prevents women from assuming leadership over men. In fact, the women of the Old Testament:

- Prophesied
- Proclaimed God’s word to kings, priests, leaders
- Issued judgments
- Led nations
- Waged and won wars

All with God’s appointment, blessing, and approval.

CHAPTER 3 – THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS REGARDING WOMEN

There can be little disagreement that Jesus treated women honorably and with respect. He did what was truly radical for His time: He treated both men and women equally in a society that looked upon women as inferiors:

- He spoke to women, when rabbis would not;
- He imparted deep spiritual truths to them (*i.e.*, the Samaritan woman and Martha);
- He taught them as He taught the men;
- He performed miracles for them;
- He allowed them to be his disciples, as were men.

The UCG paper takes the following position with respect to Christ’s treatment of, and directive for, women:

[R]ather he (Christ) simply practiced what the Bible reveals from the beginning, that men and women are equal. However, He chose men as apostles, while women served in support roles in His earthly ministry, a pattern He continued to inspire in the New Testament Church, as we will see. (Emph. added).

Although the New Testament mentions one woman serving as an apostle (more on that later), it is true that Jesus did not choose a woman for one of the Twelve. Why not? And is this fact properly construed to be a decree for all time that women should not be in the ministry?

Why Was No Woman among Christ’s Twelve Apostles?

Primarily, the twelve apostles were to be witnesses for Him from the beginning of His ministry through His death and resurrection. He told the Twelve, “[b]ut you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8). In other words, these Twelve had a duty above and beyond normal apostleship to be “witnesses” for Christ. But women, in that age were forbidden by Jewish law to be witnesses as enumerated in the Oral Law.

What is the Oral Law? The Oral law was the law of the land of Judea in Jesus’ time. Judea was presided over by the Jerusalem Sanhedrin (Greek *sunedrion*) which had authority over the **spiritual, political, and legal affairs of all Jews**, though at times the Jerusalem Sanhedrin’s authority was limited to Judea. It was presided over by the high priest, and was made up of seventy-one persons consisting of three groups – chief priests, scribes or “teachers of the law” and elders (Gr. *presbuteroi*) (Emph. added).¹³

¹³ Dr. Ralph F. Wilson, <<http://www.jesuswalk.com>> 10 May 2007

For instance, in Acts 25:8, when Paul was accused of opposing Jewish customs, he declared in his defense that “I have done nothing wrong against the law of the Jews or against the temple”. (Emph. added)

The Sanhedrin had legal authority to bring Jesus before the Sanhedrin on a charge of blasphemy (Matt. 26:65; John 19:7). Peter and John were charged with being false prophets and deceivers of the people (Acts 4 and 5), Stephen with being a blasphemer (Acts 6:13 ff), and Paul with being guilty of transgressing the Mosaic law. (Acts 23).

The Sanhedrin had the right of ordering arrests by its own officers (as in the case of Jesus when He was apprehended); of finally disposing of such cases that did not involve capital punishment such as crucifixion which had to be ratified by the Roman procurator. However, they could order people to be whipped or scourged, and their verdicts of death could be carried out only by stoning, burning, beheading, or strangling. For example, they were able to have Stephen stoned, and Peter, John, and Paul were brought before the council because of their preaching about Jesus. Fearing arrest, it is no wonder Nicodemus, a high ranking member of the Sanhedrin, came to Jesus by night.

The law they followed was the Oral Law. It is the rabbinical legal commentary on the Torah that sets forth rules over and above the written law of the Old Testament to give direction as to how those laws are to be put in practice. David Stern, author of the *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, writes:

The *P'rushim* [Pharisees] had interpreted the Written *Torah*, and their sages and rabbis had decreed additional rules. Together these came to be called at first **the Tradition of the Elders**, and later the Oral *Torah*.... It was committed to writing, notably in the Mishna, in the second and third centuries, expanded in the Gemara in the fourth and fifth (Mishna + Gemara = Talmud), and later in other works.¹⁴ (Emph. mine).

Among other things, the Oral Law as expounded by rabbis placed onerous restrictions on women's involvement in Jewish religious and social life. Following are some examples of the Oral Law's codified discrimination against women:

- Women were not allowed to be witnesses in that society, meaning, the testimony of women was not accepted in court.
- Women could not enter the Court of Israel in the temple. They were restricted to the Court of Women even though there was no command in the Bible for a Court of Women.
- In the synagogue, women were separated from the men. Most often they sat in an upstairs balcony where it was difficult, if not impossible, to hear and see what was going on.

¹⁴ David H. Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, (Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc. 1992) 92. Emph. in the original.

- They were not allowed to speak in the synagogue. They were required to be silent and were not permitted to read the scriptures aloud.
- They were not counted toward the *minyan* or quorum, which was the minimum number of men present before a synagogue service could be held. There had to be 10 men for a *minyan*; 100 women and 9 men meant no synagogue service. (When Paul found Lydia and the women by the riverside “where prayer was customarily made” (Acts 16:13), they apparently did not have enough men to have a synagogue service. Paul, however, did not consider this a problem; he started the Philippian Church with Lydia, her household, and those same women.)
- Women were forbidden to even study the Torah. Girls did not attend synagogue schools as did the boys to learn the scriptures and to read and write. Girls learned only domestic skills, and Rabbis warned against teaching the law to women.
- Men were not allowed to speak to women in public, even to their own wives.¹⁵
- Women belonged either to their husbands, fathers, or another male guardian who would not have permitted them to travel with a rabbi and other men for three and a half years

These laws were strictly enforced by the Jewish leadership. As the Erubin 21b of the Talmud says: “Whosoever disobeys the rabbis deserves death and will be punished...”

A woman simply could not have functioned as an apostle in an era in which: (i) men were not allowed to speak to her; (ii) she wasn’t allowed to learn or speak the Law; and (iii) she wasn’t allowed to enter into the main synagogue. Had she tried to do any of those things, she would have been stoned. That misogynist mindset is still very much ingrained in Israel, the Middle East and other parts of the world today. For example, in 1999, orthodox Jews, aggravated by the infraction of the Talmud’s prohibition against women intermingling with men during prayer, hurled stones and despicable insults at women who were merely trying to pray at the Wailing Wall. And this is in our supposed enlightened day and age. (See Appendix A).

The Twelve Apostles were with Christ day and night for three and a half years. A woman doing what was required of the Twelve — living and traveling with unrelated males, preaching in synagogues, and touching people for healing — would have been killed for violating the Law. In short, she wouldn’t have lived long enough to even fulfill the initial requirements of apostleship — learning from Jesus to preach the gospel.

¹⁵ A. Shalvi, *Renew our Days as of Old: Religious Fundamentalism and Social Change in the Modern Jewish State* (2003), pp. 75-88. Additionally, Josephus, in his *Jewish Antiquities*, mentions the prohibition of women serving as witnesses.

Jesus' Endorsement of a Woman Ruler

Jesus did not just treat women equally with the men, which was revolutionary enough at that time. He actually expressly approved of a woman being in authority over men. He used many women as examples for object lessons to the rabbis, priests, Pharisees and His disciples. But the particular woman He set up as a role model and judge of the Pharisees was, in her time, a ruler of men because she was a ruler of a country:

I Kings 10:1 – 7 “Now when the Queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to test him with hard questions ... and when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon [...], [s]he said to the king: “It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. However I did not believe the words until I came and saw it with my own eyes; indeed the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard.””

She visited Solomon in order “to test him with hard questions.” And Jesus commended this Queen for wanting to check him out. Solomon passed the test with flying colors. “He answered all her questions; there was nothing so difficult for the king that he could not explain it to her” (vs. 3). The Scribes and Pharisees Jesus spoke with could not or would not acknowledge His wisdom even though they put forth hard questions — every one of which He answered even at age twelve. The Queen of Sheba, however, had taken great pains and trouble to seek out Solomon’s wisdom. Yet compared to Christ’s wisdom, Solomon’s wisdom was only that of a puny human being.

So Jesus refers to her as an exemplar of a seeker and tester of wisdom; and He tells the Jewish leadership in no uncertain terms that she will stand in judgment over them:

Luke 11:31 – “The queen of the South shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here.” (Emph added).

Here, Christ was telling the Pharisees and Sadducees — those who held the spiritual and societal power — that a woman would condemn them in the resurrection for rejecting Christ while He was among them and for their spiritual stubbornness. Christ not only endorsed her future condemnation of them and made an example of it, but also approved her position of authority, her rulership during her physical life. He didn’t say she shouldn’t have been a ruler over men. Christ did not see anything wrong with a woman being queen and ruling a country

Women Witness the Resurrection

Christ also turned on its head the rabbinic law that forbade women to be witnesses. And He did so in connection with a most important occasion: He allowed women to witness His resurrection. He appeared to them first when He could have shown Himself to His apostles, who had been present at his grave site and then left. (Luke 24:12; John 20:2-8). Christ specifically told the women to go to the apostles: “Go and tell my brethren to go to Galilee and there they will see me.” (Mat. 28:10). Even the angel told them “go and tell the disciples — and Peter — that He is going before you into Galilee.” (Mat. 28:7). Augustine, a father of the Catholic

Church, realized how significant this was and gave Mary Magdalene the title of Apostle to the Apostles — “*apostola apostolorum*.”¹⁶

It is incredible to realize that Jesus Christ made a special point of permitting Mary Magdalene and the women, instead of the Twelve, to be the first witnesses to the greatest event on earth at that time, His resurrection. That experience was to be a seminal lesson to the apostles: In Christ’s church, women are to be valued as equals. And thus He set the precedent for women to serve his church in the same manner as men in the New Testament.

Additional Issues to Consider

It wasn’t just women who were not represented among The Twelve; not one Gentile was among them either. A Gentile apostle would also have caused a commotion, because the Jewish law contained similar restrictions against Gentiles entering the temple, as it did against women. This was illustrated in Acts when the Jews thought Paul brought a Gentile to the temple. A riot ensued, and the Jewish leaders arrested Paul, nearly succeeding in killing him. (Acts 21:26-31). Under the same rationale that excludes women from the ministry because of their absence as one of the Twelve, Gentiles, too, should be excluded, leaving only Jewish men to serve in church leadership positions. Of course, the only reason Jesus did not ordain a woman (or Gentile) as one of His Twelve was because Jewish societal laws at that time prevented them from receiving an education in the Law, entering synagogues, and teaching others. None of these reasons are applicable today.

Furthermore, the subordination of women in the church violates an overriding principle that Christ reiterated time and again to his disciples. Christ made the point that in His body, the Church, there were to be no paganized power and hierarchical authority structures.

You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it [*exercise lordship*] over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. **Yet is shall not be so among you**, but whoever decides to become great let him be your servant [*diakonos*]. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave. Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. (Matt. 20:25-27. (Emph. added).

He mentioned this principle five times in the Gospels to get the point across. If it were Christ’s will that men be over women exercising authority over them in His church during this physical life, and that only men, not women, be church leaders – both exceptions to the above mentioned principle — this would have been the place for Him say so. But there is no such carve-out.

On the contrary, His own dealings with women (women witnessing the resurrection) and use of them as examples to men (Queen of Sheba) contradict UCG’s assertion that He intended women to function ONLY in support roles in the New Testament Church. In fact, such a directive is conspicuous by its absence in Christ’s admonition regarding the exercise of authority.

¹⁶ G. Bedouell, “Mary Magdalene - The Apostle of the Apostles and The Order of Preachers” *Dominican Ashram*, Vol.18, no. 4, 1999, 157 - 171.

CHAPTER 4 – WOMEN IN ACTS

Acts 2 is the beginning of the New Testament Church and Peter's statements are considered to be the foundational document of the Church. The passages in Acts that refer to women on Pentecost say this:

Acts 2:1 – “When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.” Vs. 4 – “And they were all [including women] filled with the Holy Spirit and [and they all] began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Vs. 6 – “[T]he multitude...were confused because everyone heard them [Gr. “*autos*”, which is not male-specific but includes women] in his [each person's] own language.” (Emph. added).

It was because the women were speaking in addition to the men that Peter then stood up and said:

Acts 2:16-18 – “This is [i.e., women speaking] what was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams; And on my menservants and on my maidservants I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they shall prophesy.” (Emph. added).

Notice above in vs. 4 it says “the Spirit gave them utterance.” Utterance doesn't have much meaning for us. We use it in the sense of sound or remark, something trivial. But this is the Greek word *apopheggomai* and *Strong's* says it means to “to declare, to proclaim, to speak” *Robertson's NT Word Pictures* says the Septuagint uses that word for prophesying. It is only used in the New Testament here and in Acts 2:14 and 26:25. Robertson says this verb is used “for dignified and elevated discourse.”¹⁷ And the women were doing it as well as the men.

What Does It Mean to Prophecy?

The UCG paper acknowledges that women prophesied on Pentecost, but it distinguishes “prophesying” from “preaching,” “teaching,” and “counseling:”

When Peter referred to those who witnessed the resurrection of Christ in Acts 2:32, He most certainly includes women. However, only the Twelve did the teaching and counseling on Pentecost of Acts 2.

In [Acts] chapter 2, verse 18, “they shall prophesy” includes women. Does this mean that women will preach in the New Testament Church? This verse cannot justifiably be used to claim biblical authority for women preachers because prophesying is not the same as preaching. To “prophesy” refers to a spiritual gift (1 Corinthians 13:2; 14:1), which enables the recipient “to proclaim an inspired revelation.” (Emph. added).

¹⁷ *Robertson's NT Word Pictures*, Power Bible CD.
<http://bible.crosswalk.com/Commentaries/RobertsonsWordPictures/rwp.cgi?book=ac&chapter=002&verse=004&next=005&prev=003>

First of all, UCG mentions above that “**prophesying is not the same as preaching.**” Yet on page 46 I quote UCG as saying.: “*In verses 29-33, Paul continues to give guidelines for speaking in church. Then, verse 34 flows logically from this discussion, **based upon the meaning of “prophesying” as “preaching”**: (Emph. added).*

It is inconceivable to me how UCG can first state prophesying is not preaching, and several pages later contradict itself totally by stating prophesying is preaching. One would have to ask, which is it? Nevertheless, even according to UCG’s own words, women can preach if prophesying is preaching.

However, as the UCG paper also states, to “prophesy” is to “proclaim.” Synonyms for the verb “proclaim” are “to state publicly, announce, declare, say publicly, broadcast.”¹⁸ It is difficult to see how one can “proclaim an inspired revelation” without speaking it in public. Additionally, the primary sense of prophesying is to act as a spokesperson for someone else (specifically, God); prediction is not the necessary implication as explained below. So, a true prophet in the Bible — whether male or female — is one who speaks for God:

According to the *Companion Reference Guide to the Christian Bible*, this word in the Greek is *profeteuo* (“be-before affirming). The *Guide* then explains that this word means “to speak or *affirm before* someone for someone else, esp. [sic] for God; the ‘*before*’ is before in place, not time, as when Aaron spoke for Moses, *before* Pharaoh, because Aaron was Moses’ spokesman (Ex. 4:16); any prediction is incidental to the prophesy. So to prophesy means to reveal words from God before someone, or in other words to teach God’s teachings.

So women could lead a prayer, reveal words from God, and teach. Not only this, but the ability to prophesy was one of the spiritual favors or gifts of the Spirit. These women who were speaking about spiritual matters before Christians (I Cor. 14:4) not only had God’s passive acceptance, but His active appointment.¹⁹

I Corinthians 14 is replete with explanations of what it means to prophesy, and it is clear that prophesying was done in and before an assembly of believers:

I Cor. 14:3 – “He who prophesies [Gr. “*propheteuo*” or “one who prophesies”] speaks edification and exhortation, and comfort to men [Gr. “*anthropos*” or “people”].”

Vs. 4 – “He who prophesies [Gr. “*propheteuo*”] edifies the church.”

Vs. 22 - 24 – “Prophesying is not for unbelievers, but for those who believe. Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place... if all prophesy, an unbeliever . . . is convinced by all”

¹⁸ Microsoft Word Thesaurus: English (U.S.)

¹⁹ Alan Dale, “Women Speakers and Teachers,” 12 March 2002
<<http://www.theexaminer.org/volume7/number6/speakers.htm>>.

Vs. 26 – “...Whenever you come together [Gr. “*sunerchomai*” also, “assemble”], each of you [(Gr. “*hekastos humon*” meaning “every one of you” includes women] has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation.” (Emph. added).

Vs. 31 – “For you can all prophesy, one by one, that all may learn, and all may be encouraged.” (Emph. added).

Vs. 39 – “Therefore, brethren [Gr. *adelphoi* means siblings, or “brothers and sisters”²⁰] desire earnestly to prophesy.”

These scriptures show that prophesying is done in church for the edification of the church; that it means “to teach,” and that all did it, including women. There was not a different or lesser “prophesying” for women that did not include “preaching.”

Other New Testament scriptures on prophesying include:

Eph. 4:11 – “He gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.” (Emph. added).

Notably, in this scripture, prophets come before evangelists, pastors, and teachers. And we already know there were female prophets. (I Cor. 11:5 – “Every man praying or prophesying...” Vs. 6 – “Every woman who prays or prophesies” (Emph. added). Further, the word “some” in the Greek refers to both men and women and is gender neutral; the text does not say “He gave some *men* to be apostles, etc.” Thus, this scripture is properly read to include women as apostles, as prophets, as evangelists, and pastors and teachers.

Eph. 2:19, 20 – “...fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets” (Emph. added). This includes women, because the women were prophesying in I Cor. 11:5 and there were women prophets in the Old Testament.

I Cor 12:28 – “And God has appointed these [gender neutral] in the Church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers [Gr. “*didaskalos*”] ...” Prophets are listed in the order of importance ahead of teachers, *a.k.a.*, ministers.

All of the above references to positions of authority are gender neutral, meaning they included women. Or at least they did not exclude them. Nowhere is there a distinction made between the type or place of prophesying with respect to gender, and in fact, I Cor. 11:4-5 supports the equality of male/female prophesying: Vs. 5 —“Every man praying or prophesying” Vs. 6 – “Every woman who prays or prophesies” Thus, the notion that women couldn’t prophesy, as interpreted

²⁰ “Brothers and sisters is an accurate translation of the plural of adelphos [which is *adelphoi*].” Aida Besancon Spencer, “Jesus’ Treatment of Women in the Gospel,” qtd in Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Groothuis eds *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy*. (Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press 2004) footnote 38, 138.
http://krusekronicle.typepad.com/kruse_kronicle/2006/10/dbe_chapter_7_j.html

today as meaning preach, in church is incorrect. Therefore, if the men were prophesying in the assembly and teaching – which they were – the women were doing the same thing.

Why Weren't "Prominent Women" Ordained?

The UCG paper makes the point that there was no lack of “dedicated Christian women” and, in at least some cultures of the time, women held prominent roles in society:

Dedicated Christian women were part of the Church, but the record consistently shows that Christ inspired that men should serve as elders.

* * *

Antioch is noteworthy, for women were prominent and influential in the community. The culture clearly accepted and included women ([Acts 13,] verses 49-50)...

These and similar passages in the UCG paper are used to support the conclusion that women, although plentiful in number and, in some places, prominent in society, did not serve as elders or pastors in the early New Testament Church because only men were to be elders.

This inference does not take into account one crucial fact. Even though some cities in Asia Minor may have had more freedom for women, the synagogues, where Paul did most of his preaching, were ruled by the rabbis. Thus, in the synagogues, the same laws against women speaking in the assembly and requiring separation from the men applied, even in far-reaching areas such as Asia. Note that at the time Paul was converted, he was on his way to the Damascus synagogues with authority from the high priest located in Jerusalem to arrest men and women in order to bring them back to Jerusalem to arrest them. (Acts 9:1, 2). The Shema Yisrael paper makes this point clearly:

[T]here is no reference to a “leading” Jewish woman or a Jewish woman of high social standing, or of prominence in the entire B'rit Hadashah [New Testament] although there are such references in the Tenakh [Old Testament] (Deborah, Hulda).²¹

Thus, saying Paul could have chosen female elders if he wanted to because there were dedicated Christian women and prominent women in that society is analogous to saying we should find women elders in the United Church of God because there are prominent women (judges, senators, and CEOs) here in the U.S. Of course that is not true, and it is only so *because the church prohibits using women as church elders and leaders, just as the synagogue did.*

It was when Paul stopped preaching to the Jews in the synagogues, as he said he would in Acts 13:46, and started house churches that women were able to aspire to positions of authority. As a matter of fact, most of the house churches were led by women.

²¹ Congregation Shema Yisrael, “Women in Leadership,” *On The Role Of Women In Congregational Leadership*, August 28, 2002 by the Congregation's Elders.
<<http://www.shemayisrael.org/Default.aspx?tabid=1167>>

Leaders of Church Houses

Let's look at the thirteen passages about churches in houses.

1. Acts 2:46-47 - And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and **breaking bread from house to house**, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved
2. Acts 5:42 - And every day, in the temple and **from house to house**, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.
3. Acts 8:3 - But Saul began ravaging the church, **entering house after house**, and dragging off men and women he would put them in prison.
4. Acts 12:12 - And when he realized this, he (Peter) went to **the house of Mary**, the mother of John who was also called Mark, **where many were gathered together and were praying**.
5. Acts 16:14-15,40 - And **a certain woman named Lydia**, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us saying: "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, **come into my house and stay.**" And she prevailed upon us. ... And they [Paul and Silas] went out of the prison and **entered the house of Lydia, and when they saw the brethren**, they encouraged them and departed.
6. Acts 20:18,20 - And when they had come to him [Paul], he said to them, "You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in **Asia**, how I was with you the, whole time, ... how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and **from house to house**."
7. Romans 16:3-5a - Greet **Prisca and Aquila** my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles; also greet **the church that is in their house [in Ephesus]**.
8. Romans 16:23 - **Gaius, host to me and to the whole church**, greets you.
9. 1 Corinthians 1:11 - For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by **Chloe's people**, that there are quarrels among you. [Note CGP: Some suggest that Chloe had a church in her house.]
10. 1 Corinthians 16:19 - The churches of Asia greet you, **Aquila and Prisca** greet you heartily in the Lord, with **the church that is in their house [in Rome]**.

11. Colossians 4:15 - Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea and also **Nympha and the church that is in her house.**
12. Philemon vs. 1-2 - Paul ... and Timothy our brother to Philemon our beloved brother and fellow worker, and to **Apphia our sister, and to Archippus** our fellow soldier, and **to the church in your house.**
13. 2 John vs. 1 and 10 - The elder **to the chosen lady and her children** ... If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, **do not receive him into your house**, and do not give him a greeting.

Lets consider these thirteen churches in houses. Nine of the thirteen references have names attached to them.

Women Leaders of House Churches

These are the leaders of house churches listed in the New Testament.

- **Mary in Jerusalem**, mother of John Mark, Acts 12:12
- **Lydia in Philippi**, seller of purple fabrics, Acts 16:14-15, 40
- **Chloe in Corinth**, I Corinthians 1:11
- **Nympha in Laodicea**, Colossians 4:15
- **The Chosen Lady in Asia Minor**, 2 John vs. 1 and 10
- **Prisca and Aquila in Ephesus**, Romans 16:3-5
- **Aquila and Prisca in Rome**, I Corinthians 16:19
- **Apphia and Archippus in Colossae**, Philemon vs. 1-2
- **Gaius in Corinth**, Romans 16:23

Some say **Stephana** was also a minister with household (explained later), and thus was leader of a house church, I Cor.16:15

Five house churches were led by women (six if you count Stephana); three house churches were led by couples; and one house church was led by a man, Gaius.

Since no male minister was addressed when writing to these churches, other than Gaius, then it was the women or couples who were in charge of pastoring the church in their home.

The UCG paper ignores this historical and societal context. It states:

The reason women did not serve as elders or pastors in the New Testament Church cannot be ascribed to the lack of women in the Church... Many women were among those called to conversion as a result of Paul's preaching in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-4) (Emph. added).

Acts 17:1 says, “they came to Thessalonica where there was a synagogue of the Jews.” (Emph. added). The same rabbinical laws applied in this synagogue as they did in all synagogues. Women could not speak, and therefore certainly could not preach, in the synagogue. Vs. 4 goes on to say, “[a]nd some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women joined Paul and Silas.” This verse shows that these were also new converts. Even in the absence of rabbinical prohibition of women elders, these “leading women” certainly would not have been appointed as elders and teachers of the Gospel after just hearing Paul and becoming newly converted to the truth.

The UCG paper continues: “*Like those converts in Thessalonica, some Bereans were prominent women (Act 17:10-12).*”

The same situation existed in Berea as it did in Thessalonica: Acts 17:10 – “Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.” (Emph. added). Again, they were under Jewish synagogue law and could not appoint women to any speaking or leadership post.

Priscilla and Aquila

One of the best known women of the New Testament Church is Priscilla. She is always mentioned with Aquila, her husband.

The UCG paper says of Priscilla and Aquila:

On one occasion Aquila and Priscilla privately taught Apollos expounding the truth of God to him. This demonstrates Priscilla’s as well as Aquila’s depth of understanding, for Apollos was a well-spoken man, already “mighty” (that is, competent) in the Scriptures. Aquila is mentioned before Priscilla, indicating that he led the discussion. However, the mention of her name with his points out that she was an active participant in the dialogue, not just a passive listener. (Emph. added).

This is the scripture to which the above statement refers:

Acts 18:26 – “So he [Apollos] began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained [Gr. “*ektithemi*,” meaning “expounded”] to him the way of God more accurately.”

In the original Greek, however, the order of the couple is Priscilla first, then Aquila.²² The Revised Standard Version has it translated correctly: “He began to speak boldly in the synagogue; but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him and expounded to him the way of God more accurately.” If, as the UCG paper states being mentioned first indicates that person led the discussion, then Priscilla led the discussion. The question is why did the

²² Robert Nguyen Cramer, “The influence on the Textus Receptus and the KJV of the Western Text’s ‘anti-feminist bias’”, 04 Feb 2004, <<http://www.bibletexts.com/terms/tr-wtext.htm>>.

translators reverse the order? The noted biblical scholar, German theologian and church historian Adolf von Harnack explains:

In any case she must have been associated with and more distinguished than her husband. That is verified from Acts 1:6 and Romans 16:3, convincingly. For according to the former passage not only Aquila, but she also instructed Apollos. One is allowed to infer from it that she was the chief instructor; otherwise she would scarcely have been mentioned. And in the Roman epistle Paul calls her and Aquila ‘*fellow labourers in Christ Jesus.*’ This expression, not so very frequently employed by Paul, signifies much. By its use Aquila and Priscilla are legitimized official Evangelists and Teachers. Paul adds, moreover, the following: ‘*Who for my life laid down their own necks, unto to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the Churches of the Gentiles.*’²³ (Emph. added).

As in our “Mr. and Mrs.” nomenclature, Roman and Greek usage has the man’s name first. Even the Bible shows that is the case as with Ananias and Sapphira and Andronicus and Junia. It is interesting that the four out of (the) six times the couple is mentioned, Priscilla’s name comes before Aquila’s. When Luke first introduces them and refers to their trade of tent making, Aquila precedes Priscilla. (Acts 18:2). The second time Aquila’s name is mentioned first is when they are talking about their house church, and it would have been considered his house (I Cor 16:19). The other four times, when the ministry is in discussion, Priscilla precedes Aquila.²⁴

Notably, Tertullian (A.D. 160 to 240), father of Latin theology (and decidedly not in favor of women teaching and preaching, see Appendix B), says this about Priscilla: “By the holy Prisca [Priscilla is the diminutive form of Prisca] the gospel is preached.”²⁵

Some contend that since Priscilla and Aquila’s teaching (performed in Acts 18:6) was not done in a public place, it was not considered to be authoritative teaching, even though they were instructing Apollos, “an eloquent man and mighty in scriptures.” However, a review of the original text contradicts this assumption. The verb translated “explained” (Gr. “*ektithemi*”) in Acts 18:26 is elsewhere translated “expound” and describes Paul’s preaching in Acts 28:23 (“Many came to him at his lodging [a private place] ... to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets ...”). If it was authoritative teaching when Paul did it, then it was authoritative teaching when Priscilla did it. Moreover, Priscilla and Aquila’s teaching was not limited to that one incident in Acts 18. Priscilla was prominent enough to be recognized by “by all the churches of the Gentiles.” (Rom. 16:4).

Chrysostom (A.D. 347 to 407) another church father wrote this: “Prisca was a teacher of Apollos, pastor of the church in Corinth after Paul left.”²⁶ As these facts show, Priscilla was much more than just an active participant in the teaching of Apollo.

²³ Qtd. in Bushnell 87.

²⁴ Linda L. Belleville, *Women Leaders and the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books 2000) 68.

²⁵ Tertullian, 20 Feb 2006, qtd. in www.calvarychurch.us/publications/role_of_women.pdf.

²⁶ Chrysostom, trans. *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, 11.554, 13.515, qtd. in John Temple Bristow, *What Paul Really Said About Women* (New York, NY: Harper Collins 1988), 56.

Philip's Daughters

In Acts 21:8-10 we find a reference to Philip's daughters who prophesied in the Caesarean Church. With respect to those verses, the UCG paper asks:

Have we encountered something here that contradicts the thrust of the entire history of the Church up to this point? Do these verses prove women served as elders or pastors? Nothing here indicates that these women engaged in preaching, interpreting or teaching the Scriptures in the way that we understand the elders do today.

This is quite a myopic view of the history of the Church up to this point. One would have to exclude Deborah, who as ruler over Israel prophesied, and Huldah, who authenticated the Book of the Law and explained to King Josiah exactly what the scripture meant. Of course, a proper interpretation of scripture must take into account the positions and functions of these women. Thus, the suggestion that Philip's daughters prophesied in exactly the same manner as did the male elders does not contradict prior church history. Luke's reference to Philip's daughters is brief; further commentary was unnecessary because female prophets were well established in both the Old and New Testaments. In short, the act of prophesying, by both men and women, involved teaching in public to members of the church. And that is precisely how we understand an elder's function in the church today.

The Catholic 4th century church historian, Eusebius (AD 263 to 338), recorded that Polycrates of Ephesus, in approximately 195 A.D., wrote the following to the Roman Bishop Victor who wanted all Christians to change Passover from the 14th of Nisan to Sunday. This letter included mention of Philip's daughters:

As for us, then we scrupulously observe the exact day, [of the Passover] neither adding nor taking away. For in Asia, also, great luminaries have gone to their rest, who shall rise again in the day of the coming of the Lord, when He comes with glory from heaven and shall raise again all the saints. I speak of Philip, one of the twelve apostles, who is laid to rest at Hierapolis; and his two daughters who arrived at old age unmarried; His other daughter also, who passed her life under the influence of the Holy Spirit, rests at Ephesus. John, moreover, who reclined on the Lord's bosom, who became ... a witness and a teacher – he rests at Ephesus. ... These all kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month, in accordance with the Gospel, without ever deviating from it, but keeping to the rule of faith.²⁷ (Emph. added).

²⁷ Polycrates, "From His Epistle to Victor and the Roman Church Concerning the Day of Keeping the Passover." *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. VIII 04 Feb 2006
<<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/polycrates.html>>.

This quote not only refers to Philip's daughters and their prophesying, but it brings out how well known they were in the early church. One sentence in the Bible discussing them does not mean that they were minor personages. They were, on the contrary, "great luminaries" in Asia, on the par with Philip, their father, and John the apostle. It is interesting to note that the letter talks about the Passover being kept on the 14th and how all the above mentioned people never deviated from that.

Eusebius adds one more fact about Philip's daughters. He ranks them "among the first stage in the apostolic succession."²⁸

In closing, it should be noted there is no statement in Acts that excludes or prohibits women from any ministerial role. That only Priscilla and Philip's four prophet daughters are specifically mentioned is due to the newness of the Church and the longtime societal restrictions on women.

²⁸ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.37.I, tr. by Christian Frederick Cruse (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker House 1955), 116.

CHAPTER 5 — WHAT PAUL WROTE ABOUT WOMEN

The doctrine of women's subordination in the church and home is based mainly on Paul's writings. In particular, two scriptures, I Corinthians 14:35 and I Timothy 2:12, are used to forbid women's equal participation in church with men. To properly interpret these scriptures, it is important to understand their historical and grammatical context. In other words, we need to know what was going on in the area at the time Paul wrote them. We must find out how the people receiving these letters at the time understood them and educate ourselves regarding the situations Paul was addressing. Only then we can glean the spiritual principles applicable to us today.²⁹

Galatians 3:28

This scripture says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Many Bible scholars believe this verse declares that all believers are equal in Christ; that is, in His body, the Church, all are equal regardless of race, social status, or gender. The UCG does not agree.

Remarking on this verse, the UCG paper states:

The thought that introduces this passage appears in verses 26-27: "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." Plainly, he is speaking of the fact that all people, regardless of ethnic background, social standing or gender enjoy the same spiritual potential, once converted—to become the children of God. (Emph. added).

The UCG paper assumes that the equality commanded among the membership in Gal. 3:28 applied only to each member's spiritual potential. But if spiritual potentiality is the point of this verse, is Paul really saying here that being "neither Jew nor Gentile" meant that Jews were to enjoy social and physical advantages over Gentiles? That cannot be, for in Gal 2:11-14, Paul reprimanded Peter because he refused to eat with the Gentiles. Vs. 12 – "[F]or before certain men came from James, he [Peter] would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision." (Emph. added). This was a type of social as well as religious inequity which was being addressed the Gal. 3:28. The Gentiles were equal to the Jews. Therefore, the Jews should eat with the Gentiles as they eat with other Jews.

Paul's calling to preach to the Gentiles certainly did have social and political implications. Titus, a Gentile, became an equal and authoritative minister with Paul. Gentiles were not only perceived as equal to Jews before God, they were also treated as equals to Jews by the church members and had the same opportunities to lead and serve. Likewise it was with women. Paul's example of using women in top positions reveals that he meant Galatians 3:28 to reflect how God views his sons and daughters now in this life. This is also how the early Church Fathers

²⁹ As distinguished between those statements in scripture that do not apply to us today, like greeting each with a holy kiss.

understood the verse. For example, Chrysostom, hardly a champion of women's equality (see Appendix B) makes the following comment about Priscilla and Phoebe: "These were noble women, hindered in no way by their sex...this is as might be expected, 'For in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female.'"³⁰ (Emph. added).

The UCG paper totally spiritualizes away the true meaning of this verse from being equal in Church here and now to being equal in spiritual potential only. Supposedly that means in coming before God or in the resurrection. But, that was always true even in the Old Testament. Both men and women always had equal access to God. The purpose for this interpretation, of course, is to keep women from being equal with men in the church, which is clearly what the text says. However, if this applies to spiritual potential only, then Gentile and slave men cannot have church leadership positions either. And then only men of Jewish descent should be leaders in our church today.

In both context and substance, those statements (including Galatians 3:28) make it crystal clear that they were intended to provide a basic definition of the church as the human community where categoric distinctions are superseded and where all members receive an equal standing before God and before each other. [...] It describes the conditions that should prevail *within* the body.³¹ (Emph. added).

There is no verse in the New Testament (or the Old for that matter), that limits Gentiles from fully using their leadership talents, or slaves from using theirs. So why should women be limited from fully using theirs?

Racial distinctions are irrelevant in the body of Christ. We still remain Jew or Gentile, black or white, but that doesn't limit our equal participation in the church. Class distinctions are irrelevant in the body of Christ. In that culture slaves still remained slaves and owners still remained owners, but those lines were erased in the church. White collar, blue collar, no collars are to be on equal footing ministering together for the kingdom of God. Gender distinctions are irrelevant in the church. Men are still men and women are still women. But the inequality that exists between them outside the church is not to be brought into the church.³² (Emph. added).

Of course, today it is just the opposite. There is equality on the outside, and the inequality exists in the church.

Another way to understand Gal. 3:28, is that each pairing was a hierarchical one. The Jew was above the Greek (in Jewish eyes), the free as master was above the slave, and the male was above the female in that society. These three relationships were changed by being equalized in Christ. Why? Because in vs. 27 it says: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ,

³⁰ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.37.1, tr.by Christian Frederick Cruse (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1955), 116.

³¹ Gilbert Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1985), footnote 8, 277.

³² "Women in the New Testament," Women: *A Biblical Perspective*, Teachings at Valley View Community Church, 11 Nov 1967. < <http://valleyviewseek.org/teach/971116.htm>>.

have put on Christ. They all have put on the “Christ uniform, so they all look like Him. Therefore, if a Gentile has put on Christ, then he is equal to the Jew who has put on Christ; if a slave has put on Christ, then he is equal to the master who has put on Christ; and if a woman has put on Christ, then she is equal to the man who has put on Christ. “If a person wears “Christ,” then it is Christ who is seen, not one’s Jewishness nor Gentileness.”³³ Nor one’s femaleness.

The UCG paper continues:

Using this verse to obliterate all gender distinctions and as authority for changing the roles of men and women is foreign to the context. Paul did not call for a change in roles of parents and children or the roles of masters and slaves — although he mentions all in the verse. Neither did he call for a change in the roles of men and women. (Emph. added).

This is a careless reading of Galatians 3:26-28, because nowhere in these verses does Paul refer to parents or children. And this brings up an interesting point. Neither parents nor children are mentioned even though both children and slaves are enjoined to obey. The three pairings in Gal. 3:28 are in a separate category from parents and children. Children obeying parents is a moral principle. It is decreed in the Ten Commandments and disobedience to parents was punishable by death in the Old Testament. However, there is no commandment for men to be over women anywhere in the Bible.

The parent-children pairing was not included in Gal 3:28 because the relationship does not change in Christ. Children still have to obey parents in Christ. This proves that the hierarchy of Jews-Gentiles and free/slave was only a cultural construct in that authoritarian society of the time. **Therefore, the male-female hierarchy is also only a cultural construct of an authoritarian society and must be changed in Christ.**

And contrary to the remainder of the UCG paper’s conclusion, Paul most certainly does eradicate the “roles” of masters and slaves in church in Eph. 6:5-9:

Vs. 5 – “Servants [Gr. “*doulos*” or “slaves”] be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh... (Vs. 7) with good will doing service as unto the Lord, and not to men.”

Vs. 9 – “And you masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.” (Emph. added).

Paul was clearly saying that slaves and masters are equal before God as members of the church and thus slaves are to be treated equal to masters. So it is not a matter of “changing roles” or “eradicating gender differences,” but of permitting converted women, slaves, and Gentiles, to occupy the same positions, in the same manner, as the Jewish Christian men.

And that is just what happened in the early church. Pliny, the Roman historian, attests that not only slaves were called to minister, but female slaves: “...it was all the more necessary to

³³ Aida Besancon Spencer, “*Beyond the Curse, Women Called to Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson 1985), 65.

extract the truth by torture from the slave women, whom they call ministers (Lat. *ministrae*).”³⁴ The fact that both women and slaves served as ministers in the early church demonstrates that the equality among members referred to in Galatians 3:28 was not reserved for the Kingdom, but was put into practice in the church at that time. In other words, Galatians 3:28 is not properly understood to mean equal merely in “spiritual potential.”

The UCG paper’s reference to “changing” men and women’s roles suggests that if women are permitted leadership roles they change their femininity into masculinity somehow. Did Deborah’s leadership or Huldah’s authoritative prophesying to King Josiah, or the Queen of Sheba’s reigning, whom Christ used as an example to the Pharisees—did they “obliterate all gender distinctions and changed the roles of men and women? Did these women leaders in some way become men? Another question that must be asked is does male leadership really require the subordination of women? In light of this information, one must consider if there were meant to be such a thing as a “gender role” for church leadership in the first place.

I Corinthians 11

The Epistle to the Corinthians was written to the church in a city that had the largest Jewish population in the Roman Empire outside of Palestine. The Jews and God-fearers, or proselytes, formed the initial nucleus of the Corinthian congregation.³⁵ However, many of the Jews who converted to Christianity had a hard time letting go of the Oral Law, or the Talmud. All through Paul’s writings he complains about Judaizers wanting the Gentiles to be circumcised, to follow the traditions of the elders, and the like. This was especially true in Corinth. I Corinthians 11 was written to address Jewish customs and how they fit in — or not — with Christian practices.

Does “Head” Mean “Authority Over?”

With respect to I Corinthians 11, the UCG paper says:

Paul uses the underlying theme of headship and submission both in the roles of a husband and wife in marriage and in the service of men and women in the Church. ... (He includes “prophesying” at first, verse 5, and offers no definition of his intent of the word; later he mentions only prayer, verse 13.) The Church’s view is that women do not give public prayers in congregational services, nor do they lead in congregational song services. There are situations where women may lead in prayer in a public setting, such as in women’s activities.

The conclusion that “*in the church’s view women do not give public prayers in congregational services...*” is in absolute contradiction to Paul’s very plain words in I Cor. 11:5: “...every woman who prays and prophesies...” Paul doesn’t say that women can only pray and prophesy “in women’s activities.”

³⁴ *Letters of Pliny*, Bk. X. 96, qtd. in Spencer 115.

³⁵ Craig S. Keener, “Learning in the Assemblies: 1 Corinthians 14:34-35,” *Discovering Biblical Equality*, 169. <http://krusekronicle.typepad.com/kruse_kronicle/2006/10/dbe_learning_in.html>

The resulting inferences reading female subordination into this text are based on the meaning of the word “head” in the following verses (which, by the way, does not negate women praying or prophesying along with the men in congregational meetings):

I Cor. 11:3-5 – “But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of every woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying having his head covered dishonors his head. But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head....”

Nothing in these verses, however, supports the UCG paper’s position of headship and submission. A look at the original Greek meaning, the grammatical structure, and the underlying historical context of this passage suggests an entirely different sense.

The word translated as “head” is the Greek word *kephale*. As in English, the word can mean the physical body’s head, as well as “source.” It does not carry the additional English meaning of, “in charge,” or “over.” Rather, the word in Greek conveys the idea of derivation, origin, starting point and nurture. These concepts would be better expressed as “life source.” What Paul is saying in this verse is:

- Christ is the life source of man because He created Him;
- the man is the life source of woman because she was taken out of his side; and
- God is the life source of the human Jesus.

An interesting aside is that Paul does not say “the Father is the source of Christ.” That might imply that the Father had authority over the Son. But Paul avoids the word “Father” and uses the word “God” instead.

In arranging the verse, Paul did not do is use a straight, four-fold chain of command order, for example:

1. God
2. Christ
3. Man
4. Woman

This would put the man between woman and Christ, thereby suggesting that her access to Him is indirect, requiring her going through her husband. This is exactly the meaning many hierarchical churches deduce from this verse.

However, please notice that Paul used pairs and not a straight down hierarchical chain of command. And the order in which Paul placed the pairs is also very important. It is:

1. Head of every man is Christ
2. Head of woman is man
3. Head of Christ is God

This order conveys a totally different picture than the one commonly read into this verse. These pairings are chronological in sequence, starting with the creation of man. Here “head” can only mean life source. This is further confirmed in the remainder of the passage: I Cor. 11:8 – “For man is not from woman but woman from man.” And verse 12 – “For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God.” We are talking about

man being woman's source – she came from him. And now woman is man's source because every man, except Adam, is born of woman. And God is the source of all things.

In other words, in Paul's order the persons are paired showing one being the originator of the other. They are paired chronologically by their source of derivation. But within the pairing they are not being subordinated one to another.³⁶ Paul does not say "head over" but head of."

Hence verse 3, without the contrived hierarchical overlay, simply states that Christ is the source of man because He created him; the man is the source of woman because she was created from him; and God is the source of the man Jesus Christ. Contrary to popular theological opinion, this not a new or novel construction of this scripture. *Kephale* was recognized by the Church Fathers as meaning "source." Cyril of Alexandria (d. circa. 444) interprets this section explicitly using the Greek figure of speech of "source:"

Thus we can say that the 'head of every man is Christ,' for He was made by (*dia*) him...as God; 'but the head of the woman is the man' because she was taken out of his flesh.... Likewise 'the head of Christ is God' because he is of Him (*ex autou*) by nature.³⁷

Other ancient and medieval theologians who understood *kephale* as meaning source are: Athanasius, Chrysostom, Basil, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Eusebius, and Photius.³⁸

Biblical scholars also recognize that this explanation goes back to antiquity:

[T]he idea that the head is the source of supply and support for all the body's systems [is] a natural metaphor in the Greek world... Despite repeated assertions to the contrary, nothing that is said following this verse hints at an authority-subordination relationship.³⁹

Then, in verses 4 and 5, Paul includes the bodily meaning of *kephale* in addition to the source metaphor:

Vs. 4 – "Every man praying or prophesying *having his head covered* dishonors his head."

The italicized phrase in Greek translates to "having something down over his head." In Paul's time, Jewish men wore a prayer shawl or "tallith" while praying, as a sign of reverence before

³⁶ Kevin Giles, "The Subordination of Christ and the Subordination of Women," *Discovering Biblical Equality*, 351. <http://krusekronicle.typepad.com/kruse_kronicle/2006/10/dbe_chapter_19_.html>

³⁷ *Ad Arcadium et Marinam* 5.6., qtd. in Gordon D. Fee, "Praying and Prophesying in the Assemblies: 1 Corinthians 11:2-16", *Discovering Biblical Equality*, 151. <http://krusekronicle.typepad.com/kruse_kronicle/2006/10/dbe_chapter_8_p.html>

³⁸ Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, *Good News for Women: A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books 1997), 159.

³⁹ Gordon D. Fee, "Praying and Prophesying in the Assemblies: 1 Corinthians 11:2-16", *Discovering Biblical Equality*, 151. <http://krusekronicle.typepad.com/kruse_kronicle/2006/10/dbe_chapter_8_p.html>

God and of condemnation for sin.⁴⁰ Paul's point was to counteract that practice, saying that men should come before God in prayer without cover and without shame. Thus, he says if a man covers himself and prays in shame, he dishonors his head, Christ.

Vs. 5 – “But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head”

Under Jewish law, a woman who went out in public with her head uncovered would be charged with adultery, and according to the Talmud, the husband was obliged to divorce her. This would leave the wife without financial support. Such a charge would, of course, be dishonorable to her husband, not to mention devastating to the wife.

Verse 10 now becomes important because it is the only verse to use the actual word translated as “authority” (Gr. *exousia*) in this passage:

Vs. 10 – “For this cause ought the woman to have *a symbol of* authority on [*exousia epi*] her head, because of the angels.” This is how the NKJV states it. Note the italicized “*a symbol of*” is added by the translators and is not in the original Greek.

The phrase “authority on” is translated from the Greek word *exousia*, which means “authority” and the Greek preposition for “on,” *epe*, which is often translated “over” as in Luke 9:1 where it says: “Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power [dunamis] and authority over (exousia epe) all demons” *Vine's* defines *exousia* also as the “freedom of action, the right to act.” *Exousia* is only used once in I Corinthians 11:1-16, a passage purportedly concerned entirely with authority, and yet it only describes the authority of a woman to act of her own free will. The proper translation of verse 10, then, is “[f]or this cause ought the woman to have authority over her head because of the angels.”⁴¹ (Emph. added). So the only authority spoken of in I Corinthians 11 is the authority of a woman over herself.

Apparently, the King James translators did not believe it was possible for a woman to have authority over her own head either since they added the longest marginal note in the Bible, saying the “power [exousia] is a sign she is under her husband.” But the original Greek text says no such thing.

The phrase “because of the angels” gives rise to many strange explanations, including ones that women need to veil so the angels won't be tempted; or angels would be shocked at the conduct of women. However, the word “angels” is the Greek word “*aggelos*.” *Strong's* translates it as “a messenger, especially an “angel”, by implication a pastor.” *Aggelos* has been interpreted “a messenger” when speaking of John the Baptist as messenger, in Mark 1:2: “Behold, I send My messenger [*aggelos*] before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.” And Luke 7:24 says: “And when the messengers [*aggelos*] of John were departed...” This speaks of John the Baptist's messengers.

⁴⁰ Bushnell 110.

⁴¹ *Bushnell*. 109-10.

The best meaning for “because of the angels” is the following: because messengers were sent from different churches to different churches, Paul wanted to make sure all the churches were on the same page with regard to women covering their heads, i.e. women were to have authority over their own heads and were not to be forced to cover them if they didn’t want to. However, if they wanted to cover their heads because of Jewish religious restrictions or their husband’s insistence, then they could do so in order to avoid shame.

New Testament Women Praying and Prophesying

Since I Corinthians 11, 14 and I Timothy 2 are used to prohibit a female ministry, a review of these New Testament scriptures regarding women’s roles is instructive.

First, it is undeniable both men and women were prophesying in the early church. (I Cor 11:4, 5). Adam Clarke in his *Commentary* agrees with this premise:

Whatever may be the meaning of praying and prophesying, in respect to the man, they have precisely the same meaning in respect to the woman. . . . And this kind of prophesying or teaching was predicted by Joel 2:28 and referred to by Peter (Acts 2:17). And had there not been such gift bestowed on women, the prophecy could not have had its fulfillment.⁴²

As does Gordon Fee, a renowned New Testament scholar and foremost expert in textual criticism of the New Testament:

“[P]rophecy” equals speech that is community directed [I]t seems altogether likely that Paul intends ”praying and prophesying“ to be not exclusive of other forms of ministry but representative of ministry in general. And since “prophets” precedes “teachers” in the ranking I Cor. 12:28, and prophesying is grouped with teaching, revelation and knowledge in I Cor. 14:6, one may legitimately assume that women and men together shared in all these expressions of Spirit gifting, including teaching in the gathered assembly.⁴³ (Emph. added).

Turning now to the suppositions contained in the UCG paper, it first notes that Paul “*includes “prophesying” at first, verse 5, and offers no definition of his intent of the word; later he mentions only prayer, verse 13.*” There would be no reason for Paul to give a definition of his intent of the word when it already had been given on Pentecost as a prophecy — that as a result of God’s Spirit pouring out on them, women would (shall) prophesy, just as men. The fact that prayer alone is mentioned in verse 13 does not negate the fact that women were prophesying and praying in assemblies. These were, in fact, some of the traditions Paul delivered to the Corinthian church and praised them for keeping. (I Cor 11:2).

⁴² Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke Commentary*, I. Corinthians 11:4, 5.

⁴³ Gordon D. Fee, “Praying and Prophesying in the Assemblies: 1 Corinthians 14:34-35,” *Discovering Biblical Equality*, 149. <http://krusekronicle.typepad.com/kruse_kronicle/2006/10/dbe_chapter_8_p.html>

He writes tactfully, allowing no room for the men to feel superior to the women, while he explains that the women's longer hair demonstrates their yielding themselves to the man who has the God-given responsibility for authoritative teaching in the church or assembly. (Emph added).

Nothing supportive of that statement can be found in I Corinthians 11, or for that matter anywhere in the Bible. This is obviously an extrapolation based on the mistranslation of “authority over her head” to a “covering in sign that she is under the power of her husband.” (KJV I Cor 11:10 so-called explanatory note). On the contrary, as explained above, verse 10 is the only place in which authority is mentioned, that being the authority over the woman's own head.

So essentially, as a result of prejudice and preconception, we have read this passage as speaking of the concept of authority or headship, when instead “head” is to be correctly translated as “life source.” And where the text actually speaks of authority or *exousia* in the context of a woman having it over her own head, the translators come up with a tortured construction – that *exousia* actually means a sign of submission, or a token of submission to a woman's husband.

I Timothy 2:12

It is an important principle for understanding the Bible to explain an unclear scripture by a clear scripture or scriptures. I Timothy 2:12, many Bible scholars admit, is a difficult scripture. Yet in spite of the difficulty of the scripture, most churches view ALL biblical verses regarding women and their “roles” through the lens of I Tim. 12.

But a scripture that is very clear is Acts 2:17 – “Your sons and daughters shall prophesy,” and vs. 18 – “I will pour out my spirit in those days and they shall prophesy.” This should be the theological starting place for women's roles in the New Testament, and in these verses there is no differentiation between men and women. So I Timothy 2 (as well as I Corinthians 14) must be interpreted according to this clear scripture which ushered in the birth of the Church on Pentecost. You might say it is a key constitutional document of the New Testament Church. All New Testament scriptures must be viewed in its light. Therefore, a command that silences women in the churches and forbids them to teach men is a contradiction of biblical teachings as given by Acts 2. In addition, the example Paul himself set in the churches — women praying and prophesying in Corinth, Priscilla teaching Apollos, Phoebe as a minister (explained later), and Junia as an apostle (also explained later), would conflict greatly with his own words.

The verses in question are I Timothy 2:11, 12, and 15:

“Let a woman learn in silence [Gr. *hesuchia*] with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach [Gr. *didasko*] or have authority [Gr. *authentain*] over a man, but to be in silence [Gr. *hesuchia*].” Vs. 15 – “Nevertheless, she will be saved [Gr. *sozo*] in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness with self-control [or discreetness].”

So, speaking (i.e. not being silent), teaching, and being in authority are the apparent prohibitions in these verses. But let's first look at these principles in light of the actual Greek text and take into account what other parts of the Bible say about these same principles. Then let's turn to an examination of the influences in Ephesus that Paul was addressing. With a broader understanding of these issues, we see that Paul indeed was not contradicting himself, but

combating Gnostic influences and re-emphasizing the intended role of women in the New Testament church.

“Silent”

The word translated “silent” here is the Greek word *hesuchia*. I Timothy 2:11 and 12 are the only places *hesuchia* is translated “silent.” One has to wonder why that is the case, since earlier in the same chapter in verse 2, Paul admonishes prayers for kings and all who are in authority “that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life.” (Emph. added). *Hesuchia* here is translated “peaceable”, but with respect to women it is translated “silent.” *Strong’s* definition for *hesuchia* is “properly keeping one’s seat (sedentary), *i.e.*, by implication still (undisturbed, undisturbing), peaceable, quiet.” *Hesuchia*, then, is simply the proper disposition for learning. “Silent” is not a correct synonym and is not even listed in *Strong’s* definition of the word.

“Teaching”

What kind of teaching does Paul say is prohibited? The UCG paper says that Paul is prohibiting women teaching men. Yet this construction of I Timothy 2:11 and 12 adds language not found in the text and ignores glaring examples to the contrary. Nowhere in verses 11 and 12 does it state women are prohibited from preaching (prophesying) in church. The UCG construction also ignores the express examples in I Cor 11 where women taught both men and women in public assembly and of Priscilla teaching Apollos, “an eloquent man and mighty in the scriptures.”

An additional, and arguably fatal, flaw in the UCG construction is that there is not one hint of prohibition against women teaching men in the Old Testament. To the contrary, we have the examples of Deborah and Huldah. It seems strange, then, that God would let His people be in ignorance of this supposed universal, timeless doctrine prohibiting ALL women from teaching men for over 2000 years since no mention is made of it in the Old Testament. If, as the UCG claims, this restriction on women is rooted in the “order of creation,” certainly Deborah, Huldah and others would have known about it, and we would not have these examples of God sanctioned female spiritual and physical leadership in the Old Testament.

The UCG paper fails to acknowledge this Old Testament/New Testament disconnect. It is not logical to believe that God would wait until approximately 65 A.D. to have Paul give this doctrine – which is imposed upon all churches for all time – in a private letter to Timothy, at the end of his life in complete contradiction to not only his statements in all his other epistles, but also examples in both the Old and New Testaments.

“Authority”

Concerning the apparent prohibition against a woman having authority over man, we need to recall what Jesus Christ said with respect to the concept of authority within the church. He clearly stated that we are not to exercise authority over anyone, as that was the way of the Gentiles. It was a paganized form of ruling that was not to be so among the members. It was a strong commandment — a “thou shalt not.” He believed this principle was so important, He stated it five different times, and the final time was during the last supper with His disciples just before He died. It was the last commandment before his death:

Luke 22:24-27 – “There was also rivalry among them as to which of them should be considered the greatest. And He said to them: ”The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them and those who exercise authority over them are called ‘benefactors.’ But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger and he who governs as he who serves. For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as one who serves.” (Emph. added).

The apostles obviously did not internalize this principle because they were continually jockeying for the top positions. But in these verses Christ made no exceptions: He did not say they were not to exercise authority except for the husband who is in authority over his wife; or except for beneficent authority; or except in the Church where men have the authority to preach and teach.

As far as prohibiting authority over men by women, again –what about Deborah? What about Huldah? They exercised the highest type of authority over men, and it was God-given.

So how do we resolve these apparent contradictions? To understand what these verses really mean one must know what was happening in Ephesus at that time. We simply cannot look at these verses through our modern, Western eyes, excise from the passage a phrase of questionable meaning, and forbid half of the church to serve.

What Was Going on in Ephesus

Ephesus was the largest city in the Roman province of Asia with a population between 400,000 to 500,000 inhabitants in 100 A.D.⁴⁴ Its goddess was Artemis, “whom all Asia and the world worship.” (Acts 19:27). She had a temple that was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Acts reveals the devotion of the Ephesian citizens for her when they caused a riot and shouted for two hours, “Great is Diana [Gr. *Artemis*] of the Ephesians.” She protected women, children and animals, and was the patron goddess of childbirth, nursing, and healing.⁴⁵ This fact is important in understanding the passage in Timothy.

Also in Ephesus at the time, Paul was fighting Gnosticism, a belief system that had infiltrated the Church. Among other things, the Gnostics believed that the serpent was the revealer of truth in the Garden of Eden. Eve was the “illuminator” because she first received the knowledge from the serpent and thus became Adam’s teacher of this new revelation. They also taught that Eve, as the mother of all, was the progenitor of the human race including Adam who later came from her and was, in fact, not her husband, but her son. Here is a quote from the Nag Hammadi documents. They are “a collection of thirteen ancient codices containing over fifty texts ... discovered in upper Egypt in 1945. This immensely important discovery includes a large number of primary Gnostic scriptures – texts once thought to have been entirely destroyed during the

⁴⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ephesus> as retrieved on Dec 20, 2007 09:54:18 GMT.

⁴⁵ James G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 04 Jan 2006.
<<http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/f/frazer/james/golden/>>

early Christian struggle to define “orthodoxy” – scriptures such as the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Philip, and the Gospel of Truth.”:

“When Eve saw her co-likeness cast down, she pitied him, and she said ‘Adam, live! Rise up upon the earth! Immediately her word became a deed. For when Adam rose up, immediately he opened his eyes. When he saw her, he said, ‘You will be called “the mother of the living” because **you are the one who gave me life.**”⁴⁶

Ultimately, Eve and Artemis become conflated as the mother goddess in the Gnostic belief system Nag Hammadi goes into much more detail about Gnostic beliefs at the time.⁴⁷

Gnosticism can be traced to early Jewish mysticism, thus explaining the mixture of Jewish Scriptures with mythology producing Jewish fables (Titus 1:14). This new religion was called *gnosis*, Greek meaning knowledge—or as Paul says “falsely called knowledge.” (I Tim. 6:20). The Gnostics prided themselves on having secret knowledge that could only be transmitted through mediators, many of whom were women. This is why Paul insists Christ is the only mediator. “There is one God and one Mediator between God and men [Gr. *anthropois*, mankind], the man Jesus Christ.” (I Tim 2:5)

And as alluded to in the above scripture, they also believed there were greater gods and lesser gods. And Yahweh was an evil minor god who created the physical world, which was also evil.

They made Eve a salvation figure, Cain a hero, Moses a liar, and the serpent to be worshipped, but not Yahweh. They revered serpents and included them in many of their mystic rites. Therefore, Paul had to admonish and instruct Timothy about these false teachings that were overtaking the Church in Ephesus, as well as Crete:

“Remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies.” I Tim 1:3, 4. (Emph. added).

That was the problem. The elders in Ephesus, including perhaps a woman, were teaching these false Gnostic doctrines. The genealogies of the various aeons, as the gods were called, were lengthy and exceedingly complicated, and one needed special knowledge (*gnosis*) with the help of mediators to be able to decipher them. This was necessary if one wanted to reach the top levels of spirituality.

⁴⁶ *On the Origin of the World*, NHC 2.5.116, <<http://www.gnosis.org/naghamm/origin.html>>

⁴⁷ *On the Origin of the World*, The Nag Hammadi, <<http://www.gnosis.org/naghamm/origin.html>>Richard Clark Kroeger and Catherine Clark Kroeger, *Rethinking I Timothy 2:12-15 In Light of Ancient Evidence, I Suffer Not a Woman* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books 1992), 121, 148.

“Some will depart from the faith giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons ... forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving ...” I Tim. 4:1, 2. (Emph. added)

Paul calls these Gnostic doctrines “doctrines of demons.” This is interesting in light of the fact that snakes were worshipped as holy to Satan and his demons. They also felt marriage was wrong because it belonged to the physical world, as did childbirth.

“Reject profane and old wives’ fables ...” I Tim. 4:7.

This indicates that older women were involved in spreading these Gnostic heresies to the Ephesians.

“[H]aving faith and a good conscience which some have rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.” I Tim. 1:20.

Preaching that Yahweh was an evil god is certainly blasphemy.

“And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort who have strayed concerning the truth saying the resurrection is already past....” II Tim 2:16, 17.

These teachings were spreading like a cancer, or gangrene infecting the whole church. Saying the resurrection is already past was one of their doctrines.⁴⁸

It is clear, then, that Paul had his hands full counteracting the influence of the Gnostic beliefs, including among them that Eve came into being without male assistance, was considered the mother of all, and Eve-as-Artemis was revered as the protector of women in childbirth.

Does *Authentein* Mean to Usurp Authority?

Regarding I Timothy 2:12’s use of the word “*authentein*” or “*authenteo*,” the UCG paper states:

The word translated “have authority” (authenteo) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The Greek word for “exercise authority” is exousiazō (Luke 22:25). A stronger word (kataexousiazō) occurs in Matthew 20:25 and Mark 10:42 to refer to the authoritarian rule of gentile governments in contrast to the godly leadership concept Jesus enjoined upon His disciples. Authenteo has a much stronger meaning than simply having or exercising authority or even exercising authoritarian rule. Vine’s explains: “In the earlier usage of the word it signified one who with his own hand killed either others or himself. Later it came to denote one who acts on his own ‘authority.’” The implication seems to be a violent, presumptuous seizing or usurping of authority, or to domineer. (Emph. added).

⁴⁸ J. Lee Grady, *10 Lies the Church Tells Women*, (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House 2000), 129.
<<http://godstowomen.org/studies/articles/Grady.htm>>

According to the above quote, the following three words are translated as “authority” in order of severity from least to greatest:

1. *exousiazo*, which means authority
2. *kataexousiazo*, which means authoritarian rule of the gentiles; and
3. *authenteo*, which (according to one definition of *Vine’s*) means a violent, presumptuous seizing or usurping of authority.

In actuality, the three words should be translated like this:

1. *exousia* – authority
2. *kataexousiazo* – the strongest word for bearing authority
3. *authenteo* – does not have anything to do with authority as used in I Tim. 2:12

In essence, the UCG paper is saying that Paul was condemning the women in the Ephesian Church for “presumptuously seizing authority” from the church leadership and exercising authority in a more forceful way than the Gentile rulers did. This is an absurd construction, especially in that highly patriarchal society in which a woman’s status was on the level of a child or slave. It would mean these women usurped authority greater than that of Herod, who ordered all male babies killed when Christ was born and who murdered many of his own family. It would mean these women were more domineering than Nero, who burned Christians alive and had them killed by wild animals. This interpretation of *authenteo* is so wrong it begs credulity.

Authority was the issue when Christ explained about Gentile government structures. In using the word *kataexousiazo*, He did use the strongest word for domineering. If *authenteo* had meant exercising stronger authoritarian rule than *kataexousiazo* means, He would have used *authentheo* when describing despotic governments like Herod’s and Nero’s. Since He didn’t, ***authenteo*, therefore, cannot mean “usurp authority” or “have authority over” or “domineer” or be the strongest form of authority.**

When Paul was talking about *authentein*, the issue was not authority. For if Paul had wanted to say “I do not allow women to have authority over a man,” he would have used the word *exousiazo*.

What, then, does the word *authenteo* or *authentein* mean? The word has changed meanings over the centuries. This evolution of language commonly occurs in English as well. For example, our word “gay” used to mean happy, but now it refers to homosexuality. Similarly, the word “conversation” in the King James Version of the Bible used to mean “conduct;” it now it means “discussion.” *Vine’s* says the earlier usage of *authentein* was “of one who killed” in the course of seizing authority. Obviously, this definition does not fit the context. The later usage, however, meant “one who acts on his own authority” as even the UCG paper above mentions (see bolded section in the UCG quote). *Strong’s* gives the first definition of *authenteo* as “to act of oneself.” The second meaning is “figuratively to dominate, usurp authority over.” (Emph. added). Note the second meaning is only figurative.

Catherine Clark Kroeger, a distinguished Biblical classicist, has this to say about the meaning of the word *authentēin*:

In the late Renaissance, an era when scholars studied classical texts more thoroughly than is customary today and had materials to which we no longer have access, another definition was cited by lexicographers: *praebeo me auctorem* (“to declare oneself the author or source of anything”). *Authenteo*, when used with the genitive, as it is in I Timothy 2:12, could imply not only to claim sovereignty but also to claim authorship. “To represent oneself as the author, originator, or source of something” was given in various older dictionaries that I have been able to consult, such as the widely used work of Cornelis Schrevel and the still fundamental *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* by Stephanus. The earliest of these entries date back to the Renaissance, the latest to the last century. This value disappeared from classical dictionaries about the same time when the translation of I Timothy was being challenged....⁴⁹ (Emph. added).

With respect to the King James Version’s translation of *authentēin* as “usurp authority,” *Vincent Word Studies of the New Testament* states that, “[t]he King James Version [translation of I Timothy 2:12 of] ‘usurp authority’ is a mistake.”⁵⁰

Consequently, I Timothy 2’s use of *authentēin* obviously does not refer to murderous female power mongers or violent usurpers — the women of the Church of Ephesus were not going around killing people. So, in context, the most accurate meaning of *authentēin* is “being an author or originator” of something.

The table below puts all this information together, taking I Timothy 2:11-15 and properly translating each verse from the Greek and adding in explanatory references to the Gnostic influences Paul was battling. Read in this fashion, it becomes clear not only why Paul refers to Adam being born first, but also what he means by verse 15 that women are saved in childbirth:

⁴⁹ Catherine Clark Kroeger, “I Timothy 2:12 — A Classicist’s View,” *Women, Authority & The Bible*, ed. Alvera Mickelsen (Madison, WI: InterVarsity Press 1986), 231.

⁵⁰ *Vincent’s Word Studies of the New Testament*, I Tim. 2:12

Verse	Paraphrase
Vs. 11– Let a woman learn in silence (<i>hesuchia</i>) with all submission.	Let a woman LEARN in quietness , harmony and submission to church doctrine.
Vs. 12 – And I do not permit a woman to teach or <i>authentain</i> a man, but to be in silence.	I am not permitting a woman to teach <i>that she is originator of man</i> (as the Gnostics teach) but to be in harmony (with church teachings).
Vs. 13 – For Adam was formed first, then Eve.	(Contrary to what the Gnostics were teaching saying) Eve was <u>not</u> created first.
Vs. 14 – And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived fell into transgression.	Eve was not the “great illuminator” with all knowledge. Instead, <u>she</u> was the one thoroughly deceived and thus came or fell into transgression.
Vs. 15 –Nevertheless she will be saved in (Gr. through) childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness with self control (Gr. discreetness).	Women will be saved through childbirth, not by calling on Artemis, the goddess of fertility and childbirth, but by having faith in God.

Paul is dealing here with a local problem at a specific point in time. He is fighting false Gnostic beliefs that were being taught in Ephesus. Some have hypothesized that, given the verb tense and the reference to a singular woman, Paul may have been correcting only one woman who was teaching these false beliefs: “I am not allowing a woman to teach....” (Emph. added).

If he meant to silence all women for all time, he could have said “women are not allowed to teach men or preach in the Church. This is a rule for all churches.” To claim that Paul was prohibiting the teaching of men by women or women having authority over men is to extrapolate a meaning that is not present in the text, and is, in fact, totally opposite of what Paul wrote in the next chapter concerning the qualifications of female deacons (ministers) and bishops. (See section on I Timothy 3 and Appendix C for Qualifications of Elders).

In fact, he commands in the same letter to Timothy, II Tim. 2:2: – “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men [Gr. *anthropos*, people, including women] who will be able to teach [Gr. *didasko*] others also.” (Emph. added). Paul charged Timothy to commit these teachings of Paul he wrote in Timothy to men and women who would then teach other men and women. How can it be said then, that I Tim 2:12 says women can’t teach men?

The Argument from Creation

The UCG paper states:

Paul makes these observations in the context of creation — the way it was “from the beginning.” In that regard he follows Christ’s example (Mat. 9:4-8), illustrating the principle and precedent set for mankind in matters of marriage and in the realm of roles and relationships of men and women as they assemble together as they learn and worship. Paul clearly identifies authoritative teaching as the role of a man. (Emph. added).

Contrary to the UCG position, Paul’s reference to the creation account is to correct a false Gnostic teaching that Eve was not created first. Paul certainly doesn’t say, “since Adam was created first, he is in authority.” On the contrary, Genesis makes it clear that God created them equal in authority. It is interesting to note that the words “authoritative teaching” and that it belongs to man is not found this verse.

Paul does follow Christ’s example, but not in the way alluded to in the UCG paper. Christ referred to the creation account, but it was to highlight the one-flesh principle: “He who made them at the beginning, made them male and female and said ‘For this reason shall a man leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife. And the two shall become one flesh.” (Gen. 2:24). (Emph. added). Of great importance here is that in a one-flesh entity, there are no authoritative and submissive roles. It is one cohesive unit.

Furthermore, Christ said that man (Heb. *Ish* – “man,” not “Adam” which became the name for both) shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife. The scripture makes this requirement only of the man. If Christ were to have said the woman is to leave her mother and father and be joined to her husband, there might be reason for thinking he was to be in charge and she was to be subordinate to him. And if women were subordinate to men, why even mention that the husband should leave his mother? Actually, Gen 2:24 is proof that the patriarchal society in which the husband and father rule supreme, and in which it was common practice for the woman to leave her family and be absorbed into the husband’s family goes against this specific command of God.

Nothing in the statements by Paul or Christ concerning creation suggests that authoritative teaching is the role of a man. As further proof, Paul states in I Tim 3:1 “if ANYONE [Gr. *ei tis*, not *aner*, Greek for “any man,” as most translations have it] desires the office of a bishop desires a good thing.” Women are included. They certainly were not excluded. If they were not to be included, Paul would have said “if any man desires the office of a bishop”.

The UCG paper goes on to state:

Paul’s directives are based upon two concepts made clear at creation — Adam was created first (the order of creation) and Eve was the first to be deceived. Both of these statements speak to the foundational concept of role distinctions, defined broadly as headship and submission. The moment Eve chose to assume Adam’s position of headship, exercise authority over him and “take the lead,” attempting to teach her husband, things went terribly wrong. (Emph. added).

Does God's creation of Adam first really signify that males are meant to be dominant over females? The Bible gives no such indication. Although the Israelites tended to give preference to the first-born son, God's acts seem to contradict that custom: He chose Jacob instead of Esau, the older twin; Moses over his older brother Aaron; Ephraim, who received greater blessings than his older brother Manasseh; and last but certainly not least, David as king of Israel and ancestor of Christ was chosen over all his older brothers. Any concept of headship and submission based on the above scriptures would have the younger placed over the older. And since Christ mentioned several times "the first shall be last," principle, one should be cautious of translating first into being better.

The scriptures also do not express any relation between Eve's deception and concepts of headship and submission. Was the fact that she was deceived worse than breaking God's command through rebelling as Adam did? It has already been mentioned that Adam was standing right by her as she was being deceived, and he never said a word. He heard the whole conversation. Paul himself laid the blame on Adam for bringing death to the world, not on Eve. (Rom. 5:19 – "[F]or by one man's disobedience many were made sinners...."). Why? Adam *knew better*. (Job in 31:33). In fact, in the New Testament, Adam's fault is mentioned nine times more than Eve's, and specifically in terms of how he brought sin and death into the world. Of Eve, Paul says only that she was deceived and came into transgression. There are also other examples of deception, which have nothing to do with rulership and submission: Aaron was deceived into building the golden calf, and, of course, the whole world is deceived by Satan.

The UCG paper makes the statement that Eve sinned by "*choosing to assume Adam's position of headship and exercising authority over him by taking the lead and attempting to teach him.*" This notion apparently is taken from the account in Genesis 3:17 in which God cursed the ground "[b]ecause you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you ...". However, things did not go "horribly wrong," as the paper suggests, because Adam listened to his wife, or because she reversed roles, or because she "usurped authority." They went wrong but because both Adam and Eve disobeyed God and partook of the forbidden fruit which He had commanded them not to do.:

Gen. 2:16-17 – "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."⁵¹

Eve's sin was not that she "instructed" Adam, nor was Adam's sin that he listened to his wife. If listening to one's wife were wrong, God would never have told Abraham to listen to Sarah's counsel:

Gen. 21:10-12 – "Therefore she said to Abraham, 'Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac.' And the matter was very displeasing in Abraham's sight because of his son. But God said to Abraham, 'Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called.'" (Emph. added).

⁵¹ Mickelsen, *Studies on Biblical Equality*, 15.

The UCG paper continues:

Because formal, authoritative, doctrinal instruction takes place in church services and Bible studies, we understand Paul's instruction to mean that women should not teach in those circumstances.

From the foregoing, it becomes clear that Paul referred only to the creation account as part of his instruction against specific Gnostic beliefs that were being preached in church. The UCG paper's reading that infers a trend of female subordination from the beginning cannot be squared with both Old and New Testament examples of women such as Huldah and Priscilla who engaged in formal, authoritative doctrinal instruction, nor by the women praying and prophesying (teaching) in public assemblies in I Cor. 11:5, as mentioned before.

I Corinthians 14:34 and 35

Paul's statements in I Corinthians 14:34 and 35 are also used as a basis for disallowing women to preach. Here is what these two scriptures say in the King James Version, with comments on the translation following each:

I Cor. 14:34, 35 – “Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but *they are commanded* to be under obedience [Gr. *hupotasso*], as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame [Gr. *aischros*] for women to speak in church.” (Emph. added).

First, some observations on this translation: The italicized phrase “they are commanded” was an addition by the translators; it is not in the original Greek. Further, *hupotasso* is more correctly translated “submission” rather than “obedience.” And the word translated as “shame” in verse 35 is the Greek word *aischros* — the same word translated as “filthy” elsewhere, as in “filthy lucre.” (I Tim 3:8).

The UCG paper concludes from these verses that women should not preach or teach in church:

In verses 29-33, Paul continues to give guidelines for speaking in church. Then, verse 34 flows logically from this discussion, based upon the meaning of “prophesying” as “preaching”: “Women should not speak,” that is, preach or teach before the congregation.” (Emph. added).

Do these verses really signify a 180-degree reversal of Paul's statements just three chapters earlier in I Corinthians 11:5, where he expressly speaks of women praying and prophesying as the men were? Or a reversal of his immediately prior statements in verse 31, where Paul reiterates the concept of letting all prophets speak — including women? (Vs. 31 – “you can ALL prophesy one by one.”). And what of verse 29 – “Let two or three prophets speak and let the others judge?” Or verse 39 – “Therefore, brethren. (Gr. *adelphois*, i.e., “men and women”) desire earnestly to prophesy...?” We must dig deeper to explain this apparent contradiction within scripture.

What Law Forbids Women to Speak?

To what law is Paul referring when he says “for they are not permitted to speak, but they are to be submissive, as the law also says?” (Emph. added). There is no law in the Old Testament that forbids women to speak. There is not even one statement in the Old Testament that requires the submission of women.

There is only one law that specifically forbids women to speak in the assembly – and that is the Oral Law of the Jews, later written down and known as the Talmud.

The great German lexicographer [Johann Friedrich] Schleusner in his *Greek/Latin Lexicon* says, “the expression ‘as ALSO SAITH THE LAW’ refers to the Oral Law of the Jews In the Old Testament no precept concerning this matter exists.” He then cites Vitranga [Campegius Vitranga, Dutch Christian Hebraist; born at Leeuwarden May 16, 1669] showing that it was “forbidden by Jewish traditions for women to speak in the synagogue.”⁵²

Why would Paul quote the Oral Law? Because he is quoting the Jewish faction of the Church in Corinth from the letter they wrote him. They are using the Oral Law as authority to show why women should be silenced. They wanted the church to operate according to Jewish synagogue rules — where women were separated and not allowed to speak. This faction not did not want women praying and prophesying, just as they wanted to reinstitute the requirement of circumcision for Christian Gentiles.

Following are some quotes from the Oral Law which they are applying concerning women:

“Out of respect to the congregation woman should not herself read in the law.”

“It is a shame for a woman to let her voice be heard among men.”

“The voice of a woman is filthy nakedness.”⁵³

These edicts sound suspiciously like the statement in I Corinthians 4:35 that it is “a shame for women to speak in church.” The King James translators softened *aischros* to “shame” and “shameful” in verse 35 from its understood meaning of “filthy” or “filthiness.” The shame and filth associated with a woman speaking is from the Talmud. This is the language of the Judaizers in Corinth; it is not Paul’s. Remember, Corinth had the largest Jewish population, so most likely there were several churches of God and several synagogues. The Corinthians had written Paul a letter (I Cor. 7:1), and Chloe’s people reported to Paul, informing him of divisions (“quarrellings” or “contentions”) in the church. (I Cor. 1:11). No doubt some of these problems stemmed from the Jewish Christians, who opposed women praying and prophesying in the Church. These Jewish teachers are quoting the Oral Law to support their argument.

How do we know Paul is quoting the Oral Law? Because Paul does not refer to written scripture in this way. Instead, when he refers to written scripture, he quotes the particular scripture.

⁵² Bushnell 90, 91.

⁵³ Bushnell 90, 91.

For example: He says in I Corinthians 9:8, 9 – “Does not the law also say the same? For it is written in the law of Moses: ‘you shall not muzzle the ox....’” (Emph. added). After referring to the law, Paul tells us what is written and then quotes it *verbatim*. Similarly, in I Corinthians 14:21, after he writes “in the law it is written,” he follows it with the quote from Isaiah 28:11, 12. Indeed, in every case in which Paul specifically refers to scripture, he says “it is written.”⁵⁴ (See I Cor 1:19, 1:31, 2:9, 3:19, 9:8-9, 10:7, 15:45).

But in I Corinthians 14:34: the phrase is, “as the law also says.” There is no reference to *written* scripture and no scripture cited. So in verses 34 and 35, Paul is quoting the statements made in the letter he has received before answering them in the following verses. The Shema Yisrael Congregation in its paper on women recognized this:

However, the oral law, later codified in the Talmud, does have references to women's roles in the synagogue. In fact, the Talmud has several passages subjugating and demeaning women. In addition, we know that the synagogues in Sha'ul's (Paul's) day had curtains separating men and women, and that women were not allowed to speak in services. We find the same practice today in non-Messianic, Orthodox Jewish congregations. We can only conclude that this Oral Law is the law referred to in I Corinthians 14:34. It was not a law of God, but a tradition developed over the years and handed down orally. Sha'ul (Paul) speaks of it as a law because it was so much a part of the religious culture of his day. It was later codified into law in the Talmud. This oral law is also the reason why there is no mention of Jewish female leadership in B'rit Hadasha (New Testament) in the 1st Century Messianic Jewish community.⁵⁵ (Emph. added).

Professor Sir William Ramsey, archaeologist and New Testament scholar, says on this subject: “We should be ready to suspect Paul is making a quotation from the letter addressed to him by the Corinthians whenever he alludes to their knowledge, or when any statement stands in marked contrast either with the immediate context or Paul's own views.”⁵⁶ Indeed, Paul would not have reversed himself on women prophesying and praying a mere three chapters later which probably would have taken him less than one half hour to write.

And how does Paul respond to the Judaizers? He says, in the verses that immediately follow:

I Cor. 14:36, 37 – “What? Came the word of God out from you [the Greek word used here for “you” is masculine — meaning “you men who are trying to silence the women”]? Or came it only unto you? If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write unto you are the commandment of the Lord [as opposed to the Oral Law or Tradition of Elders.]” (Emph. added).

⁵⁴ Dennis J. Preato, “Did Paul Really Say ‘Let the Women Keep Silent in the Churches?’” 20 Jan 2005 <<http://godstowomen.org/studies/articles/Preato2.htm>>

⁵⁵ Congregation Shema Yisrael, “Women in Leadership.” <http://www.shemayisrael.org/Default.aspx?tabid=1167.5>

⁵⁶ Bushnell 93.

He was saying that a true prophet or a true spiritual person would recognize that Paul's instruction agreed with Christ's teachings. And what were those teachings? They are found in the verses immediately preceding and following the verses supposedly forbidding women to speak in church: "Ye ALL can prophesy...that ALL may learn..." (I Cor.14:31) and "[t]herefore, brethren (men and women), covet to prophesy, do NOT FORBID to speak in tongues." (I Cor. 14:39).

Verse 39 is certainly a strange ending to an argument forbidding women to prophesy and requiring silence on their part. But it is a logical and appropriate reproof to those who would forbid women.

Adam Clarke, wrote in his commentary regarding verses 34 and 35:

They are the only verses in the whole Book of God, which even by a false translation [which it was] can be made prohibitory of women speaking in the Church. How is it that by these passages, which according to the best Greek authorities, are wrongly rendered and wrongly applied. How comes it that women's lips have been sealed for centuries. How is it that these texts have been allowed to stand unexamined, and unexplained for centuries? (Emph. added).

The Greek Text and Quotation Punctuation

But let's look, as we always should, at the original Greek text to see if Paul is really quoting the Judaizing teachers. The original Greek text included no quotation marks or punctuation of any kind. The decision was left up to the translators to decide where Paul was quoting and where he was writing his own text. So the absence of quotation marks in modern translations proves nothing.⁵⁷

The translators of the Greek text, the Textus Receptus, however, knew it was a quotation. At the beginning of verse 36 there is the Greek letter "η".⁵⁸ This Greek punctuation has the impact of emphatically opposing the substance of the text that precedes it. In other words, the "colloquial equivalent such as 'Bunk!' instead of 'What!' would come close to rendering the effect of dissociation between the prohibition statement (vv. 33 -35) and Paul's response to it in verse 36."⁵⁹

Another clue that Paul is chastising the false male teachers in Corinth is the abrupt change from the third person pronoun of "they" (the women) to an emphatic second-person masculine in verse 36 "*(monous: "just you men)*. That shift "indicates that Paul is now taking to task a male element in the Corinthian church, rather than rebuking women for getting out of line."⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Mickelsen, "Studies on Biblical Equality. "

⁵⁸ Bilezikian, 151, footnote 9, 206.

⁵⁹ Bilezikian 151.

⁶⁰ Bilezikian 152.

The UCG paper concludes:

At any rate, a woman's femininity must not be disgraced by her trying to take a man's role in church.

God-given female leadership does not “disgrace a woman's femininity.” Deborah, Huldah, the prophetess Anna mentioned in Luke 2:36, and Priscilla were not disgraced by their actions. Quite the contrary is true, as reflected by the laudatory language concerning them.

And finally, the UCG paper quotes the Expositor's Bible Commentary as support for its explanation on Paul's verses on women praying and prophesying:

“But what about the seeming contradiction between these verses and 11:5 ff., where Paul speaks of women praying and prophesying? The explanation may be that in chapter 11 Paul does not say that women were doing these things in public worship as discussed in chapter 14.” (Internal citation omitted).

This quote acknowledges a contradiction. It attempts to resolve it by supposing that since Paul did not expressly mention that women were praying and prophesying in public, men must have prophesied differently than did women. So this commentary takes something Paul *didn't* say and creates a distinction where there is none.

Remember, both the men and women were praying and prophesying, so it was in a church service. And since the subject of I Cor. 11 was head coverings for men and women as they prayed and prophesied, it had to be a public assembly. As stated before and mentioned in chapter 14, prophesying was done during public worship because prophesying is a public function. David Stern, a Messianic Jewish scholar and translator of the New Testament from a Jewish perspective was familiar with the traditions in the synagogues, and he confirms in his commentary that the praying and prophesying referenced in Corinthians 11:4 was “in public worship meetings.”⁶¹ Furthermore, how was I Cor. 14:31's admonition that “you ALL can prophesy, one by one, that ALL may learn and ALL may be encouraged,” to be fulfilled if the praying and prophesying weren't public?

Titus 2:3-5

This epistle of Paul was written to Titus, the bishop of Crete. Like Ephesus, Crete was also a center of Artemis worship as well as Gnosticism. Here again, Paul was battling similar false teachings. He says there are “many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers. [...]whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households [...]”(Titus 1:10, 11). Paul is encouraging Titus to fight these false teachings with the help of all the elders. Most translators assume this section speaks to old men and old women, but some scholars believe that Paul is addressing male and female elders.

⁶¹ Stern 474.

In its analysis of Titus 2:1-5, the UCG paper implies that the only “teaching“ appropriate for older women in the church is that directed towards young women.

The Greek word for “teach” in verse 4 is sophronizo, which means to make of a sound mind, teach to be sober, teach self-control. In these verses Paul admonishes that older women should teach the younger women, first of all by being a role model themselves in godly conduct. Paul then lists characteristics that the older women are to teach the younger women...”

Here is Titus 2:1-5 in the King James Version:

Vs. 1 – But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.

Vs. 2 – That the aged men [*presbutas*] be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.

Vs. 3 – The aged women [*presbutidas*] likewise, that they in behaviour as becometh holiness [*hieroprepeis*], not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things (*kalodidaskolous*);

Vs. 4 – that they may teach the young women to be sober [*sophronizo*] to love their husbands, to love their children,

Vs. 5 – to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home [*oikouros*], good, obedient [*hupotasso*—submissive] to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.
Titus 2:1-5, KJV.

Old Women or Women Elders?

As the following quotes indicate, “old women” should better be translated as women elders.

The masculine counterparts of the *presbutidas* appear in Titus 2:2, one verse before the women. The men are called *presbutas*.Sometimes it is said that these allusions are merely to older and younger members of the church family, but in I Peter 5:5, we see an example which combines the concepts of age differences in the congregation as well as that of church office. The younger members of the community were to be subject to the elders. We must also note that like in Timothy (I Tim. 4:11-13), younger women and men might serve in positions of responsibility in the church, and so might slaves.⁶²

Jewish writings also corroborate the fact that elders are being talked about, and that “youngers” are a lower rank of elders.

⁶² Kroeger, “Women Elders: Called by God?”, 20 Jan 2004. <www.firstpresby.org/womenelders.htm>

Secular, Jewish and Christian writings all seem to indicate that "young" or "younger" sometimes implied an official appointment. For example, in the Jewish story of Susanna and the Elders, "the younger" Daniel has enough authority to stay the wrongful execution of Susanna and to interrogate the wicked elders, even though he is obliged to let them speak first!"⁶³

Church history shows the Catholic Church as well used that same term to mean women elders at the Council of Laodicea Canon proves:

Canon 11: "Presbytides, as they are called, or female presidents ..., are not to be appointed ... in the church."⁶⁴

Since the Catholic Church was forbidding the appointment for *presbytides*, it obviously means there had been women elders up to that point. The Catholic Church also prohibited the keeping of the Passover on the 14th and instituted Easter instead at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD. Just like the ordination of women elders, this proves that Passover was being celebrated by the Churches of God on the 14th up to that time.

Being Priest-like or Reverent in Behavior?

The NKJV has "older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior." (Titus 2:3). But is this the correct translation? Or does it obscure the true meaning of *hieroprepes*?

"Hieroprepes means proper to priests."⁶⁵ (Emph. added).

One qualification of the *presbytidas* in Titus 2:3 is of special interest. They must be *hieroprepeis* or "worthy of sacred office." One New Testament dictionary gives the meaning of this adjective as "like those employed in sacred service," Another offers "like a priest (ess)" as an alternative and admits that such a translation is possible here.⁶⁶

⁶³ Kroeger, "Women Elders: Called by God?", 20 Jan 2004. <www.firstpresby.org/womenelders.htm>

⁶⁴ Council of Laodicea, 343-381 C.E., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952) Second Series, Vol. XIV, 129, 153, qtd. in Plampin, "Women Pastors (Presbutidas=Women Elders): Classification, Qualifications, and Duties," 15 Apr 2003 <<http://home.netcom.com/~cplampin/Lessons-on-Christian-Women/pastors-nt-eng/07-titus2-pastors.htm>>.

⁶⁵ Robert Young, *Analytical Concordance to the Bible*, Twenty-Second American Edition Revised (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, n.d.), 487.

⁶⁶ Kroeger, "Women Elders: Called by God?" <<http://www.firstpresby.org/womenelders.htm>>

How was it that these women went from being “worthy of sacred office” to the requirement that their behavior be reverent?

In the Greek *hieroprepeis* modifies behavior. It is absurd to say that the New Testament requires behavior befitting holy persons, holy, worthy of reverence, like priestesses, of all older women in the church. But the word **reverence** jumps out at them [the translators]. It is not absurd to say that all older women are to be reverent. So they go for it. If the idea of reverence were the most faithful translation, these women should be said to be **worthy of reverence**.⁶⁷ (Emph. added).

Teaching Only Young Women?

Strong's says *didaskalos* means, "instructor, doctor, master, teacher." In the New Testament rabbis were called *didaskalos*. When people addressed Christ as “Master”, the word is *didaskalos*. It is obvious from several passages of Scripture that "elders" are to be skilled teachers (I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9; I Timothy 5:17). This word seems to be used of "elders" in Ephesians 4:11 in the phrase "pastors and teachers." The structure of this sentence in Greek makes it very clear that Paul is referring to only one ministry but emphasizing two aspects of it: a spiritual leader is both a shepherd and a teacher.

“The women could as easily be understood as “women elders” rather than “old women” especially in light of the fact that they are called “teachers (*didaskalos*), teachers of the good.” The contrast between bishops and deacons (or ministers) in I Tim. 3:1-8 rests primarily on the ability bishops must have to teach ably (see also Titus 1:9 elder and bishop are used synonymously in vs. 5-7). The women elders at Crete had the ability (to teach) and were told to use it.”⁶⁸ (Emph. added).

The interesting thing is that the word *kalodidaskalos* is in the masculine, just as *diakonos* is in the masculine when describing Phoebe, as explained later. Thus it probably is a teaching position in the church.

Women pastors (elders) have a teaching ministry authorized by Titus 2:3-5. It has been noted with interest that "teachers of what is good" *kalodidaskalous* is in the masculine and not the feminine, suggesting that they may have taught both men and women.⁶⁹ (Emph. added).

⁶⁷ Carolyn Goodwyn Plampin, “Phoebe, Roman 16:1-2,” 30 Nov. 2003.

⁶⁸ Spencer 107.

⁶⁹ Plampin, “Women Pastors.”
<<http://home.netcom.com/~cplampin/Lessons-on-Christian-Women/Women-Pastors-in-NT-eng/01-index-pastors.htm>>

Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza states that *kalodidaskolos* should be translated as “good teachers” instead of “teachers of what is good.” The Greek *kalo* means good and modifies the word *didaskolos*. Being a good teacher is a qualification of bishops who are “apt to teach” mentioned in I Tim. 3.2.

“Women presbyters are to be “priestly”... and prove themselves “good teachers.””⁷⁰.
“*Kaladisaskolous*” is usually mistranslated as “they are to teach what is good (see e.g. the RSV).”⁷¹

Many churches say that older women (women elders) can only teach younger women since they cannot teach men, which is supposedly prohibited by I Tim 2:12. But is that really the case? The above clearly states that the word *kalodidaskolous* is a masculine noun, not a feminine noun which normally would have been used for women. Therefore, it does suggest that this teaching was not limited to young women, but as with men teachers where the masculine noun is used, the teaching was for the whole church.

The KJV says they were to be “teachers of good things (*kalodidaskolous*); that they may teach the young women to be sober (*sophronizo*)...” Titus 2:3, 4. However, the words for “teacher” and “teach” are not the same word. If they were the same, it could give the meaning that women were only to teach young women. But the word for “teach” here is *sophrosune*.

The NKJV has it “that they admonish the young women.” (Titus 2:3, 4). In other words what this verse says is that women elders are to be good teachers AND that they admonish younger women. They are not to be good teachers so they can only discipline (another meaning given by *Strong's*) young women to be sober minded, or to only teach young women. These young Cretan women needed disciplining so they would care for their reputation, character and families.

This verb [*sophrosune*] connotes sanity of mind and stability of thinking. There are many enemies of sanity and mental stability [especially when false teachings are being perpetrated]. To be [*swphrwn*] means to have a mental attitude of care for one's reputation, one's character, a consideration for appearances, along with a connotation of mental stability.”⁷² (Emph. added)

Housekeepers or Workers at Home?

The word (*oikourgos*) is translated "keepers at home" in the KJV. Six out of twelve Bible translations say “workers at home, diligent in their home, or industrious in their home” (Power Bible CD on I Tim. 2:5). Adam Clarke mentions in his commentary: “Instead of *oikourgos*, *keepers of the house*, or *keepers at home*, ACD*EFG, and several of the *Itala*, *have okourgous*, *workers at home*; not only *staying in the house* and *keeping the house*, but *working in the house.*”

⁷⁰ Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2000) 290.

⁷¹ Fiorenza, footnote 21, 336.

⁷² Warren Doud, Grace Notes, 06 Jan 2006, <<http://www.gracenotes.info/>>

In I Tim.5:13 Paul talks of young women learning to be idle “wandering from house to house, and not only idle, but also gossips, and busybodies, saying things which they ought not.” Therefore, he encourages the women elders to admonish and discipline them to work at home and not be lazy, to take care of their families, so that the word of God is not blasphemed.

To summarize the situation in Titus, in order to counteract the onslaught of false teachings, Paul directed Titus how to go about battling this situation.

If you will read through the entire passage from Titus 1:5-2:10, it becomes apparent that the Apostle was rallying Christian leaders against an attack on Christian families, and women elders were an integral part of his battle plan. It is possible that all the groups mentioned in Titus 2:1-10 were officers of various ranks who were asked to refute heretical opposition (vs. 5, 8,10) just as the elders of Chapter 1, were to refute heretics (vs. 9-16) who "upset whole households."⁷³

⁷³ Kroeger, “Women Elders: Called by God?” <<http://www.firstpresby.org/womenelders.htm>>

Women Leaders in the New Testament

Even though the UCG paper does not make mention of the New Testament women leaders, Phoebe, Junia and Stephana, it is very important to include them in this study in order to more completely understand the subject of Women's Position in the Church.

Phoebe

Phoebe was another high level woman leader in the New Testament Church. Her leadership position has also been greatly diminished to the point that most people don't even realize she was a minister. Let's see what Paul says of Phoebe.

Romans 16:1-2 (KJV) – “I commend to you Phoebe, our sister, who is a servant [Gr. *diakonon*, the masculine form of the word *diakonos*] of the Church which is in Cenchrea. That ye may receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you; for she hath been (Gr. *egenthe*) a succourer (Gr. *prostates*; NKJV has “helper”) of many and of myself also.” (Emph. added).

Of crucial import is the fact that the word translated as “servant” in these verses is *diakanos*, a masculine cognate form of *the* masculine noun *diakonos*.⁷⁴ (As a matter of note, the word *diakonos* will be used for all cognates of the word in order to avoid confusion.)

When the noun *diakonos* refers to an individual male, it is always translated minister by the KJV. Paul, Timothy, Epaphras are always called “minister.” However, to some scholars, simply because Phoebe is a woman, she cannot be called a “minister.” As James Hurley (no supporter of female leadership) writes: “[I]f Timothy or Judas were called a *diakonos*, 100% of the scholars would presume *diakonos* meant minister.”⁷⁵

⁷⁴ *Diakonos* will be used for the various cognates of the word.

⁷⁵ James B. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, qtd. in Spencer 101.

Translations of Diakonos as “Minister” in the New Testament

In the scriptures below, in every case where the Greek word *diakonos* is used, it has been translated “minister” when it applies to men such as Paul, Timothy, Epaphras, etc. except for Phoebe in Rom 16:1 where the word *diakonos* is translated “servant.”

In every case where “servant” has been translated for the men, it comes from the Greek word *doulos* which means slave – except in the case of Phoebe where servant in Rom. 16:1 was translated “servant” from the Greek masculine word of *diakonos*.

I Cor 3:5 – Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but **ministers (diakonos)** by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

II Cor 3:6 – Who also hath made us able **ministers (diakonos)** of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

II Cor 11:23 – Are they **ministers (diakonos)** of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

Eph. 3:7 – Are they **ministers (diakonos)** of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

Eph. 6:21 – But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful **minister (diakonos)** in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:

Phil. 1:1 – Paul and Timotheus, the **servants (doulos)** of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and **deacons (diakonos)**:

Co. 1:7 – As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow **servant (sundoulos)**, who is for you a faithful **minister (diakonos)** of Christ;

Col. 1:23 – If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a **minister (diakonos)**;

I Thes. 3:2 – And sent Timotheus, our brother, and **minister (diakonos)** of God, and our fellow labourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:

Titus 4:6 – If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good **minister (diakonos)** of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.

Rom. 16:1 – I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a **servant (diakonos)** of the church which is at Cenchrea.

The Living Bible describes Phoebe as “a dear Christian woman” whereas Timothy is “a worthy pastor,” (I Tim 4:6) when the same word *diakonos* is used for both. He is not called a “dear worthy man.” Is there a double standard here?

Phoebe is commended as a “*diakonos* of the church in Cenchrea,” the port city of Corinth. The fact that she a “*diakonos* of the Church in Cenchrea,” also lends weight to the fact that in Phoebe’s case *diakonos* was an official title much like we would say “minister of the Dallas

Church.” You would not confuse this title with being a servant of the Dallas Church. Robertson says in his *Robertson’s NT Word Pictures* “the addition of “*tês ekklêsias*” (of the church)” supports the meaning of the technical sense of the word *diakonos* as a title.

Rendering “*diakonos*” as servant effectively obscures the importance of her position and thus misses the official character of the commendation: Phoebe was Paul’s designated letter carrier, his envoy, to the Roman Church. (Rom. 16.2). A church’s acceptance of the envoy was based on the presentation of credentials. That is why Paul customarily provided credentials for his letter carriers. For example:

Col 4:7, 8 – “Tychicus, who is a beloved brother [as Paul calls Phoebe *sister*], a faithful minister, [*diakonos* — same word used for Phoebe], and a fellow servant (Gr. *sundoulos*; *doulos* is the Greek word for “servant,” not *diakonos* as was translated for Phoebe] in the Lord will tell all the news about me. I am sending him to you for this purpose, that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts.” (Emph. added).

See also Phil 2:25-30, Eph. 6:21-22.

As an aside, the word *doulos* *actually* means slave. Yet in most cases in the New Testament the translators render this word as “servant.” The point is, if Paul had meant to say Phoebe was a servant, he would have used the word *doulos*, and not *diakonos*.

The early Church Fathers, who were certainly biased against women, also understood *diakonos* to mean “minister,” and not merely “deaconess” or “servant.” Some examples are:

Origen in the 3rd century cites Roman 16:7 (Junia) as an example of the fact that “even women were instituted deacons (Latin – *ministrae*) in the Church.”⁷⁶

Chrysostom, a 4th century church leader, wrote that “Prisca was a teacher of Apollos, pastor of the Church in Corinth after Paul left.”⁷⁷ (Emph. added).

Ignatius, bishop of Rome at the turn of the first century, twice refers to a *diakonos* of one church serving as an ambassador to another.⁷⁸ This is significant because a minister was needed to explain any questions the brethren had about the letter being sent and read aloud to the church.

The great English Bible translator, William Tyndale⁷⁹ translated Rom 16:1 this way: “I commend unto you Phoebe, our sister (which is a minister of the congregation of Chencrea).” (Emph. added).

⁷⁶ Origen, *Homilies on Romans* 10.17, qtd. in Spencer 101.

⁷⁷ Chrysostom, qtd. in Bristow 56.

⁷⁸ Ignatius, *Letter to the Philadelphians, 10:1; Letter to the Ephesians, 2:1*, qtd. in Linda Belleville, “Women Leaders in the Bible,” *Discovering Biblical Equality* 121.

⁷⁹ “Tyndale’s Old and New Testaments were the first English translation of the scriptures taken directly from the original Hebrew and Greek languages.... Tyndale’s 1526 New Testament was the first ever printed in English.” In the 1530s he also translated the first 14 books of the Old Testament. He thus became the first man to translate anything from Hebrew into English — as Hebrew was virtually unknown in England at that time.” <http://wesley.nnu.edu/biblical_studies/tyndale/rom.txt>. He was later hanged and burned for the treasonous act of translating the Bible.

Was Phoebe Ordained?

In Rom. 16:2, the *Montgomery's NT* translates the Greek text as follows: "...for she has been made [Gr. *egenthe*] an overseer to many people, including myself." In contrast, the NKJV and most other translations have either "she has been" or variations thereof (leaving out the word "made"). (Emph. added).

The Greek word here used for "has been made" is *egenthe* which means to be made, established appointed, ordained. *Strong's* gives these definitions: to cause to be, to become, be made, be ordained. The word is used to signify appointment to office as in Eph. 3:7, 8 where Paul says of himself "of which I became (*egenthe* – "was ordained") a minister... that I should preach among the Gentiles..." See also Heb. 5:5, Col 1:23. In Eph. 3:7 the word is passive ("I was made a minister," which indicates someone else made the appointment or ordination. Thus, the sentence might be rendered "for she has been appointed, actually by my own action, an officer presiding over many." Rom 16.2).⁸⁰ Note that Paul was made a minister so he should preach. Doesn't this apply to Phoebe as well?

Proistemi — Did Phoebe Rule?

Phoebe was not only a minister, but a minister who was to be welcomed as worthy by the saints and assisted (Gr. *parestemi*) in anything she required, for Paul explains "she herself has been a *prostatis* over many and even of myself." *Prostatis*, the verb of which is *proistemi*, means according to *Strong's* "to stand before, i.e. (in rank) to preside, – to maintain, be over, rule." Phoebe, therefore, was "a woman set over others" or "one who stands before."

The verb form *proistemi* occurs several times in the Bible. Both the bishop and minister (*diakonos*) are "to rule [*proistemi*] their house well." I Tim 3:4-5. See also I Tim 5:17 – "Let the elders who rule [*proistemi*] well be worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine." In discussing the gifts of the spirit, "...or ministry *let us wait on our* on ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching, Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity, he that ruleth (Gr. *proistemi* the verb form of *prostatis*) with diligence." Rom 12:7, 8 (KJV). See also the following verses where *proistemi* is translated "to rule": Rom 12:8, I Thes. 5:12, I Tim. 3:12, I Tim 5:17, Titus 3:8, Titus 3:14.

Josephus uses *prostates* (the male form of *prostatis*) to refer to a leader of a nation or tribe, and even God. Moses, Joseph, Herod Agrippa and Hyrcanus are all called *prostates*. Josephus as governor is a *prostates*. Antipater calls Caesar the *prostates* of the world. God is *prostates* over all. And Phoebe is *prostatis* over many, including the great apostle Paul.⁸¹ To call Phoebe instead a "succorer," "servant," or "helper," is akin to saying Condoleezza Rice, rather than being Secretary of State of the United States, is a secretary in a typing pool. Here is what Charles Trombley says of Phoebe as *diakonos* in his summary of Roman 16:1, 2:

⁸⁰ Kroeger, *Women Elders: Called by God?* <<http://www.firstpresby.org/womenelders.htm>>

⁸¹ Spencer 117.

If we refuse to admit that Phoebe “ruled” or “lead” or was a “defender” or “guardian,” then we must reduce the male [*diakonos*] to whatever level Phoebe was ministering. If Phoebe just “succored,” then that’s all the male [*diakonos*] did. It’s quite inconsistent to translate the word “ruler” when it refers to men and “succorer” when it refers to women.”⁸²

One final comment about Phoebe, the *Stephens Greek Text* has this note at the end of the letter to the Romans. “To the Romans written from Corinth, by Phoebe, *diakonon* of the church in Cenchrea.”

Junia

Junia held the highest position of leadership in the New Testament Church. Yet because Bible interpreters could not believe a woman could be an apostle (it certainly did not fit in with their silent and subordinate women theory), she—like Deborah and Phoebe—has not only been totally devalued, but most Bible scholars turn her into a man, as the RSV scripture below shows.

Rom 16:7 – “Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen, and my fellow prisoners, they are men of note among the apostles, and they were in Christ before me.” (RSV, emph. added).

However, a deeper examination of the role, and the person, of Junia is enlightening.

The RSV uses Junias (masculine) instead of Junia. The words “Junias” and “kinsmen” lead one to believe both mentioned were males, as does the addition of “men of note.” Seven out of twelve translations had the masculine Junias instead of the feminine Junia, and the word “men” in “men of note” is not in the original Greek, but was added by the translators.

So was Junia a man or a woman? How did the early commentators understand the name? Origen, who lived toward the end of the first century A.D, understood her to be a woman.⁸³ John Chrysostom, who lived in the 4th century, praised her as a woman apostle:

To be even *amongst these of note*, just consider what a great encomium this is! Oh! How great is the devotion of this woman that she should be even counted worthy of the appellation of apostle!⁸⁴

Jerome, who lived in the latter half of the 4th century, also said she was a woman.⁸⁵ It wasn’t until the 13th century that she became a man⁸⁶

But if Junia was a woman, could she really have been an apostle, an office of the highest authority? The traditional reasoning is that she had to have been only noted or esteemed by the

⁸² Charles Trombley, *Who Said Women Can’t Teach in the Early Church*, 194-195, qtd. in Plampin.

⁸³ Origen, *Epistolam ad Romanos Commentarium*, qtd. in Spencer 101.

⁸⁴ Chrysostom, Homily on the Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Roman XXXI, qtd. in Spencer 101.

⁸⁵ Spencer 101.

⁸⁶ Groothuis 197.

apostles and not one of them. But the Greek grammar does not support that construction. The scripture says, and the Greek confirms, she was of note among the apostles, as also is stated by Chrysostom above.

Junia was no low level apostle. The NIV as well as the *The New American Standard* and the *New American Standard Updated* versions state that she was “outstanding.” The NRSV says “prominent” And *Strong’s* lists “remarkable” as one of the definitions.

Stephana

Most have never heard of Stephana in the New Testament. She is another woman who became a man, just like Junia did.

I Cor 16:15, 16 – “I urge you brethren –you know the household of Stephanas, [Gr. *Stephana*] that it is the firstfruits of Achaia and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry [Gr. *diakonia*] of the saints, that you also submit [Gr. *hupotasso*] to such and to everyone who works and labors with us.” (Emph. added.)

Stephana, the word used in the original Greek, is a woman’s name. The Greek male counterpart is Stephanos (Acts 6:8). William Tyndale, the renowned Greek and Hebrew Bible scholar, uses Stephana in those scriptures. Paul said the whole household was devoted to the ministry and the brethren (men and women) should submit to her and them. “Unfortunately, since Stephana had authority, commentators and translators have assumed Stephana was a man and not a woman.”⁸⁷

And, again, in the closing comments on I Corinthians in the *Stephens Greek Text* is this note: “To the Corinthians first written from Philippi, by Stephana (not Stephanos) and Fortunatus and Achaicus and Timotheus,” meaning the letter was delivered by these three.

There are other women leaders in the New Testament. Why have Bible scholars not highlighted these women for us? Have some translators and commentators refused to allow, or even consider that women could be in authority? The familiar reasoning goes somewhat like this:

Phoebe could not be a minister because she was a woman.

Junia could not be a woman because she was an apostle.

Stephana could not be a woman because people were subjected to her.⁸⁸

Our church, too, is guilty of marginalizing and minimizing the importance of these women leaders, as they were not even included in the UCG doctrinal paper.

In concluding this section on “What Paul Wrote about Women,” there are several statements of fact that need careful consideration:

⁸⁷ Spencer 119.

⁸⁸ W. D. Spencer and A. Spencer, *In Defense of the First Church of Tootsie*, The Wittenburg Door, April/May, 1983.

- There is no biblical text which subordinates women to men because Adam was created before Eve in all of Paul's writings.
- There is no biblical text that makes men head over women.
- There is no biblical text that exclusively disqualifies women from exercising church leadership.
- There is no biblical text that prohibits the ordination of women to the ministry.
- There is no biblical text which mandates hierarchical relations between men and women.

However:

- There are examples of women praying and prophesying and teaching in public assemblies..
- There is an example of a female apostle (Junia).
- There is an example of a female minister (*diakonos* – Phoebe).
- There is an example of a woman teaching a man – an evangelist and minister – (Priscilla).
- There is an example of brethren being subject to a woman's minister (Stephana).

CHAPTER 6 – THE ROLE AND OFFICE OF DEACONESS

The position of deaconess only came into being during the 4th century in the Eastern Church. The word “deaconess” itself is not found in the Greek Bible, even though many translations wrongly use that word for Phoebe in Rom. 16:1 (see section on Phoebe in Chapter 5).

With respect to the position of deaconess, the UCG paper states:

A need for a specific type of service came early in the New Testament Church (Acts 6:1-6). The elders found they could not preach, teach and counsel new converts, as well as attend to the co-ordination of specific and unique physical needs of the rapidly growing church. Thousands of people who had come to Jerusalem only to observe Pentecost had stayed over to fellowship with and be taught by the Church of God. Housing and food were needed. Certain widows had been “neglected in the daily distribution” (Acts 6:1. The men who were selected for this job were set apart by the laying on of hands, that is ordained to an office (Acts 6:6, which is generally recognized to be the origin of the office of deacon. This was 31 A.D.)

As an initial matter of correction, it wasn’t the elders who said “it is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.” (vs. 2) It was the Twelve Apostles.

Second, even though this scripture is where we get our tradition of ordaining deacons, it is strange that the Bible does not say anything about the office of deacon in Acts. The word used in Acts 6:2 is “to minister” from the Greek *diakoneo*:

Acts 6:2 (YLT) – ‘It is not pleasing that we, having left the word of God, to minister [Gr. verb *diakoneo*] at tables.’ Vs. 4 – (KJV) “But we will give ourselves continually to prayers and to the ministry [Gr. noun *diakoni*] of the word.”

So a ministry of the word and the ministry at tables are both *diakonia*. One person is not a minister, the second a deacon. They were both ministers.

Also, two of the seven ordained became powerful preachers, which is considered *diakonia* of the word. So Stephen did not only wait on tables, but did great works and was a powerful preacher. He became the first martyr of the New Testament. Philip, also one of the seven “deacons”, became an evangelist.

It seems this incident in Acts is not the ordination of deacons to an office of physical service, *per se*, but an ordination to perform a specific job that needed to be done at that time and place. In Antioch, Acts 13:1-4, the Holy Spirit had separated Paul and Barnabas to send them on an evangelizing tour:

Acts 13:3 – “...then having fasted and prayed and laid hands on them, they [the prophets and teachers of Antioch] sent them away.” (Emph. added).

Adam Clarke says regarding verse 3: “They land hands upon them, thus solemnly appointing them to that particular work.” (Emph. added). Paul and Barnabas were already in the ministry. Why did they have hands laid on them again unless it was for that particular assignment?

The point here is the word *diakonos* is mainly used for our word “minister.” (See explanation under Phoebe.) It has been translated “minister” 17 times in the New Testament. Paul calls himself a *diakonos* meaning minister: (Eph. 3:7 –“Of which I (Paul) was made a minister (*diakonos*).” Timothy (Phil 1:1), Tychicus (Eph 6:21), and other men also are designated thus.

The UCG paper states:

If his (Paul’s) reference to Phoebe as a diakonos should be understood as “a deaconess,” the official title must have been established sometime within that quarter century.

Why should the word *diakonos* mean “deaconess” for Phoebe when it means minister for every male it describes? In any event, the paper is in error with respect to its timing of the establishment of the position of “deaconess” in the church. Bishop Charles John Ellicott, British clergyman and scholar, says: “The proposed rendering ‘deaconess’ is open to the objection that it introduces into the New Testament the technical name (*diakonissa*), which is of later origin.”⁸⁹ In fact, “[i]t was not until the middle of the 3rd century that an order of women called “deaconesses” (*diaconissae*) became common in the churches of the East; they were scarcely ever known in the early centuries in the Western branch of the Church.”⁹⁰

I Timothy 3:11

The UCG paper begins:

In I Timothy 3:8-13 Paul gives instructions to Timothy in selecting men as deacons. The Greek word is diakonos, the same Greek word used for servant in connection with Phoebe.

And in connection with every man, including Paul himself, *diakonos* is translated “minister.” The paper continues:

Seemingly breaking in for the guidelines for deacons, Paul says: “Even so must their wives” (vs. 11, KJV). By “even so,” Paul is saying that the general principles of character and reputation about deacons must be applied to “their wives.” Scholars have debated whether “their wives” refers to wives of deacons or to “deaconesses.”

The UCG paper is referencing I Tim 3:11 – “Likewise, *their wives must be reverent, not slanderous, temperate, faithful in all things.*”

⁸⁹ Bushnell 171.

⁹⁰ Bushnell 171.

The word “their” is not in the Greek but was added by translators to make the women wives of deacons as evidenced by being italicized in the verse. In the Greek, the word *gune* can mean “wife,” or it can mean “woman,” depending on the context. The possessive pronoun “their” would make it “wives,” but the word “their” is not in the original text. So in the proper context, and knowing that Paul used *diakonos* to describe Phoebe as well as himself, Paul here is speaking of female *diakonos*, not “deaconesses” and not wives of male *diakonos*.

So if the same word *diakonos* is translated as deacon and minister, what is I Tim 3:1 talking about? The qualifications of deacons...or the ministry? Let’s take a closer look:

Vs. 1 – “*If any man* [Gr. *ei tis*] desires the position of a bishop.”

This verse is mistranslated as limited to men only. The original Greek is “*ei tis*,” which means “any one.” The Greek word *aner* is the word for the singular masculine “man” and it is not in the Greek as evidenced by italics.

Vs 1 – 7 discuss the qualifications for bishops or overseers.

Vs. 8 – “Likewise *deacons* [Gr. *diakonous*, a verb, meaning “those who minister”]...” (after which come the qualifications of male deacons (ministers)).

Vs. 11 – “Likewise *women* [Gr. *gune*, not “their wives”] . . . (after which follows the qualifications for women deacons (ministers)).

Vs. 12 – “Likewise” refers back to deacons (ministers) and bishops.

First, why would Paul talk about deacons’ wives, and not bishops’ wives? One would think that it would be more important for bishops’ wives to “*be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things*” (I Tim 3:11) rather than for deacons’ wives, especially as the UCG understands the position of deacon as serving “only” in physical matters, and the bishop being an overseer or pastor?

Second, why talk about wives in the middle of a treatise on qualifications for the ministry? It can only be reconciled by interpreting *gune* to mean “wives” or “their wives” as deaconesses. But, as stated, there was no position or word for deaconess at the time.

The UCG paper goes on to state:

In I Timothy 3 the guidelines for deacons focused on the man, his habits and values, the condition of his marriage, and whether or not he held the “mystery of the faith in pure conscience.” Since a deaconess is the female counterpart of a deacon, it would seem logical that, in general, the same guidelines would apply to both. (Emph. added).

It is erroneous to say the “guidelines focused on the man, his habits, his values, and his marriage. Why? Because in the Greek, neither the masculine-only word for man (*aner*) is used, nor the masculine pronoun “his.” The word that is used is the Greek word *ei tis*, which means “any” or “any one.” So properly translated, verse 1 (“If any desires the position of bishop. . .”) includes both men and women. *Young’s Literal Translation* renders it thus: “*Steadfast is the word. If anyone the oversight does longs for...*” (Emph. added).

So the proper translation of I Tim 3:5-13 would be:

Vs. 5 – “If *anyone* [Gr. *ei tis*] does not know how to rule *his* house (“his” in the Greek is not masculine-specific, but refers back to “anyone” and can include women).

Vs. 8 – “*Likewise* [Gr. *hosautos*], *diakonos* must be reverent...”
(The YLT has “*diakonos hosautos*”).

(“Likewise” here refers back to “if anyone desires the office of a bishop” in verse 1.)

Vs. 10 – “Let *these* be proved.” (“these” is gender neutral in the Greek).

Vs. 11 – “*Likewise* [Gr. *hosautos*] women *must be reverent*.” (The YLT has: “*gunaikas* (women) *hosautos*” or “Women, in like manner.” The “likewise” in this verse also refers back to the bishop’s qualifications. It is in essence saying, “like the bishop, like the deacons, the women deacons must be reverent ...”

To reiterate, this passage is not limited to males at all:

The original does not say “man” at all but states “**If any desire the office of a bishop, (he/she) desires a good work.**” Paul knew the Greek language. He would not have used a **neuter word** if he had intended to limit overseers to males only! If Paul had intended a male ministry he would have used the all male word “aner 435” in this text. Paul did not just slip up in this scripture. In all his admonitions concerning the ministry **he uses words that include both sexes!** Yet translators were bound by their own traditional ideas and translated with male words not found in the original! (Just as their hatred of the Sabbath caused the translation of “Sabbatismos” in Heb. 4:9 to become “rest” instead of the correct translation, “Sabbath rest.” In both cases they knew better.

In fact, all scriptures relating to the ministry were written without gender bias; they were written for both men and women.⁹¹ (Emph. added.) (For further information see Appendix D, Qualifications for Elders).

The UCG paper states:

From a modern perspective, a minor footnote as to why Paul put guidelines for deaconesses in the middle of guidelines for deacons is that husbands and wives might have been ordained as deacon and deaconess at the same time.

If a deacon and “deaconess” (a term and concept that is nowhere in the Bible) were to be ordained at the same time, Paul certainly would have said so. Regardless, the idea that Paul is speaking of a dual ordination has no support in the Greek.

⁹¹ Dianne McDonnell, “Requirements for Ministry: Can a Woman be a Minister?”, 09 Nov. 2002.
<http://www.churchofgoddfw.com/women/w_minister.shtml>.

Summarizing the connection between *diakonos* in Roman 16:1 and 2 referring to Phoebe and deacons and “deaconesses” in I Tim. 3, Charles Trombley states:

Phoebe was a deacon (Rom. 16:1) whom Paul called a ruler (*prostatis*) of many (Rom 16.2). The King James Version used the word “succourer” but the word *prostatis* isn’t translated that way anywhere else in the Greek Scriptures. It was a common, classical word meaning... “a woman set over others.” It’s the feminine form of the masculine noun *prostates*, which means “defender” or “guardian” when it refers to men. In I Timothy 3:4-5, 12 and 5:17, the verb *proistemi* is used of the qualifications for bishops and deacons when Paul charged the men to “rule” well their households, which included caring for their needs. Whatever it means for men, it must mean the same for women. Whatever these bishops and deacons did for their households, Phoebe did for the church and Paul. The positions were identical.⁹²

“Husband of One Wife”

Another reason given for only men being bishops is in I Tim 3:2 – “A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife.” (Emph. added). The reasoning goes like this: Since only a man can be a husband, women are, therefore, excluded from being a bishop. However, verse 12 contains the exact same requirement for deacons:

“Let the deacons [*diakonos*] be the husband of one wife...”

As already shown, Phoebe was a *diakonos* (the masculine form of the Greek word translated deacon). Her status as *diakonos* undermines the rationale that a *diakonos*, like a bishop, must be male because only males can be the “husband of one wife.” A look at the actual Greek words used presents a more gender inclusive view of the scriptures on this issue.

The Greek term translated “husband of one wife” is “a one-woman man.” (*mias gunaikos andra*) — in other words, a man who does not cheat on his wife. *The Jewish Commentary* renders it: “faithful to his wife.” Another possibility would be to prevent ordaining church leaders who practiced polygamy. Since only men could have more than one wife, this then would also not apply to the women. Rather than meaning to exclude women, this term is simply used, as Stern says, brevity of expression, or as a statement of the rule for the more frequent case.”⁹³

Another example of the “statement of the rule for the more frequent case is Matt. 5:28:

“But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

Does Jesus mean that only men can commit adultery through lust, and women can lust and not commit adultery? Certainly not. However, since males are the ones who do most of the lusting, especially in that restrictive society, Jesus addressed this to the men. But there is no exception for women. Both commit adultery when they lust.

⁹² Charles Trombley, 194-195, qtd. in Plampin.

⁹³ Stern 642.

CHAPTER 7 – THE EXAMPLE OF AN ELDER’S WIFE

The position of Elder’s Wife is mentioned nowhere in the Bible and requires nothing more than that a woman be married to an elder. Thus, for purposes of this paper on women in the Bible, I will not comment on this topic other than to ask this question: Why, in our church, do we have elder’s wife and deaconess as the only two positions to which women may aspire . . . and neither are mentioned anywhere in the Bible?

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The all-important principle in interpreting the Bible is that scripture does not contradict scripture. Can the few verses in I Corinthians and I Timothy that seemingly restrict women's ministry contradict the many biblical examples of women in positions of ministry and leadership, such as Deborah, Huldah, Priscilla, Phoebe, Junia, and the others mentioned?

Our view on the "role" of women in the church has become our church tradition because we have never taken the time to research the relevant scriptures to find out what they really say. We have researched the Sabbath, the Holy Days, the doctrine of the Trinity, and all the other doctrines where we differ with mainstream Christianity. But on this subject alone, we have done what most churches have done with Sunday, Easter, Christmas, the Trinity and women — simply accepted the superficial arguments originated and propagated by the Catholic Church.

The profound question we must ask ourselves is, are we guilty of "transgressing the commandments of God" with our tradition of women's restrictions in the Church?

In the times the Bible was written, everyone can agree that the society was patriarchal and male-dominant. Women were considered inferior and had few, if any, leadership roles. Contrary to the societal norms of the times, the Bible enjoined women's leadership opportunities — both by example (Deborah, Huldah, Priscilla, Phoebe, Junia), by scriptural exhortation (as in Acts — "women shall prophesy") and by statements of fact (women were praying and prophesying in Corinth). The church in each case bucked the societal norm, even at the risk of persecution and death.

Today, it is exactly the reverse in America and most western countries. Women have occupied just about every leadership position in our culture, including heads of state. But the church is hanging on to false teachings promulgated by a pagan Church that has adopted the idea of the inferiority of women from pagan societies and dressed them up in scriptural clothing. In essence, we are following the dictates not of our own modern ever-increasingly equality-based society, but those of an ancient male-dominant society which Jesus denounced. (See Appendix B showing where we got our ideas about women).

What is the effect of the current doctrine on the people we are trying to reach? As Bonnidell Clouse said at the end of her book, "A society that accepts women as corporation executives and university presidents will find it difficult to listen to a church that silences them."⁹⁴ (Emph. added).

⁹⁴ Bonnidell Clouse *Women Ministry, Four Views*, ed. Bonnidell and Robert G. Clouse (Downers Grove: IL InterVarsity Press, 1989), 227.

My hope is that the Church review with an open mind what I have written and confirm its accuracy or disprove it. If anything I have written is incorrect, I respectfully ask for proof to be shown where I am in error. If it is correct, however, we must change our doctrine and give the women in our Church the opportunity to serve Christ in all areas. I know this will not be easily accepted by some of the ministry and some of the membership. But the New Testament Church had a long battle incorporating Gentiles into the Church. And they were successful in spite of many people disagreeing with the inclusion of the Gentiles with the Jews.

There are two overarching principles that Christ gave that need to be kept in mind with regard to this subject:

- 1) In the Gentile nations “their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you ... whoever would be great among you must be your servant” Mat. 20:25 (RSV emph. added). “Yet much of the concept regarding women in ministry rides on the concept of authoritative teaching and positions of authority as belonging to men only.”⁹⁵ (Emph. added).
- 2) “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” This is the greatest equalizing principle of them all. Few, if any, men would appreciate restrictions on their ability to serve God without regard for their qualifications or willingness, but based solely on their gender. And how many of our men would like to see their intelligent and talented wives and daughters be able to use their gifts to serve their Church in all areas?

Walter Liefeld has said it well: “The *authority* of biblical teaching does not rest in the person teaching, but rather in the *Word of God* that he or she proclaims.”⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Clouse 165.

⁹⁶ Alvera Mickelsen, “An Egalitarian Response”, *Women Ministry, Four Views*, 121.

APPENDIX A

Women Attacked at the Wailing Wall

ORTHODOX JEWS BASH US RABBIS

January 26, 1997 – By JACK KATZENELL Associated Press Writer Sunday, January 26, 1997 2:41 PM EST JERUSALEM (AP) – **Ultra-Orthodox Jews shouted insults Sunday at a group of Reform Jewish rabbis from the United States who prayed at the Western Wall with men and women standing together, in violation of Orthodox custom “You women are impure and evil spirits,” shouted one ultra-Orthodox Jew after the rabbis prayed in the plaza about 50 yards from the wall.**

The Western Wall, the last remnant of the Jewish Temple destroyed by Romans in A.D. 70, is regarded by Jews their holiest site.

The scuffle, the latest in a series of confrontations at the wall between Orthodox and Reform Jews, is part of the larger conflict over religious rights in Israel. The Orthodox, who hold sway over religious law within Israel, have refused equal recognition to the Reform and Conservative branches of Judaism. Reform and Conservative marriages performed in Israel are not legally recognized, for example.

Orthodox men at the wall shouted that women could not be rabbis “You have no brains,” objected one man. “You are disgusting,” shouted three young ultra-Orthodox seminary students, who wore black coats and trilby hats. Border police quickly escorted the Orthodox students away from the women rabbis. One student began screaming and lay face down on the ground until he was carried off by his friends.

In accordance with Orthodox tradition, women are permitted to pray at the wall but are separated from the men by a barrier. In contradiction of Orthodox practice, the Reform women rabbis wore prayer shawls, leather prayer cases on their right arm and foreheads, and skull caps.

Rabbi Jo David of Freeport, N.Y., said she was not angry with the ultra-Orthodox for their insults. “They are entitled to their opinion,” she said. “I have prayed at the Western Wall before, but never with my Talit (prayer shawl) and tefillin (prayer cases). It gave me a special feeling of being connected with the Divine Presence. I hope that in the future we will be able to do this without police protection.”

“These people desecrate God’s holy name,” said Isaac, an ultra-Orthodox Jew from Spring Valley, N.Y., who refused to give his full name. “They violate the laws of the Torah here at Judaism’s holiest site, and they cause such pain to devout Jews that they sometimes even drive them to violence.”

The leader of the Reform delegation, Rabbi Ami Hirsch, 38, of New York said “We are holding this egalitarian service to demonstrate for religious pluralism, for the right of all Jews to practice their religion according to their lights.” He said the group planned to warn Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu against giving in to pressure from the ultra-Orthodox for legislation that would disqualify conversions to Judaism conducted by Conservative and Reform rabbis outside Israel.

Orthodox rabbis currently control all conversions in Israel but non-Orthodox conversions abroad are recognized by the state.

See next page

Wailing at the Wall

By Phyllis Chesler

According to those who slander them, women cannot be counted as Jews in a prayer quorum. Women are separate and unequal. Simultaneously, women are routinely idealized as superior, as long as they confine themselves to their proper, subordinate places – away from the Kotel.

In 1989, for a period of nearly eight months, a group of Jewish women peacefully praying at the Kotel (or Western Wall) in Israel were verbally and physically attacked by ultra-Orthodox extremist men. The police and the border patrol refused to intervene, except once when they used tear gas to disperse both the rioters and the women at prayer.

Women of the Wall (WOW) and the International Committee for Women of the Wall (ICWOW) sued the state and the Ministry of Religion in the Israeli Supreme Court for their religious and civil rights. They asked that the Israeli police maintain law and order in public places – just as they do at holy sites shared by Muslims and Jews elsewhere, as well as in disputes among different denominations of Jewry. The Court prohibited the women from praying in their fashion until the matter was resolved, either judicially or politically. If WOW disobeyed this order, they were informed they would be fined and arrested. The case has been to the Supreme Court three times and has been the subject of a "six-month" government-commissioned study – a study that has now lasted for over three years.

Although WOW's mode of prayer was in strict accordance with an Orthodox interpretation of Jewish law (halacha), the women – who prayed only with each other in the women's section – were still called "whores," "witches," "unnatural," and "tainted by women's lib," both on the ground and in the press. According to those who slander them, women cannot be counted as Jews in a prayer quorum. Women are separate and unequal. Simultaneously, women are routinely idealized as superior, as long as they confine themselves to their proper, subordinate places – away from the Kotel. Israel has increasingly been plagued by fundamentalist terrorism – both Jewish and Muslim. Following the assassination of Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin by a right-wing religious Israeli Jew, his successor Benjamin Netanyahu's government has increasingly yielded to right-wing influence. As a result, bills are currently pending in the Israeli Parliament to turn the Kotel, which since it was liberated in 1967 has been a national shrine, into an ultra-Orthodox religious site. Lawsuits are pending in the High Court to strengthen the Orthodox stranglehold over conversions. **Recently, the state-run bus service consented to a religious neighborhood's demand that women be forced to sit separately from men at the back of the bus.**

On June 10 and 11, 1997, during the sacred days of Shavuot, a group of Israeli Conservative and Reform Jews gathered to pray at the Kotel. They did not know that on June 2, the government had secretly enacted "Decision #14," based on an also-secret report by the Israeli police. In the report, the police claimed they could not protect the petitioners (WOW) at the Kotel. As a result, the government declared in Decision #14 that the petitioner's prayer at the Kotel would "constitute a danger to public order."

The following is an eyewitness account of what happened to the group of Jews, both men and women, who came to the Kotel to pray:

Haviva Ner-David: "My complacency was shattered . . . It was when they saw women reading from the Torah that they really went wild. Women reading Torah with or without men is desecrating the Torah in their eyes . . . Hundreds of young men in black had surrounded us and were yelling . . . they began to push and shove and kick and spit and I immediately asked some people around me to help me shield my baby, who was sitting in his stroller. The police's solution was to ask us to leave . . . I had experienced this same hatred before as a member of another group, the Women of the Wall . . ."

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APPENDIX B

Where Did We In The Church Get Our Ideas About Women From?

Jewish Bias

The Jewish mindset, especially after the Babylonian captivity, was wholly biased against women. They looked upon them as inferior in every way. This idea of inferiority certainly did not come from the Bible but from the Israelites' pagan surroundings in Babylon. This is the same place where the Oral Law originated, and with it the systematizing of laws against women and other so-called "traditions of the elders" that Jesus and Paul continually battled in their time.

Later, during the time between the Old and the New Testament, when Alexander the Great had attempted to Hellenize the known world by inculcating it with Greek philosophies, the Jews tried to reconcile these Greek pagan teachings with the Old Testament and the Jewish customs. This period between the testaments was called "the days of mingling."⁹⁷

Here are some statements from the Oral Law:

Sotah 3:4 – "Let the words of the Torah be burned rather than committed to women."

"If a man teaches his daughter Torah, it is as though he taught her lewdness."

The Oral Law – "Even the most virtuous of women is a witch."

Menahot 43b – "Praised be God who has not created me a woman."

Niddah 31b – "...when a girl comes into the world all are sad, when a girl comes into the world nothing has come into the world..."

"Even the most virtuous woman is a witch."⁹⁸

Philo (20 BC to 50 AD) was a Jewish scholar and philosopher, who lived in Alexandria at the time of Christ. "He sought to harmonize the teachings of Plato and Aristotle and other Greek philosophers with the teachings of the Old Testament. In the process he imposed the Greek disdain for women onto his interpretation of Scripture (just as later Christian scholars were to do in their interpretations of the writings of Paul)."⁹⁹

Philo taught that since women were able to be more deceived than men, the proper relation of a wife to her husband is epitomized in the verb "to serve as a slave" and the only purpose for marriage was procreation. He would have women confined to the home. "Women are best suited to the indoor life which never strays from the house."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Bushnell 37.

⁹⁸ Rothman.

⁹⁹ Bristow 25.

¹⁰⁰ Richard N. Longenecker, "Questions on Genesis 1:33," qtd. in *Women, Authority & the Bible*, ed Alvera Mickelsen (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 70.

Josephus (37-93 AD), a Jewish historian who studied Greek and Hebrew literature, viewed the Old Testament with the same disdain toward women.

In *Contra Apion* 2:210 he wrote – “The woman is in all things inferior to man. Let her accordingly be submissive.”

He insisted that the testimony of women in a court of law not be admitted “on account of their levity and the boldness of their sex.”¹⁰¹

The Church Fathers, the early Bible historians of the Catholic Church, shaped how the Church interpreted scripture and were the authorities on what the Church should believe. They all studied the Greek philosophers and were influenced by them in addition to their own cultural prejudices against women.

They thus developed an “orthodox theology” not based on Jesus’ teachings, but on the Greek philosophies in which they were steeped.

The Greek Bias

Socrates and Aristotle especially influenced the development of thought among not just the western world but early church leaders as well.

Socrates (ca. 470-399 B.C.) – believed that women were the “weaker sex” and said that “being born a woman is divine punishment since a woman is half-way between a man and an animal.” He believed women were inferior to men and were to be treated as such.¹⁰²

Plato (427-347 BC) – Women are those who fell prey to their irrational, emotional side, and are therefore incapable of reason and making rational choices . . . Moreover as irrational beings, women may not always know what they really want, and so it is the man’s domain to decide for them.¹⁰³

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) – believed “a husband and father rules over wife and children... the male by nature is fitter to command than the female” Aristotle, *Politics*

The courage of a man is shown in his ability to command. The courage of a woman is found in obeying.

He taught that the husband should be more than twice his wife’s age so he could dominate her.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, qtd. in Bristow 26-27.

¹⁰² Bristow 4.

¹⁰³ Bristow 4.

¹⁰⁴ Susan C. Hyatt, *In The Spirit We’re Equal*, (Euless, TX: Hyatt Press 1998), 50.

The Roman Catholic Bias

Clement, Bishop of Alexandria (ca A.D. 150 - 220) – believed every woman should blush with embarrassment because she is a woman and feel shame if she reflected on her nature.¹⁰⁵

Tertullian, Father of Latin theology (A.D. 160 - 240) – called women the “devil’s gateway.” “On account of your desert [*i.e.*, punishment] even the Son of God had to die.” He was the first to use I Corinthians 14 to silence women where they could not baptize, sing, pray or teach.¹⁰⁶

Origen, Father of Systematic Theology (A.D. 155 - 284) – he castrated himself and believed that “God does not stoop to look upon what is feminine”

Augustine, Father of Orthodox Theology (A.D. 354 - 430) – taught that “women were not created in the image of God and that the female state is a deformity.” He promoted the concept that both women and sex were evil.

Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria (d. 444) – believed that women were inferior and should not teach men.

Chrysostom, Patriarch of Constantinople (A.D. 347 - 407) said “Woman taught once and ruined all and to ask them for advice would be like talking to irrational animals of a lower kind.” He also believed that woman’s inferior status was not simply a result of the fall, but was an inferior one at the moment of creation. He adds, ‘image’ has rather to do with authority and this only the man has; the woman has it no longer. For he is subjected to no one, while she is subjected to him” Quoted by Hyatt.

Jerome, Ablest Scholar of the Western Church (A.D. 340- 420) – “Woman is a temple built over a sewer.” He described women in leadership as sin-ridden wenches.¹⁰⁷

Thomas Aquinas, Father of Systematic Theology (c. 1225 - 1274). “Aquinas did more than any other to systematize Christian beliefs and to harmonize them with Greek philosophy. In this monumental task, Aquinas interpreted the writings of St. Paul through the mind of Aristotle, and the Greek deprecation of women became solidly infused within Christian theology.”¹⁰⁸

He said: “Woman is defective and misbegotten.” And he believed that man is the thinker, and woman the childbearer. Woman, therefore, can fulfill her divine destiny only in the matter of bearing children for the man; “she was not fitted to help man except in generation, because another man would have proved a more effective help in anything else.”¹⁰⁹

Ruth Tucker and Walter Liefeld point out that Thomas Aquinas, the greatest medieval theologian, believed that women were inferior, dependent, dominated by sexual appetites, and unfit for any important role in society or in the church. Thus, Thomas Aquinas argued, as did all medieval male theologians, that women should be subordinate and submissive to men in virtually all matters.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ Hyatt 51.

¹⁰⁶ Hyatt 51-52.

¹⁰⁷ Hyatt 55.

¹⁰⁸ Bristow 29.

¹⁰⁹ Bristow 116.

¹¹⁰ Ruth Tucker and Walter Liefeld, *Daughters of the Church: Women and Ministry from New Testament Times to the Present* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987), 164-65.

Protestant Bias

Martin Luther, Founder of Protestantism (1483-1546) – “Woman must neither begin or complete anything without man: Where he is there she must be, and bend before him as before a master, whom she shall fear and to whom she shall be subject and obedient.”¹¹¹

John Knox, Protestant Theologian (1505-1572) – “Woman in her greatest perfection was made to serve and obey man.”¹¹²

John Calvin, Notable Protestant Theologian (1509 – 1564) – “As the woman derives her origin from man, she is therefore inferior in rank... as the woman was created for the sake of the man, she is therefore subject to him... On this account all women are born, that they may acknowledge themselves as inferior in consequence of the superiority of the male sex.”¹¹³

King James I, King of England (1566-1625) who caused the Bible to be translated in the version that bears his name — “To make women learned and to make a fox tame work out to the same end. Educating a woman or a fox simply makes them more cunning.”¹¹⁴

As shown by the quotes above, the Protestant scholars carried on the same bigoted mindset. The early ones were all educated in Catholic universities and learned the same Greek philosophies.

“The Church Fathers who laid the foundations of orthodox theology did so from the perspectives of Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy. They interpreted the writings of Paul through the eyes of pagans who lived 500 years before Christ and Paul! This problem intensified when Thomas Aquinas (1125-1274) systematized Roman theology using Aristotelian philosophy. Thus the male superiority/female inferiority, male rulership/female subjugation, male dominance/female silence formula was established in the root system of orthodox theology. These sexist presuppositions now permeate theology and provide a misogynous starting point for biblical interpretation regarding women even today among Spirit-oriented believers.”¹¹⁵

Thus we see that this same female bias is being perpetuated into our time because it has become systemized orthodox religious dogma still being taught in most seminaries and still being preached in most churches in this country, including ours.

On the subject of why there is a male bias against women in the Bible translations, Rabbi Rothman wrote:

“Once I realized the bigoted mindset that the translators had toward women, it made perfect sense as to how they, in good conscience, were able to choose renderings in their translations that seem to disregard women as viable partners and capable leaders in the ministry of the Church. This perspective was effectively argued by Berkeley and Alvera Mickelsen in their article, “Does Male Dominance Tarnish our Translations.”¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ Grady 170.

¹¹² Grady 18.

¹¹³ Hyatt 67.

¹¹⁴ Gene Edwards, “Who Started the Mistreatment of Women”, *The Christian Woman... Set Free* (Jacksonville, FL: Seedsowers). < <http://godswordtowomen.org/studies/articles/edwards.htm> >.

¹¹⁵ Hyatt 56.

¹¹⁶ Rabbi Ed Rothman, “In the Likeness of G-d: Male and Female He Created Them”, 27 Feb 2006. < <http://www.i-m-f.org/Teachings/Likeness/likeness.html> >.

APPENDIX C

Mistranslations in the Bible Concerning Women

1. A Prophecy about Women Proclaiming Good Tidings?

Psalm 68:11 (NKJV) – “The Lord gave the word. Great was the company of those who proclaimed it.”

(NAS) – “The Lord gives the command; **the women who proclaim the good tidings are a great host...**” *Katherine Bushnell, God’s Word to Women*

Adam Clarke’s Commentary says of verse 11: “Great was the company of those that published it. [The Hebrew is translated] ‘[o]f the female preachers there was a great host.’ Such is the literal translation of this passage; the reader may make of it what he pleases.”

2. Is God Against Women Ruling?

Isa 3:12 (NKJV) – “**As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them.**”

This is one of the main scriptures used by the church to hammer home the idea that God forbids women to be in leadership positions. But this is a rank mistranslation. It is not at all about women ruling.

The Septuagint (the translation Christ and the writers of the NT used) says, “As for my people, taxgatherers (Gr. *praktōres*) glean them, and exactors (Gr. *apaitountes*) rule over them.”

Adam Clarke Commentary: This verse might be read, "The collectors of grapes shall be their oppressors; and usurers (noshim, instead of nashim, women) shall rule over them."

Even the context does not support the translation of “women and children.”

Vs. 14 – “The Lord will enter into judgment with the elders of his people and His princes;” (both are masculine gender, not feminine). “**For you have eaten up the vineyard**” (the conduct of extortionate tax gatherers on behalf of the masculine rulers). “**The plunder of the poor is in your house. Vs. 15 “What mean you that you crush my people and grind the faces of the poor?”**”

3. “**O Daughter That Bringest Glad Tidings to Zion**”

Isa. 40:9 – RSV – Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, “Behold your God!”

Adam Clarke’s Commentary: Verse 9. “O Zion, that bringest good tidings-“**O daughter, that bringest glad tidings to Zion.**” That the true construction of the sentence is this, which makes Zion the receiver, not the publisher, of the glad tidings, which latter has been the most prevailing interpretation, will, I think, very clearly appear, if we rightly consider the image itself, and the custom and common practice from which it is taken. I have added the word daughter to express the feminine gender of the Hebrew participle, which I know not how to do otherwise in our language; and this is absolutely necessary in order to ascertain the image.”

4. Diminishing the Importance Women by Placing Aquila's Name before Priscilla's.

Acts 18:26 (KJV) – “And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue; whom when **Aquila and Priscilla** had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God ‘more perfectly.’”

The Greek text has it as *Priscilla kai Akulas*: “. . . but when **Priscilla and Aquila heard him.**”

The NRSV has it correct also.

5. Phoebe Becomes a Servant Instead of a Minister.

Rom 16:1 – “Phoebe a *diakonon* (masculine in the Greek) of the Church of Cenchrea.” Where *diakonon* pertains to a man (in 22 other scriptures), it is translated “minister,” but in this verse only, in connection with a woman, is it translated as “servant.”

Tyndale Translation: Rom 16:1 “I commend unto you Phoebe our sister (**which is a minister** of the congregation of Cenchrea).”

6. Phoebe Becomes a “Succouror” (KJV) Instead of “A Woman Set over Others”.

Rom 16:2 (KJV) – “For she has been a succouror of many, and of myself also.”

The word translated “succouror” is (Gr.) “*prostatis*.” Thayer’s definition is “a woman set over others, a female guardian.”

Greek scholar Alfred Marshall translates this passage:

“Now I commend to you Phoebe the sister of us, being also a minister of the church in Cenchrea, in order that her ye may receive in the Lord worthily of the saints, and may stand by her in whatever of you she may have need things; for indeed she a protectress of many became (or was made) and of myself.”

7. Junia Becomes the Male, Junias.

Rom 16:7 (RSV) — “Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners; they are men of note among the apostles, and they were in Christ before me.”

The Greek has “Junia” instead of “Junius” and “my relatives” instead of “kinsmen.” The word “men” is not in the original Greek text. It was inserted by the translators, apparently because they could not imagine a woman being an apostle. The Greek simply says, “they are of note among the apostles.”

Junia was considered to be a female until the 13th century when Aegidius translated it Junias. Junia was a common Latin female name. No Junius (male form of the name) is recorded.

8. Are Gifts of the Holy Spirit Given to Men Only?

I Cor 12:4-7 (KJV) — “But the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal.”

Greek: “But to EACH is given the manifestation for profit.” All the gifts mentioned in the New Testament by Paul are gender neutral.

9. Another Woman Leader Named Stephana Becomes a Male.

I Cor. 16:15, 16 – “Now I urge you brethren You know the household of Stephanas [Gr. *Stephana*] that they were the first fruits of Achaia, and have devoted themselves to the ministry to the saints) that you also be in subjection to such and to everyone who in everyone working with us and laboring.”

Paul is talking about ministers with authority. Therefore, many try to maintain Stephana was an abbreviation for a man’s name, but Stephana is a Greek female name; Stephanos was the masculine form in Acts 6:5. This translation is based on the disbelief that a woman could be the head of a household of ministers.

Here is how William Tyndale, the great English Bible scholar, translates it:

Vs. 15 – “Brethren (ye knowe the housse of Stephana how yt they are the first of Achaia and that they have appointed them selves to minister ynto the saynctes).”

Vs. 16 – “I beseche you yt ye be obedient ynto soche and to all that helpe and laboure.”

The postscript to I Corinthians from the Tyndale New Testament: *The pistle unto the Corinthyans sent from Philippos, By Stephana, and Fortunatus, and Acaichus, and Timotheus.*

10. Were Only Men Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, Teachers?

Eph 4:11 – “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, PASTORS AND TEACHERS...”

The Montgomery New Testament has: ‘He gave some MEN...’

I Cor. 12:28 – “And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles...”

SOME includes both men and women. That means women could be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, etc., as well as men.

11. A Woman Leader Named Nympha Becomes a Male.

Col 4:15 (KJV) – “Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.”

(RSV) – “Give greetings...to Nympha and the church in her house.”

Greek: “...and Nympha and the in every [kat] house [oikon] her [autees] church.”

Nine out of twelve Bible translations listed Nympha as Nymphas. So Nympha became the male, Nymphas, because a woman couldn't possibly be a leader of several churches in her house.

Paul greets Nympha among other church leaders and greets her house church. *She is the only leader mentioned by name in her town.*¹¹⁷

12. Were Only Men Teaching in Ephesus?

I Tim 1:3 – “I urged you...remain on in Ephesus in order that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines.”

The Greek has “certain ones not to teach strange doctrines.” Paul is saying: “Instruct certain people not to teach false doctrines.” This includes women. This means women were teaching in Ephesus.

13. Can a Bishop Be Modest? Different Translations for Men and Women.

The Greek word “*kosmios*” occurs twice in I Timothy, and it means ordered in outward deportment and inner life. Yet it is translated “modest” when relating to a woman, (I Tim 2:9), and “blameless” for a bishop who is assumed to be a male. (I Tim. 3:2).

I Tim 2:9 (KJV) – “In like manner also that women adorn [*cosmein*] themselves in modest [*cosmios*] apparel with shamefacedness [*aidous*] and sobriety [*sophrosounes*].”

Properly translated from the Greek: “. . . that women in seemly [*cosmios*] guise with modesty [*aidous*] and discreetness [*sophrosounes*] adorn [*cosmein*] themselves.”

The same word *aidos* (here translated “modest”) is used in I Tim 3:2 when describing a bishop, yet the NKJV translates *aidos* in that context as “blameless.” And the KJV translates it as “of good behaviour.” The Greek translates it as “decorous.”

14. Does Paul Forbid Women to Usurp Authority Over Men?

I Tim 2:12 (KJV) – “But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.”

(RSV) – “I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent.”

The Greek word for “usurp authority” or “have authority” is *authentain*. This is the only place in the Bible where it is used. The normal word for “authority” is *exousia*, and is used many times in the New Testament. *Strong's* first definition is “to act of oneself.” Another meaning derived from this definition can be “claim to be originator or author of something.” Catherine Clark Kroeger. Paul used the rare word to counter Gnostic teachings which had taken hold of the Ephesus Church.

¹¹⁷ Dianne McDonnell, “A Church with Women”. <http://www.churchofgoddfw.com/women/w_with.shtml>

15. Do Women Have to be Silent, While Men Are at Peace?

I Tim 2:12 (KJV) – “But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.”

The Greek word for “silence” here is *hesuchia*, and it was used just ten verses before in I Timothy 2:2 — “Prayers be made...for kings and all who are in authority that we may lead a quiet and a peaceable (*hesuchia*) life.”

Again, only when the word *hesuchia* deals with a woman is it translated “silence, silent.”

16. Women Deacons Become Deacons’ Wives

I Tim. 3:8 — “Likewise deacons must be reverent...”

I Tim. 3:11 — “Likewise *their wives* must be reverent...”

“Their” is not in the Greek. Woman or wife is the same Greek word: *gune*. Only by context can the meaning be ascertained if it is to be wife or woman. It is a wife if it has a possessive pronoun in front. Thus “their” makes it wives. This is missing from the Greek. The women, therefore, are female deacons.

17. Were Women to Manage the House?

I Tim. 5:14 – “Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house...”

Women in Ephesus were idle (vs. 13). Many became gossips and busybodies. Paul instructed them to stay home and to rule their homes not “manage the house.”

The word translated in this verse as “keep house” or “manage the house” is *oikodespotein*, and it means to “be ruler of the house.” *Despotein* is where the word “despot” comes from. Yet, translators, perhaps fearful of giving women that kind of authority, translated this word “keep house” or “manage the house” rather than “rule their homes.”

18. Is Woman the Weaker Vessel? Was She Created Weak and Shy?

I Pet 3:7 — “Likewise you husbands, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered.”

The Greek says: “Husbands, likewise dwelling with them according to knowledge, *as with a weaker vessel*, the wife, rendering honor as also being joint heirs of the grace of life, so as your prayers not be cut off.”

American Standard Bible: “husbands, likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, *as with a weaker vessel*, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.”

The NKJV as well as the KJV ask the men to render honor to the wife as the weaker vessel. The Greek understanding is the husband is to honor the wife as a joint heir to the grace of life, and to live with her in an understanding way AS with a weaker vessel.

“This text does not directly say women are weaker. It exhorts husbands to treat their wives with consideration and respect as if they were weaker. Paul is saying because of the sin in Eden, and the patriarchal governments which marginalized them, women are at a disadvantage even politically, and need to be protected. He is not putting them down or relegating them to inferior status.” *J. Lee Grady, Ten Lies the Church Tells Women*.

19. A Woman Church Leader Becomes a Church.

II John:1 — “The elder to the elect lady [*eklepta kuria*] and her children.”

The word translated “elect” in the Greek is *electa*, or “chosen of God.” (Thayers). *Kuria* is the feminine for *kurios*, which means “supreme in authority” or “Lord.” The reason her name is not mentioned is because of great persecution and John warns her of many deceivers.

John continues: “It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth.” (vs. 4).

In the New Testament pupils or disciples are called children of their teachers, because the latter nourishes their minds by instructing them. John’s children are mentioned in 3 John 1:4. This epistle was obviously written to a person, just as 3 John was (“The elder to Gaius the beloved”). He also writes he is looking forward to seeing her “face to face.” So *eklepte kuria* could not be symbolic of the church, but is a real woman leader. He warns her not to take a certain deceiver into her house, which is obviously a house church.

John also mentions “the children of your elect sister send you their greetings.” Is sister a title for the ministry just as brother is used by Paul?

NOTE: It is noteworthy that Acts 18:28 and Col 4:15 illustrate how – in some cases – The Textus Receptus (TR) and the KJV reflect Western text errors that minimize the historically important roles of early Christian women., Textus Receptus and the Western Text, from bibletexts.com

APPENDIX D

Qualifications for Men and Women Elders

I Timothy 3

Englishman's Greek New Testament The Greek Text of Stephens 1550	<i>King James Version</i>
Vs. 1) Faithful is the word: if ANY (man or woman) stretches forward to overseership (<i>episcopos</i>), he (<i>goes back to ANY, not masculine</i>) is desirous of a good work. (No masculine noun in the Greek).	Vs. 1) This is a true saying, if a MAN desire the OFFICE OF A BISHOP , he desireth a good work.
Vs. 2) It behooves then the overseer (<i>episkopou</i>) to be irreproachable, to be husband of one wife, sober, discreet, decorous, hospitable, apt to teach:	Vs. 2) A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;
Vs. 3) Not given to wine, not a striker, not greedy of base gain, but gentle, not contentious, not loving money;	Vs. 3) Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;
Vs. 4) His (<i>refers back to ANY</i>) own house well ruling (<i>proistamenou</i>), his children having in subjection with all gravity; (<i>there are no masculine pronouns in the Greek</i>).	Vs. 4) One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (rule from the Greek word <i>proestemi</i>). (<i>There are no masculine pronouns in the Greek.</i>)
Vs. 5) (but if ONE his own house knows not how to rule (<i>prostenai</i>), how shall <i>he</i> (<i>refers back to ONE and should be he/she/it</i>) take care of the assembly of God.?)	Vs. 5) For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) (<i>There are no masculine nouns or pronouns in this verse.</i>)
Vs. 6) not a novice lest being puffed up <i>he</i> (<i>goes back to ONE, ANY</i>) may fall into the crime of the devil. (no masculine pronoun in Greek)	Vs. 6) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.
Vs. 7) But it behooves him (footnote: should read IT IS NECESSARY) to have a good testimony from those without, lest into reproach <i>he</i> may fall and snare of the devil (<i>no masculine pronoun</i>).	Vs. 7) Moreover, HE must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.
Vs. 8) THOSE WHO SERVE IN LIKE MANNER , (<i>diakonous</i>) grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of base gain,	Vs. 8) Likewise, <i>must</i> the DEACONS be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;
Vs. 9) Holding the mystery of the faith in pure conscience.	Vs. 9) Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.
Vs. 10) And THESE also let THEM be proved first, then LET THEM SERVE (<i>diakoneitosan</i>) being unimpeachable.	Vs. 10) And let these also first be proved; then let them USE THE OFFICE OF A DEACON being found blameless. (<i>Office of a Deacon is not in the Greek</i>)
Vs. 11) WOMEN IN LIKE MANNER (<i>as the bishops and deacons</i>) grave, not slanderous, sober, faithful in all things.	Vs. 11) Even so <i>must their</i> wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all thing. (<i>Italized words are not in the Greek.</i>)
Vs. 12) Let THOSE WHO SERVE (<i>diakonois</i>) (<i>verb</i>) be husbands of one wife, ruling (THEIR) children well and their own houses.	Vs. 12) Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.
Vs. 13) For those WELL HAVING SERVED (<i>diakonesautes</i>) a good degree for themselves acquire, and much boldness in faith which (is) in Christ Jesus.	Vs. 13) For they that have USED THE OFFICE OF A DEACON well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus (bold words are not in the Greek).

I Timothy 5

Englishman's Greek New Testament The Greek Text of Stephens 1550	<i>King James Version</i>
Vs. 1) An ELDER (<i>presbutero</i>) do not sharply rebuke but exhort (him) as a father; younger(s) (<i>neoterous</i>) (then) as brethren (<i>adelphous</i>);	Vs.1) Rebuke not an elder, but intreat (him) as a father; and the young men as brethren;
Vs. 2) Elder (women) (<i>presbuteras</i>) as mothers; younger (<i>neoterias</i>) as sisters, with all purity. (<i>Presbuteras is feminine of presbutero</i>).	Vs. 2) The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity. (<i>Man in vs. 1 is translated elder, but woman is elder woman</i>)
Vs. 17) The elders (<i>presbuteroi</i>) (includes both male and female) who take the lead well (<i>prostotes</i> Rom 16:1), of double honor let be counted worthy, specially those labouring in word and teaching.	Vs. 17) Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.
Vs. 18) for says the scriptures, An ox treading out corn thou shalt not muzzle, and worthy (is) the workman of his hire.	Vs. 18) For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The Labourer is worthy of his reward.
Vs. 19) Against an elder (<i>prebuterou</i>) an accusation receive not, unless on (the testimony of) to or three witnesses.	Vs. 19) Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.
Vs. 22) Hands quickly on NO ONE lay, nor share in sins of OTHERS...	Vs. 22) Lay hands suddenly on NO MAN , neither be partaker of other MEN'S sins.
Vs. 24) Of some PEOPLE (<i>anthropou</i>) the sins manifest are, going before to judgment; and SOME also they follow after.	Vs. 24) Some MEN'S sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some MEN they follow after.

I Timothy 6

Englishman's Greek New Testament The Greek Text of Stephens 1550	<i>King James Version</i>
Vs. 3) If ANYONE teaches other doctrine, and draws not near to sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and teaching according to piety,	Vs. 3) If any MAN teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, <i>even</i> the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness,
Vs. 4) He (<i>refers back to anyone</i>) is puffed up, knowing nothing, but sick about questions and disputes of words out of which come envy, strife, evil speakings, wicked suspicion,	Vs. 4) He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,
Vs. 5) vain argumentations of PEOPLE (<i>anthropon</i>) corrupted in mind and destitute of the truth holding piety to be gain; withdraw from such.	Vs. 5) Perverse disputings of MEN of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.