

An Examination
of the Roles of
Men and Women
in Light of Scripture
and the Social Sciences

Man
and
Woman
in
Christ

STEPHEN B. CLARK

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PREFACE

WHEN a group of Christians I belonged to used to gather together for prayer, we would sometimes sing songs that had separate parts for men and women. For a while, however, we did not pay much attention to the fact that men and women were supposed to sing different parts. We felt that when men and women did things together, they should do them in basically the same way. So when our music leaders would introduce a song that had different parts for men and women, they would instruct everyone to sing the whole song together.

At one point, however, under the encouragement of some who were convinced of the value of separate parts for men and women, we began to sing some of these songs the way they were originally written. When we did this, the consensus was that something worthwhile had been added to our ability to sing and worship the Lord. In fact, most people were enthusiastic about the new dimension of beauty and expression that had been added to our life together.

This lesson was symbolic of an important truth. Men and women should live together in love and serve the Lord together. Most of what they should be doing is the same. But as we learn how to perceive and draw upon the value of what is distinctive to men and to women, our life together becomes stronger and more beautiful. There is something worthwhile about women for which men cannot substitute, and vice versa. When we live our life together as Christians “the way it was written,” it becomes better.

Today there is a flood of books on women. Most of them are written by women who in one way or another are part of the modern feminist movement. A high percentage of them are Americans. They press for

equality between men and women and for the elimination of many of the differences between them which have been part of life in contemporary Western society. Their writings are a symptom of a serious problem area in our society, and are fair warning that it is no longer possible to approach men and women in a traditional way or even with the remnants of a traditional approach.

With all these books and articles, one would think that enough had been written about the issues bearing on men and women. In fact, too much has been written on the subject: The flood of material has produced a certain amount of confusion and unclarity. Before people in our society are rushed down a steep bank into the sea, Christians need to look again at this area to understand how they should approach it.

This book is written in the conviction that the modern discussion about men and women normally misses something crucial: the perspective of social roles. Much of the modern feminist movement in church and society is advocating measures that would destroy social roles that have performed a useful function in all of past societies. At the same time, they seem to be unaware that their proposals lead to a restructuring of the very bases of our society. Hence, they miss many of the real issues. In the last three hundred years there has been a significant cultural change in Western society, a change that makes it difficult to understand the significance of social roles. Before dismantling the last elements of the social roles of the past, we need to ask what useful social function they performed and what we are going to do to replace that social function. Such a view can give us a greater respect for many elements of scriptural teaching, because the scriptures were written from within a culture that understood some things better than our own. Seeing men-women differences in the perspective of social roles makes a major difference in understanding the past and the present. Discussions of men-women issues without this perspective are seriously deficient.

This is not a book on the political issues raised by the feminist movement. Most people expect a Christian book on the roles of men and women to focus on the issue of ordination. While there is much material in the book relevant to the question of ordination, and while during the discussion of scriptural teaching it might appear as though ordination is the issue, this book does not really treat the question. If there was any issue that gave rise to the ideas in this book, it was the issue of raising children. What are we to say to children about the fact that they are boys and girls? How are we to teach them to relate to their maleness and their femaleness?

The feminist movement in church and society is a political movement. This book is not and was not produced as a counter to the feminist movement. With some regularity, arguments and assertions of feminist authors have to be dealt with in this book because they seriously cloud important truths. But the book is not concerned to address, much less oppose, most of the feminist program. Its thrust is rather to say that some important human realities are increasingly being neglected, and that the Christian people will suffer as a result.

This, then, is a book on social roles for men and women. There is, of course, much more about men and women that could profitably be discussed. Very little is said, for instance, with regard to the sexual relationship between men and women, although it is certainly of foundational importance. The topic is restricted, but only so that the question of social roles can be seen more clearly. It should also be emphasized that this is a book about the social roles of both men and women. While much of the literature on social roles has focused on women, this book is written in the conviction that the roles of men and women are complementary and that one cannot be understood without the other.

The pages that follow were written primarily for Christians. Others might well learn from them, but they were written from a Christian perspective. In this perspective, the data of revelation are of primary importance. The first and most important question in considering the roles of men and women is whether the Lord has said or taught anything about them and, if so, how Christians should respond to his word. Today many Christians are eager to say that there is nothing clear about social roles in scripture (or Christian tradition) that they have to be bound by. They say that there is a great cultural gap between New Testament times and the modern world which makes it impossible to view scriptural teaching as being directly intended for us. Indeed, there is a great cultural gap, a gap that makes traditionalism in social roles impossible. Nonetheless, such an offhand dismissal of the teaching of scripture and tradition makes it possible for modern Christians to leave an entire area of life out of their submission to the Lord. Since it is such an important area personally, and since it is an area that is a crucial piece in a great cultural development taking place in our society and among Christians, those who adopt this attitude are saying that they are free to make their own decisions without the guidance of Christian revelation in an area that is central to the way human beings are formed.

The pages that follow include as a special concern the life of Christian

communities. If this book were written solely for Christians who were not part of something that could be described as a Christian community, it would have to be written differently. Much would have to be left out or refocused. Therefore, only those who are in Christian communities will find all of it helpful. This does not mean, however, that most Christians will not find the book helpful. In fact, for those who do not belong to a Christian community, the pages on the usefulness of Christian community for dealing with some of the social problems facing Christians today might be one of the more helpful aspects of the book.

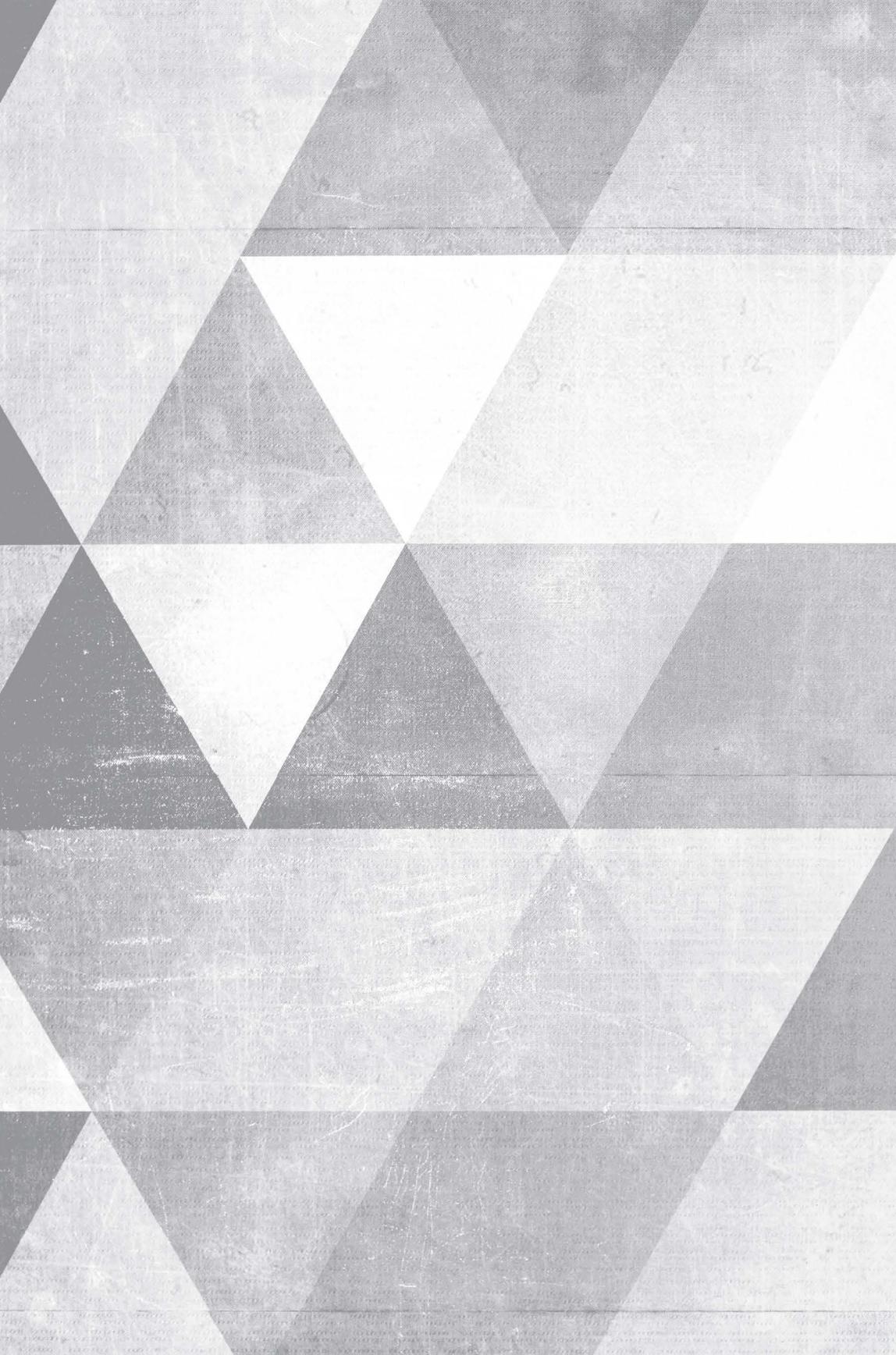
This book advocates an approach to men-women roles for Christians. Its purpose is practical, or pastoral. This book could even be described as a book in pastoral theology. But the discussion is not intended just for theologians; it is intended for all those who are taking a concern for how Christian life should be formed in the twentieth century.

Since this book is written for the layman as well as the theologian, much of the technical material has been kept out of the text. The footnotes at the bottom of the page and the special Notes on Method have been written to provide a more in-depth treatment of certain technical issues which can clarify the basic argument in the text. The notes at the back of the book contain most of the bibliographical references as well as the discussions that call for special acquaintance with the scholarly literature or scholarly tools. The reader can omit all the footnotes and the Notes on Method and still grasp the argument of the book.

Finally, this book was also written with an ecumenical audience in mind. Many questions that face Christians will be approached and solved differently by Christians from different church and theological traditions. Ordination of women, for instance, is one of them. Catholic and Orthodox discussions of ordination focus a great deal on sacramental and canonical considerations that are strange reading to an Evangelical Protestant. But the broader question of the roles of men and women presents itself in much the same way to Orthodox, Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, Evangelical, Pentecostal. Many of the same positions are heard in every church, and much the same arguments are used. Orthodox and Catholics will want to rely more heavily on Christian tradition (perhaps), but a consideration from tradition does not significantly modify the results of a consideration from scripture. Moreover, the methods of scriptural interpretation used by the different church traditions to determine what Christians should do are not materially different when it comes to questions of social roles. This may be due to the fact that theological thought with regard to social

roles is underdeveloped in all traditions. It may also be due to the fact that in past centuries there has been relatively little controversy over the roles of men and women in comparison with controversies over Christology or Soteriology. At any rate, the differences of method in this area are not significant between, for instance, Catholic and Evangelical. Their divisions lie elsewhere.

This book was written with the help of many. It depends, first of all, on the experiences and input of a large number of Christian men and women who have tried to seek and live out God's will in the area of social roles. This book also depends on the work of a smaller group of people who critiqued talks and manuscripts and made suggestions for new approaches or new materials: Here I would particularly like to thank John Keating, Mark Kinzer, James Manney, Barbara Morgan, Philip O'Mara, and Juliet Pressel for their many hours of dedicated work. Besides these there are a number of men and women who read the manuscript after its completion and made valuable comments leading to significant improvements. Among these I would particularly like to thank Rev. Donald Basham, Dr. Donald Bloesch, Rev. Larry Christenson, Dr. George Drum, Dr. Gregory Gavrilides, Rev. Theodore Jungkuntz, Dr. Kerry Koller, Fr. Francis Martin, Ralph Martin, Previterra Alexandra Poulos, Dr. Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan, and, although he was unable to read the entire manuscript and evaluate its conclusions, I would like to thank Fr. George Montague for his helpful comments and suggestions which bore especially on the first few chapters of this work. Thanks also is due to the many who worked on research, translation, editing and typing, especially to Stephen Lucchetti for his work on the index. Particular thanks goes to John Keating and Mark Kinzer for the great amount of time and energy they spent in researching the book. A book like this could not be written today without much more research than one person could do alone, unless the writing of it were to take many more years than it has in this case taken. Of course, the final responsibility for the arguments and conclusions found in this book is my own. In an area as controversial as that of men's and women's roles, no one should be held responsible for another's opinions, even when a person might agree with a good part of those opinions.



The Scriptural Teaching



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FROM THE BEGINNING

IN THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER OF MATTHEW'S GOSPEL, Jesus provides one of the most important keys to understanding Christian teaching on men and women in a passage where he discusses marriage and divorce. The passage, an exchange between Jesus and some Pharisees about the grounds for divorce, is sometimes overlooked in discussions about men's and women's roles. However, it contains some crucial principles, especially about how to interpret the scriptures wisely. This passage will be the starting point of the study of scriptural teaching on men and women.

The discussion begins when some Pharisees come up to Jesus "to test him." They want him to answer a question about the law. Possibly they hope that they can force him to answer in a way that would embarrass him or lose him support. More likely they want to see where he stands on an issue that was much debated among groups of Pharisees and between Pharisees and other Jews. The discussion as presented in Matthew 19:3–9 follows:

And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" He answered, "Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder." They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?" He said to them, "For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the

beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery.”

From the
Beginning

During the time that Jesus preached and taught, there were two main Pharisaic schools of interpretation of points of the law. The differences between the two surfaced in various issues, including the question of divorce.¹ The school of Hillel allowed divorce for many reasons, almost “on any ground,” as some translations have it. The *Mishnah* records that the school of Hillel allowed a man to divorce his wife “even when she burns the food.”² The school of Shammai, the stricter party, only allowed divorce for transgression of the marital laws. The controversy originated because the law contained a decision about divorce procedures (Dt 24:1–4), but did not state clearly the grounds on which divorce was permissible.

The matter of interest at this point is not Jesus’ position on divorce, but the way Jesus approaches the question. He begins his reply by referring to the creation account in Genesis 1 and he then adds a verse from the account of the creation of woman in Genesis 2. From these two verses he concludes that a man and his wife are no longer two but one and that divorce therefore violates the unity that God establishes when he joins a man and woman together. When Jesus’ questioners object that Moses allowed divorce and refer to a passage from Deuteronomy to prove their point, Jesus replies that the law they quoted was only given because of “your hardness of heart,” that is, as a concession to man’s obduracy and therefore as a protective measure for situations where hardness of heart is what normally can be expected. But he insists that divorce was not God’s original and highest intention. “*From the beginning* it was not so.”

Jesus appeals to “the beginning.” He appeals to creation and God’s purpose in creating.³ He thereby lays down a principle of great importance: To understand how God intends human life to be, we should look to God’s purpose in creating the human race. Behind this principle lies an understanding of how to approach “law” and the various teachings in revelation. Jesus indicates that when we consider God’s directives, especially those written in scripture, we should look to the intention behind the directives in order to observe them well. It is not enough to observe a directive “legalistically”; that is, it is not enough to merely apply the directive to our lives externally so that we behave in a way that somehow conforms to the law. Rather, we cannot observe a law well unless we understand God’s intention in giving the law and cooperate with that intention in our observance. We cannot deal adequately with the law on divorce in Deuteronomy by

resorting to casuistic explanations of the grounds of divorce. We must first understand that God's intention for the law of Deuteronomy was to deal with those who were hard of heart, not those who were inwardly committed to God's perfect way.

The principle Jesus enunciates also teaches that a key place to grasp God's intention for matters like divorce is the account of creation in Genesis. We can see God's intention for the human race purely in his original creation of the first human beings. In other words, we have to go back to the first chapters of Genesis to understand some important elements of God's purpose for the human race. In Genesis, we thus find the most helpful perspective for understanding men and women.

Other New Testament writers, especially Paul, followed Jesus' lead. Most of the important passages on men-women roles in the New Testament refer back either explicitly or implicitly to the first three chapters of Genesis (1 Cor 11:2-16; Gal 3:26-28; Eph 5:22-31; 1 Tm 2:9-15). These passages clearly show the foundational importance of the creation accounts for understanding this subject in a Christian perspective. It is not possible to understand the New Testament teaching on men and women without understanding how it is founded on the creation of Adam and Eve and on God's purpose as revealed in the creation of the human race. Therefore, this book's study of scripture will start by looking at "the beginning."

Genesis and Truth

DESPITE the central role that the New Testament gives Genesis, many are tempted to bypass Genesis because it is difficult to interpret. Among these difficulties, the one that most commonly comes to mind is the issue of the "historicity" of Genesis. Did God actually create the world in six days? Did anyone like Adam and Eve really exist and were they the only parents of the human race? Did a serpent cause Adam and Eve to fall by persuading them to eat a piece of fruit? The very questions are enough to make a modern mind wary of Genesis. Memories of the Scopes trial and similar controversies make many Christians want to give Genesis a wide berth.

However, these issues raise questions about the truth value of Genesis that cannot be ignored if the book is so central to the New Testament teaching on men and women. Four main approaches to the truth value of Genesis and their implications for the study of men and women should be assessed:

1. *The beginning of Genesis is simply a myth or story with no truth value.* This approach holds that at some point in the human past—in ancient Israelite or Babylonian or Iranian tradition—a story emerged about how things began. This story or myth was incorporated into Genesis. This story has no historical basis, nor does it have any truth value. The beginning of Genesis is simply an interesting view into primitive culture or is perhaps a notable piece of literature. It may even provide insight into some truth, but it is of little more value for this purpose than an ancient Greek myth of creation.⁴
2. *The beginning of Genesis is a symbolic story.* In this approach, Genesis is held to have no historical basis. Adam and Eve never existed as real people. The events in the beginning of Genesis did not happen the same way Hitler's invasion of Poland happened. They emerged out of Israelite tradition (or someone made them up) the way fairy tales emerge. But they came into existence for a purpose: to teach some things which were clearly true. The story of Adam and Eve is a dramatic presentation created or redacted by someone (the Yahwist) with a gift for storytelling who composed it to teach some truths about God and the human race, about men and women, about sex and marriage. Even though it is not historical, it is true in the most significant sense of "true."⁵
3. *The beginning of Genesis is a historical narrative.* This approach regards Genesis as a description of how things happened as much as, say, Churchill's *The Second World War*. Some who hold this view might see some elements of the account as symbolic (the "apple" perhaps) or as presented in a dramatic way. But the main outlines, if not all the details, are basically a sober, historical account, as factual as any historical account. The beginning of Genesis is historically true.⁶
4. *The beginning of Genesis is a historical story.* According to this view, the beginning of Genesis is not a normal work of history. Most of the material is an imaginative creation of the author or of some tradition. Yet historical facts are behind these accounts. The stories of the creation of the world and of Adam and Eve actually refer to events that happened. The events may be presented in dramatic form and the accounts may make use of symbolic elements, but the core of the story is historical. It concerns something that happened, albeit not in the way described. The story is written in a form that is primarily designed to convey the significance of the underlying event. It is somewhat like the *Iliad* or a historical novel. According to this approach,

the beginning of Genesis is true in the teaching it gives and it also contains historical truth.⁷

Many of the issues raised by these approaches to the truth value of Genesis lie outside the scope of this book. This book deals with men's and women's roles in scripture. The primary concern of the book is with scripture's teaching and directives to Christians about how to live as men and women. The issue does not necessarily involve deciding whether certain events in scripture actually happened (such as, did God "really" create Eve out of Adam's rib, or did Jesus ever discuss divorce with a group of Pharisees, or did Jesus ever restore a withered hand instantaneously). These are important questions, but they are not directly relevant to the primary concern—the scriptural teaching on men and women. In other words, many of the questions that can be raised about the truth value of Genesis do not need to be decided here. But some of them do need to be dealt with.

Genesis
and Truth

Fundamental to the approach of this book is the view that the scripture is the word of God. Scripture is God's revelation to the human race of what he wants people to know. Some of the questions connected with this view will be treated in Chapters Fourteen and Fifteen. Moreover, there are many questions connected with interpreting the scripture, questions which must be answered in order to determine what God is saying and what Christians should do in response. Many of the issues and questions connected with scripture interpretation will be treated more fully in Chapter Twenty. However, at this point it is enough to say that believing that scripture is God's word means believing that the teaching in it is true. Therefore, the teaching in Genesis is true.*

Thus it is evident that the first approach to the truth value of Genesis is incompatible with accepting all of scripture as God's word. The first approach, which regards the beginning of Genesis as a myth with no truth value, would not allow us to draw reliable teaching from the beginning of Genesis, since this view regards these chapters as just a story from a primitive culture. Many people also hold that the second and fourth approaches are also incompatible with understanding scripture as God's word. They

* There are, to be sure, many questions connected with even this statement: questions of the relation of Old Testament teaching to New Testament teaching, questions about how one knows what is "the teaching of scripture." Scripture, after all, contains teaching that is attributed to Satan or God's opponents as well as teaching attributed to God or unattributed. There is, in addition, the question of whether some of the material might not simply be the presentation of someone's opinion rather than divine revelation. The statement in the text about the truth of the teaching of Genesis is simply intended as a recognition of what it means to say that this material is part of scripture.

maintain that to regard these chapters as symbolic stories or as historical stories denies the historical value of the Genesis accounts and therefore denies the inerrancy of scripture which must be accepted if one is to believe that scripture is God's word.⁸ To consider this point would go beyond the purpose of this book. This position concerns the historicity of the events in Genesis; the concern of this chapter is only with the teaching in Genesis on men-women roles. One need not decide the exact historical quality of the Genesis account in order to hold that the account of Adam and Eve in Genesis 2 and 3 contains true teaching and revelation about God's purpose in creating men and women and about their relationship to one another. Thus, for the purposes of this discussion, approaches two, three, and four are all adequate approaches to the truth value of Genesis.

Approach one, then, is an inadequate approach for a Christian to take to Genesis because it does not allow us to regard the beginning of Genesis as God's word. While few Christians would take approach one in the unembellished fashion it is presented above, a number of Christians hold a version of approach two that amounts to a similar position. They hold that if the events narrated in Genesis are not true history, any arguments or conclusions based on those events (like Paul's arguments based on the view that God created Eve out of Adam) cannot be true. They might say: if the Genesis narratives cannot be taken literally, then teaching cannot be based on the events described in them. This position is simply a more subtle way of dismissing the teaching value of Genesis on the basis of considerations about the historical value of the accounts.*

* The following quote from a discussion on what scripture teaches about women illustrates the position under consideration. The passages under scrutiny are 1 Corinthians 11:7–16, 1 Corinthians 14:26–35, and 1 Timothy 2:9–14. After offering some reasons for not taking the passages very seriously today, the author writes:

But aside from these, each of the three passages refers back to the Old Testament. In 1 Corinthians 11 the reason given for the ruling is that woman was created from and for the sake of man. In 1 Tm, we read that a woman ought not to speak because Adam was created first and Eve sinned first. This takes us all the way back to Genesis, the first book of the Bible . . .

In the second chapter of Genesis (which was actually written earlier than the first chapter) we find the whole Adam and Eve story, which most people now take as a "myth" or poetic way of explaining theological truth—in this case the teachings of the fatherhood of God and the fact that we are all one family. In this second chapter we read that Eve was created from Adam's rib.

Our class also discovered that there are many aspects of this second creation story we cannot accept literally. Yahweh-God fashioned man from dust before he caused to spring up from the soil every kind of tree, and only later did he fashion all the wild beasts and all the birds of heaven, and last of all woman.

Yet Paul here uses only the second version of creation in Genesis. And unless we can accept the whole second story literally, we have no basis left within the epistles themselves for believing the sections on women are anything more than customs. (Arlene Swidler, *Woman in a Man's Church* [New York: Paulist Press, 1972], 34–35)

The author seems to be aware of at least the first three approaches to the truth value of Genesis described above, and she seems to prefer the second—that these are symbolic stories without historical basis. When she sums up the teaching of the first chapters, she gives an in-

To be sure, there are significant difficulties in understanding what particular passages of Genesis are actually teaching about men and women; these difficulties will be examined. But the issues concerning the historicity of Genesis do not need further discussion. Whether symbolical story, historical narrative, or historical story, the accounts in Genesis do describe God's creation of the human race in a way that teaches a great deal about God's purpose in creation and about his intention for men and women.

The Beginning of Genesis

THREE passages in the beginning of Genesis are especially central for understanding the relationship of man and woman: Genesis 1:26–31 (the account of the creation of the human race), Genesis 2:18–25 (the account of the creation of woman), and Genesis 3:1–24, especially verses 16–19 (the account of the Fall). These passages occur in a larger block of material that extends from chapter 1 to chapter 5. This block includes the account of the creation and Fall and also a record of Adam's descendants up to Noah, thereby setting the stage for the next great incident, the flood.*

adequate summary, as the exposition in this book will reveal. But here the problem is the way she deals with Paul. She notices that Paul bases his teaching on the events in Genesis. Then she dismisses the truth value of the events in Genesis because they cannot be accepted "literally." Having rejected the Genesis account, she rejects Paul's teaching as well. Her approach fails to take into account the point that even if Genesis is a poetic way of expressing theological truths, it is a poetic way of expressing *truths*. Whenever someone dismisses a teaching drawn from or based on Genesis because the accounts are not "literally true" or "historically true," they are undercutting the reliability of what is taught in God's word. If this author were consistent in her position, she could scarcely hold the theological "truth" that God is our Father on the basis of the Genesis account. The story of God's molding man from the dust of the ground and breathing life into him is certainly no less dubious than Paul's argument concerning men's and women's roles. In other words, if a person takes the approach of viewing Genesis 2–3 as a symbolic presentation of theological truths, then surely all of the teaching built into the symbolism, not only some of it, should be taken seriously.

The same misunderstanding can be found in professional scripture scholars. See J. M. Ford, "Tongues—Leadership—Women," *Spiritual Life* 17 (Fall 1971): 186–197.

* The units of this section of Genesis could be outlined as follows:

1. Genesis 1:1–2:4a—the creation of the visible universe
2. Genesis 2:4b–4:26—the creation and "fall" of mankind
 - a. Genesis 2:4b–2:25—the creation of man and woman
 - b. Genesis 3:1–24—the transgression of man and woman
 - c. Genesis 4:1–26—the consequences of the transgression
3. Genesis 5:1–32—the record of the descendants of Adam

We are only concerned with three segments of a longer section, the segments with most relevance for men-women roles. Many of the wider concerns of the beginning of Genesis go beyond our purposes here.

The first five chapters of Genesis are an introduction to the book of Genesis, in fact to all of scripture. The central concern of the Bible is the redemptive plan of God. This story of the old and new Israel begins with Abraham. Yet the whole history begins with a statement about the place of man in the universe and God's purpose in creating man.

From the
Beginning

One major purpose of the first five chapters of Genesis is to attack the religions of peoples surrounding the Israelites, religions that tempted the Israelites. These religions involved star and animal worship and fertility cults. The beginning of Genesis teaches clearly that God created all of what might be called material creation, and he placed the human race over the living things on earth. Moreover, Genesis teaches that God gave sex to the human race as a means to create society, not as something that human beings are subject to. Finally, the beginning of Genesis teaches that man's life as we see it is not functioning according to God's original intention. The way things are is not the way things should be. Rather, the human race needs God to show it what human life should be like, and humans must rely on God to do something to make the right kind of human life possible.⁹

Thus a major focus of the beginning of Genesis are the roles and relationship of the sexes in human life. Genesis is very much concerned with marriage, sex, men and women, childbearing, and family life. It is not an exhaustive treatise on these social realities. But to limit the teaching of Genesis to "the fatherhood of God" and the unity of the human "family" as some do is to miss some of the major concerns of the book.¹⁰ When Jesus and the apostles detect in Genesis a statement about man and woman and their relationship to one another in the human race, they have found a major feature of the accounts.

Genesis 1 ▸ Male and Female

GENESIS 1:1–2:4A is the first literary unit in Genesis. It is an account of the creation of the visible universe. The materials in it are presented in an organized, schematic fashion. Unlike Genesis 2–4, which is presented in a predominantly dramatic form, Genesis 1 is more of a "doctrinal" presentation. Much of it does not concern the topic of this book, but the account of the creation of man concerns us a great deal. Some of the phrases in these few verses occur throughout the scripture and throughout Christian tradition. The teaching presented in these few lines lies behind much of the most important teaching and theology in the rest of scripture and in

Christian tradition, especially in the area of men's and women's roles. The account of the creation of man in Genesis 1 is as follows:

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth . . ." And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, a sixth day.

Genesis 1 ▶
Male and
Female

This same passage is restated in a more summary form in Genesis 5:1–2:

When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created.

Genesis 1:26–31 is primarily concerned with the place of the human race in the universe. The human race was created last, the high point of the visible creation.¹¹ This section contains two key statements about the way God created the human race: God created man in his own image and likeness, and God created man male and female. It also contains two directions for the human race: It is to have dominion over the living things on the earth, and it is to increase and multiply, that is, to become a race or people. The two directions are derived from the way God created the human race—in his image and likeness, and as male and female.

Genesis 1:26 begins by stating, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image and after our likeness.'"¹² The terms "image" and "likeness" are important for the roles of men and women both because of what they say

* There are many interpretations of the use of the plural: "let us make man . . ." Some have suggested that it is merely a grammatical concern—because the word used for God ("Elohim") is plural, so is the pronoun ("us"). Vawter, *On Genesis: A New Reading* (New York: Doubleday, 1977), 53, mentions this approach, but considers it unlikely. Von Rad (57) prefers the notion of God's addressing his heavenly court (as in Gn 3:22). Cassuto (55) regards it as the "plural of exhortation" (as in a person's exhorting himself, "Let's go!"). Others consider it to be the royal "we" often used by kings of the time in speaking of themselves. Vawter, *On Genesis*, 53, mentions this notion. Some of the church Fathers saw implicit reference to elements within the Godhead—the Trinity—here. (See Ambrose in *De Paradiso*, Fathers of the Church Series, vol. 42 [New York: Fathers of the Church Inc., 1961], 253).

about the nature of the human race and because of later discussions by Christian teachers about whether woman is made in God's image. The phrase "in our image and after our likeness" seems to be connected with the commission that mankind is to have dominion over the living creatures of earth. Genesis 5:3 gives some insight into the meaning of this phrase: "Adam became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth." Here the same phrase is used of a human father generating a human son. The similarity in usage indicates that when God formed the first man after his "image" and "likeness," he created a being similar in nature to himself, a being who could to some degree carry on his own role and take his place.

God, then, created humans to be like him in some very important respects so that they could be his representatives and rule over part of creation. Man participates in God's nature enough so that he is like God and can act on God's behalf. God's purpose involves giving the human race a very important role in creation and an ability to exercise God's own authority in the way God himself would.*

Genesis 1:27–28 states: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply . . .'" These verses add something of great importance to us—that God created "man" male and female.† The text moves back and forth between the singular ("man," or "the man") and the plural ("them") in a way that can be confusing. However, the shift between singular and plural is an indication of something important: The text is not just concerned with the first human

* There has been considerable discussion over the significance of the terms "image" and "likeness." Some contemporary scholars, including von Rad (56) and Vawter (*New Catholic Commentary*, 175) suggest that "image" (*tselem*) implies an exact copy, while "likeness" (*demut*) means resemblance—indicating perhaps that man was created as a copy of God's nature in some ways, but also with some differences. He could manifest God's nature, but he himself was not God. Von Rad also points out that, as powerful kings of the time would erect images (the same word: *tselem*) of themselves in their distant provinces as representing themselves, so man is placed on earth in God's image, as his representative and sovereign emblem. Some see man's dominion over the rest of creation as an integral part of his being in God's image (Vawter, *On Genesis*, 57), while others see man's dominion as a consequence of his being in God's image (von Rad, 57). Still others have seen "image" as man's rationality or his freedom (D. Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall* [London: SCM Press, 1959], 35). Various church Fathers have also considered the meaning of "image" here, and have suggested that it involves dominion over nature (Chrysostom), capacity to love (Gregory of Nyssa), capacity for friendship (Basil), creativity (Theodoret), or capacity for sanctification (Cyril of Alexandria).

† The words "male" and "female" (*zakar* and *neqaybah*) are simply the Hebrew terms for gender difference, and can apply to animals as well as to human beings. These are the most specific terms in Hebrew for designating sex differences.

being, but is concerned as well with the whole human race. The meaning of the word *adam* points to the same conclusion.* *Adam* is the Hebrew word for “human” or “human being.” It can be translated “man” in English, but it can also be translated “human” or “human being.” Moreover, it can even be translated “Man” as in “mankind” or the “the human race.” Genesis 1:26 could be translated “Let us make Man (the human race) in our own image.” In other words, when Genesis 1 is talking about “man,” it is referring to the creation of the human race and not simply about one male human being “Adam” (although, as we shall see farther on, the two cannot be completely separated).

Genesis 1 ▸
Male and
Female

Therefore, Genesis 1:27–28 states that the two sexes are part of the way God made the human race, and that God made them that way for a purpose—so that they could have children and increase and multiply. Here the command to increase is linked with the creation of the human race male and female. Sexual differentiation, then, is part of God’s original purpose for the human race on this earth, and it is good. Both men and women are essential for a fully functioning human race. According to Genesis 1, God wants both men and women.

It is natural to draw a further implication from Genesis 1:27–28, namely, that God created both men and women in his image and likeness. This point is debated, and this debate will be considered in a later chapter. Here it is enough to make three observations. First, Genesis 1:26–31 is about the creation of the human race; the natural implication would be that everything that is said about “man” is true of every human being. Secondly, nothing in Genesis 1:26–31 indicates that women do not take part in the commission associated with being in God’s image, namely, having dominion over the living creatures. Rather, the fact that the commission is repeated in v. 28 following the statement about the human race being created male and female indicates that women share not only the commission but also the image of God which makes the commission possible. Finally, in Genesis 1:27, the phrase “male and female he created them” is

* One should note here that the Hebrew *adam* and the Greek *anthrōpos* have a similar set of meanings, but the English word “man” is used somewhat differently. “Man” is commonly used for “human” in a way in which *anēr* (in Greek) and *ish* (in Hebrew) are not. (See *adham* in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974], 75–87.) Thus, in English, the common word for the male (“man”) is also a common word for the human race (in a manner unlike Greek, with its *anēr* [male] and *anthrōpos* [mankind]). There is presently an attempt, connected with the feminist movement, to revise the English usage. However, in this chapter, we will commonly retain the word “man” for intelligibility. Often, by retaining the term “man,” an exegetical point can be made more clearly.

an elaboration following on “God created man in his own image.”* The progression would then be something like this: God created the human race in his own image so that it could have dominion over living things. *Moreover*, he created the human race male and female so that the race could increase and fill the earth.

From the
Beginning

Genesis 1 does not say much about the roles of men and women. The passage is not concerned with differences between men and women or with the implications of those differences. Those who try to make the case that Genesis 1 is upholding a view of man and woman that does not involve any differentiation in roles or subordination of woman to man are reading something into the passage that is not there.¹² Since the passage does not focus on the differences between men and women in that way, interpreters exceed the bounds of evidence when they claim it represents some definite approach to the area. But that is not to say that the passage is irrelevant to a discussion on the roles of men and women. It states something that is crucial to keep in focus: The human race as a whole has a call within God’s creation and both men and women participate in that call. Both men and women are good and important to God. The passage also suggests that the difference between men and women cannot be understood properly without keeping in view the need for human reproduction. Genesis 1, in other words, is a foundation for all further consideration of the roles of men and women.

* There is an alternate interpretation to the one presented here offered initially by Karl Barth in this century (*Church Dogmatics*, vol. 3, trans. J. W. Edwards et. al. [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1958], 194f.) and recently proposed by Jewett, 33–40. It has not been one normally held by scripture scholars. Barth suggests that, rather than the phrase “male and female he created them” being a second statement concerning the creation of mankind, it is an explanation of the fact that man was created in God’s image. In other words, the image of God in man is their maleness and femaleness, and that in their sexual differentiation they are related together communally. Others in the modern world will also see the image of God in man as being their community or interpersonal relationships. This is an increasingly popular view, as there is an attempt to refocus many aspects of Christian teaching around categories of interpersonal relationships. In terms of theology, there may be something to be said for these interpretations of the image of God. However, the following observations are important. First, the reason for such an interpretation would be theological rather than exegetical. The structure and sense of the passage would indicate that “male and female he created them” is a second and further statement of God’s creation in his image and likeness. Second, the New Testament, in teaching about God’s image in man, teaches about it primarily in ethical terms, that is, both men and women come into God’s image when they manifest in their lives love, kindness, compassion, humility, etc. Third, the notion is a modern preoccupation and is to be found neither in Christian tradition nor in the New Testament. Until the twentieth century, all interpretations of the image of God have understood it as residing completely in each human being. This is not to deny that the “image of God” includes an orientation to other people, but it is not the actual interrelating among them that has been seen to be the image of God.

Genesis 2 ▸ Flesh of My Flesh

GENESIS 2 contains a presentation of the creation of man that covers the same ground as Genesis 1:26–31, but in a significantly different way. Genesis 2 relates the story of Adam and Eve in narrative form. In so doing, it reveals a great deal about the origin, and purpose of the human race. Some view Genesis 2 as a second and parallel account of human creation. Some view it as primarily an account of the origin of the sexes, while Genesis 1 is an account of the origin of the species.¹³ Both views are basically correct and can be seen as complementary insights if not stated in too exclusive a way. For the purposes of this discussion, the most important observation is that Genesis 2 includes a much more developed treatment of the two sexes and their relationship. In fact, it would not be wrong to say that the central concern of at least verses 18–25 in Genesis 2 is the relationship of men and women.* That concern continues in Genesis 3.

Chapter 2 of Genesis focuses on the creation of man in a way that chapter 1 does not. Genesis 2 begins with heaven and earth already created. From the literary point of view, the creation of man in chapter 2 begins the account, and man is the center of concern throughout. God gives man an occupation in Genesis 2. God entrusts him with the care of the garden, and with that responsibility he commands man not to eat of the tree of the

* Some interpreters, in noting the difference in literary form between Genesis 1:1–2:4a and Genesis 2:4b–25, hold that we have here two different views of the roles of men and women. According to this view, chapter 1 presents man and woman as truly equal, whereas chapter 2 presents man as superior. These interpreters feel that we are therefore justified in choosing which of the two approaches we think best to hold.

As has been pointed out, such a view rests upon an overinterpretation of Genesis 1. But even more importantly here, Genesis 1 and Genesis 2–4 were put together by an author who obviously saw no fundamental incompatibility between them. He saw Genesis 2–3 as building on and explicating the material in Genesis 1 or at least presenting a complementary, not contradictory, approach. We ought to credit the author with some understanding of the central meaning of materials he was putting together.

Further, those who accept the authority of the scripture as the word of God will accept as authoritative the scripture as it has been written down, canonized, and presented to us. It is the text of scripture as we have it from the hands of the final author that is authoritative, not a scholar's reconstruction nor the original source as contrasted with the currently available book. The authority of scripture does not rest on the inspiration of the original source (the original source was not necessarily inspired), but on the inspiration of the author of the current book.

Some scholars hold that the author of the "priestly" sections of Genesis is also the book's general editor and is the final editor of the Pentateuch. See a survey of the scholarly discussion of sources in Vawter, *On Genesis*, 17–24. Were one to take such a view, then the author of Genesis 1 would be seen to have written it as an introduction to all of Genesis (especially chapters 1–5), with chapters 1 and 5 serving as a framework for the Yahwist's account in chapters 2–4. Those holding such a position should have no difficulty in understanding Genesis 2 as an explication of what was written in Genesis 1.

knowledge of good and evil. This commandment expresses God's fatherly care: If man eats of the tree he will die. Eating of the tree, in other words, is dangerous. Nonetheless, God delivers a command and not just good advice. Man's occupation and the commandment will become important in considering the Fall and the curses. Here we only need to see them as background to the creation of woman.

From the
Beginning

To understand Genesis 2 accurately, the term "man" must be studied more fully than was necessary for Genesis 1. In chapter 2 "the man" ("the human," "The Man," "The Human," "Adam") is the focal point, and some of the understanding of the chapter turns on discovering how the particular individual who was first created is presented. First, the Hebrew word *ha-adam* is normally translated as "the man" or "the human." In those few cases where it is without a definite article, it can usually be translated as a proper name, "Adam." "The man" can be understood as an individual or as an archetype of the whole human race. To get a feel for the difference in connotation, it is helpful to read through the account and substitute the words "the human," "Mankind," and "Adam" for the words "the man" (the most common translation of *ha-adam*).

Genesis 2 is talking about a man who was the first human being and from whom the whole human race descended. At this point he *was* the human race. Later on, his proper name was "Human" or "Man" (Gn 5:1, 3). The writers of scripture understood him as embodying in his person the human race, much as the man Israel embodied in his person the people Israel (cf. Heb 7:9). It would be possible to say that Human (Adam) was the archetype of the human race, but this could be misleading, because the Jewish mind saw the relationship much more realistically. The original father of the race *was* the race while he lived, and later on the race Israel could be seen as the continuation of the man Israel. The account of Human (Adam) is not an account of one human being among many. It is an account of the man who passed his nature and call on to his descendants, who affected their history by what he did, and who lives on in them as a people.¹⁴

Luke 3:38 provides a further insight into Adam and his significance. Luke 3:38 falls at the end of a genealogy of Jesus that begins, "Jesus was the

* It was probably the Septuagint, the early Greek translation of the Old Testament, which introduced the translation of "Adam" as a proper name for *ha-adam*. This was the translation of the Old Testament used by the New Testament writers. The Septuagint translates *ha-adam* as "Adam" both in places in which there is a definite article and in places in which there is no definite article (*adam*). Sometimes, however, it translates *ha-adam* by *ho anthrōpos*.

son of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matthat . . .” and the genealogy continues back through David and Abraham to “Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.” God appears in the genealogy along with all the other fathers. There is a great deal of theological significance in this verse, but now it is enough to note that the author of the verse saw something in Genesis that is sometimes missed because of cultural differences. In Genesis 2, God is treating Adam as his son. He creates him and gives him a place in life, especially by providing an occupation for him and getting him a wife. Genesis 2 concretely portrays what Genesis 1 states—that God created man in his image and likeness to have dominion over the earth. God places the man (Adam or Human) over his creation, just as a Jewish father would place his only son over his house. The man (Adam, Human) is descended from God, his creator, and represents him, acting on his behalf and according to his instructions.¹⁵

Genesis 2 >
Flesh of
My Flesh

In verse 18, the account turns to the creation of a helper fit for the man. The passage is as follows:

Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make a helper fit for him.” So out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper fit for him. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh; and the rib which the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said,

“This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of Man.”

Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. (Gn 2:18–25)

In the course of Genesis 2, Adam names the animals and then his wife. Although there is some discussion, the consensus of scripture scholarship is

that naming is a ruling function.¹⁶ Man's right and ability to name follows from his position as ruler. His naming of the animals appears to be the narrative counterpart to the commission in Genesis 1 to rule the living creatures. God expresses Adam's position over the animals by bringing them to Adam to receive names.

From the
Beginning

The creation of woman from the rib of man is the central action of Genesis 2. This is sometimes referred to in a mocking way, when men say that women are nothing but a rib. However the meaning of the rib in the account is not disrespectful. Among some Arabs today, a man will speak of a close friend as his "rib," meaning that his friend is very close to him, almost part of him, using "rib" in a way similar to the Genesis account. The word in Hebrew could even mean "side" or "flank."¹⁷ The image certainly indicates closeness of relationship, and calls to mind the saying that woman stands at man's side.

Even more clearly, the "rib" indicates that woman is made from man. The context of Genesis 2 shows that the overriding significance of the mode of the creation of woman is that woman is the same kind of being as man, not a different and inferior species. After God creates Adam and places him in the garden, he brings the animals to him. Adam names them, and as they go through all the animals they do not find one fit to be a helper for man. Therefore God creates woman out of man's side to be a helper fit for him. The clearest point to be drawn from the building of woman from man's rib is not any inferiority on woman's part but quite the contrary. The "rib" indicates the sameness of nature between man and woman.*

God takes the new creature to the man, and when the man sees her, he recognizes her as bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh.[†] He then calls her

* The rabbis, probably after the time of Jesus, interpreted the original Adam as androgynous. They said that the original created being was both man and woman together. Then, to provide for the human race, woman was taken out of man and made into a separate being. It is unlikely that this view was in the mind of the writer of the Genesis account. This is a rabbinic interpretation (not a Christian one) and developed late, probably under the influence of Greek thought (as exemplified in Plato's account in the *Symposium* [192] of the origin of man and woman and sex). Such an interpretation could lead to the distorted view that neither men nor women are human in themselves. However, it does highlight a truth that is integral to both chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis: Both men and women are part of the human race and the human race is not complete without both. For discussion of the rabbinic interpretation see Batey, 271–272; Strack/Billerbeck, vol. 1, 802.

† "Bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh" calls to mind the term "my own bone and flesh" (in some freer translations [e.g., NEB] the term is often idiomatically rendered "flesh and blood") which is used commonly in scripture to denote a family relationship (Gn 29:14; Jgs 9:2; 2 Sm 5:1; 19:12–13; 1 Chr 11:1). The phrase also seems to refer directly to "the rib" of the man from which his wife was made (see Cassuto, 135–136).

“woman” because she was taken out of “man.”* In the context it is clear that the man is very enthusiastic for God’s new work. After a long search for an appropriate partner, at last a creature appears who will do. The man seems to recognize immediately that woman was made from him and that this is the reason for her fitness: She is from his own flesh and bone.

There then follows a statement which is not a continuation of the words of Adam but a theological conclusion from what has happened and a summary of its significance, “Therefore a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his woman (wife), and they become one flesh.”¹⁸ This statement is important in scripture. It recurs in the marriage teaching of Jesus and Paul as a foundational statement that explains the nature of marriage. To “cling to his wife” (or “to cleave to his wife”) and to “become one flesh” describe the marriage relationship. The word “clings” or “cleaves” indicates a committed personal relationship. It does not mean weak dependence, as the English word “clings” suggests.¹⁹ Elsewhere in the Old Testament the word is used to describe the way human beings relate in loving faithfulness to God. Some have suggested that the idea of man cleaving to woman is the remnant of a matriarchal social system in early Israel. Such a suggestion is linguistically possible, but by no means linguistically necessary nor proven, and the trend of scholarship increasingly discounts the view that there was an earlier matriarchal social order in Israel.[†]

Genesis 2 >
Flesh of
My Flesh

* According to the etymology used in the text, “woman” (*ishshah*) comes from the word “man” (*ish*). Although some modern interpreters believe that *ish* and *ishshah* are not etymologically related (cf. W. Brueggeman, “Of the Same Flesh and Bone,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, October 1970, 532–542) this makes no ultimate difference from the point of view of what is being said by the etymology given in the text. The author’s underlying intention in offering this etymology is not in any case nullified.

This word for man first appears at this point in the account, and is a word that is used only for male human beings, men rather than women. It could also be translated “husband,” just as *ishshah* could be translated “wife,” there being no terms in Hebrew meaning only “husband” and “wife.” Probably the chief significance of the names at this point in the account is to show that woman is called by a term that comes from man’s name, just as woman herself is taken out of man.

Some modern proponents of the androgyny view of the original creation say that this is the first point at which man appears; hence man also gets a new name from the process (see P. Tribble, “Eve and Adam: Genesis 2–3 Reread,” *Andover Newton Quarterly*, March 1973, 251–258; some of the rabbis who held to the basic androgyny view may also have held this view, see Batey, 271ff.). This view is an overinterpretation of the text. The text does not say that man gets a new name, nor even that *ish* is a new term for him. Moreover, the term “the man” (Adam, the human) continues as the name for the male human being even after woman is created. In fact, much of the significance of the narrative depends on the identity of the man who was alone earlier and the man who is presented with the new creature and who calls her woman.

† Among those who mention the theory of “early matriarchy” are Cassuto (137) and von Rad (83). Modern anthropologists are in general agreement that no known society has ever been

From the
Beginning

Both “cleave to his wife” and “become one flesh” are phrases which describe the establishment of a new committed relationship.* The New English Bible translates the verse in a helpful way, “That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife and the two become one flesh.” The transition indicated by this verse can be seen most clearly by considering the social situation that it is referring to. A son is his parents’ flesh and blood, and he lives as part of his parents’ household. He is one with his parents, because he has come from them and lives with them. When he marries he takes on a new relationship. He becomes more related to and more one with his wife than with his parents. He leaves the “one flesh” which is his parents and joins with a woman to create a new “one flesh.” He may leave his parents behind by literally moving away and moving into a new house with his wife. If he were to move to another city, he may leave his parents behind, but he would be unlikely to leave his wife behind. In the Genesis account, this social fact is explained by the original creation of woman out of man. Something was taken out of man when woman was formed, and hence it is natural for a man to find a woman that he can join to himself, becoming one flesh as a foundation for creating a family.

The core of the passage provides a necessary perspective for understanding Genesis 2:18, “Then the LORD God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make a helper fit for him.’” Just as in Genesis 1 the creation of man and of everything else is good at its completion, here the creation of man is not yet completed and hence the Lord God is not satisfied. Something more is needed.

Some modern interpreters view man’s aloneness as meaning “loneliness.”²⁰ Man needs a companion, a woman to talk to and share his life

“matriarchal” in the sense of women as dominant in the society. (See Chapter Seventeen, p. 425. Cf. Rosaldo and Lamphere, *Women, Culture and Society* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1971], 2–3.) Some allow for the possibility that v. 25 points to an early *matrilineal* society, although C. Vos (*Woman in Old Testament Worship* [Delft: Judels & Brinkman, 1968], 45) calls this “debatable.”

* In one of his footnotes (p. 18, n. 25), Vos suggests that since the man cleaves to the woman, and since it is usually the lesser who cleaves to the greater, this verse could be seen to point to some superiority on the part of woman. (He attempts a similar formulation with the term for “help” in v. 18.) His observation is in line with an overall attempt to discover elements of man’s subordination to woman in this passage. This suggestion is a very recent one, undoubtedly inspired by the feminist movement, and is not widely held outside of feminist circles. It seems clear from the context of the passage that the man’s “cleaving” to the woman refers to the establishment of a personal relationship, and has no special reference to subordination. See Brueggeman, 540: “The latter term cleave, *davaq*, when used of interpersonal relations, as in any context, is clearly a covenant term.” See also Feuillet, 178.

with, someone to give him ego support. In this view, the real companion for a man is one woman with whom he can be especially intimate and share his “real self.” Such interpretations proceed from a modern view of companionship marriage that was undoubtedly foreign to the author of Genesis 2, as well as to the writers of the New Testament. The view that the ideal fulfillment of the need described in Genesis 2 is the modern approach to companionship in marriage may possibly be held on other than simply exegetical grounds, but it is a historical anachronism to read such a view back into the account and hold that Genesis propounds such a view. Man’s aloneness was not good, but Genesis does not see the solution in one intimate partner for personal sharing. Rather, man needs a human society to live in, a household and a people. To use the description in Genesis 1, the man needed more people to fill the earth and rule over it, and he needed to be able to increase and multiply.*

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The establishment of the first family was the solution to the man’s need for social life and for a race to fulfill his commission. Hence, the man needed a wife with whom he could beget children and with whom he could establish a family. In creating woman and coupling her with the man, God created one flesh that could be the source of a family. The New Testament interprets “one flesh” in terms of sexual intercourse (1 Cor 6:12–20). While it would be a mistake to regard one flesh solely in terms of sexual intercourse it would be an even greater mistake to miss the reference to

* The point being made in this and the next two paragraphs is an exegetical point about Genesis 2 and an attempt to distinguish what is said in Genesis 2 from some modern approaches to marriage that have been described as companionship marriage. The term “companionship” here is potentially ambiguous. “Companionship” could mean simply living together and helping one another. In this sense, Genesis 2 contains the idea of companionship in marriage. The wife was to be part of the human society of the man, the one who most consistently was part of his household and associated with his person. However, modern notions of companionship marriage frequently go beyond such a notion to the ideas that the wife was someone the man should talk with a great deal, share his feelings with, spend much of his leisure time with, etc. To read such a notion back into the Genesis account is an anachronism. Evidence from comparative social history in traditional societies as well as from Israelite society would indicate that the man in Genesis 2 was not seen by the author in such a way. The husband was probably not being urged to talk to his wife a great deal, much less share his feelings with her (a very modern notion), nor was he expected to spend a great deal of leisure time with her or even work along with her. These were all things he would probably do with his son or other males. That is not to say that the man was not expected to love his wife or be around her. Rather, the point is that the modern notion of companionship marriage proposes a different pattern of interaction than the author of Genesis 2 would have envisaged. The discussion in Chapter Eighteen on the changes involved in the transition from traditional society to technological society is helpful background here. Edward Shorter, in his book *The Making of the Modern Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1975) traces the recent rise of companionship marriage and romantic love, and clarifies the difference (see esp. 15–17). These remarks, of course, do not address the question of whether modern companionship marriage might not be an improvement.

family and reproduction and concentrate instead on the modern idea of companionship. One reason that animals will not do as a partner for man is their inadequacy for reproductive purposes. The man needs someone with whom he can live and establish a household. Implicit in this, especially for the first man, is the need for sexual relations and reproduction.

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Genesis 2:18 describes the man's problem as being his aloneness, but it describes the solution as being "a helper fit for him." This phrase is important for understanding the relationship of woman to man, especially in marriage. The phrase sums up much of what has been said in the last two paragraphs. Genesis does not describe woman as a companion to man but as a helper to him. As von Rad points out, the phrase is not a romantic evaluation of woman.²¹ Rather, it presents woman as "useful" to man. The use of the word "useful" here does not suggest that Genesis teaches that man should approach woman as "a thing" or "use her," nor that he should not love her and care for her. But in an age when many writers tend to idealize deep interpersonal sharing relationships and read them back into Genesis, it is important to point out that the writers of scripture approach personal relationships with a certain practicality and common sense. A man's wife is supposed to "do something" for him, just as he is supposed to "do something" for her. If she does not do what she is supposed to do for him (and if he does not do what he is supposed to do for her), deep interpersonal sharing will not make the marriage a good marriage. Genesis describes her part in the marriage as being a helper to the man in the work of establishing a household and family.*

The idea of being a "helper fit for man" also includes another important feature—woman's correspondence to man. The Hebrew word for "fit" in this context implies a similarity between man and woman. She is a helper who corresponds to him, who is of the same nature as he is, unlike the animals. A horse is a helper to man because it carries burdens and draws a plow. But a horse cannot be a helper who corresponds to him. The woman was created to be the man's partner, another human being who would live with him and help him. The phrase "fit for man" clearly stresses woman's sameness and community of nature with her husband.²²

* It must be admitted that the family focus for "helper" is not explicitly referred to in the text. On the other hand, the overall context of Genesis 2–4 would indicate that reproduction and family and household life are a major concern. The traditional interpretation of the sense in which woman is to be a help for man is warranted both by a sense for the overall narrative and by the social history that was its background. Some more recent attempts, like that of Jewett (124) to say that the word applies to a larger partnership with man in all of life are clearly interpretations placed on the text rather than in any way being given by the text. Such an observation does not necessarily negate the view that woman should be a partner of man in all of life. Rather it simply indicates that the focus of the text is probably on household and family life.

In some ways, the term “complementarity” best sums up the relationship between the man and the woman in Genesis. “Complementarity” implies an equality, a correspondence between man and woman. It also implies a difference. Woman complements man in a way that makes her a helper to him. Her role is not identical to his. Their complementarity allows them to be a partnership in which each needs the other, because each provides something different from what the other provides. The partnership of man and woman is based upon a community of nature and an interdependence due to a complementarity of role. That partnership and sameness of nature, both of which together make possible the creation of a race or people, are the central concerns of Genesis 2.

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Genesis 2 ▸ Subordination

THE partnership between man and woman as people with the same nature is the central focus of Genesis 2. However, a further question arises: Is there any subordination in that partnership? The term “subordination” has been chosen for this discussion because, despite some of its English connotations that cause confusion, it is one of the best translations of a Greek word (*hypostassō*) commonly used in the New Testament to express this aspect of the husband-wife relationship and of other similar relationships. The meaning of this word as it is presented in the New Testament will be one of the major concerns in later chapters. The English word “subordination” means literally “ordered under,” and its Greek counterpart means almost the same. The word does not carry with it a notion of inferior value. A subordinate could be more valuable in many ways than the person over him or her. Nor does the word carry with it a notion of oppression or the use of force for domination. The word can be used to describe an oppressive relationship, but its normal use is for relationships in which the subordination involved is either neutral or good.

“Subordination” simply refers to the order of a relationship in which one person, the subordinate, depends upon another person for direction. The purpose of this order is to allow those in the relationship to function together in unity. Subordination is a broader concept than obedience and command. As will be seen, subordination usually implies a form of obedience. A person can give some commands to a subordinate and expect obedience, but to place the emphasis on obedience is to narrow the meaning of “subordination.” A person could be subordinate without ever having to obey a command. People can subordinate their lives or actions to

another in many ways: by serving another, by observing and cooperating with the other's purposes and desires, by dedicating their lives to the cause the other is upholding, or by following the other's teaching. The more that love and personal commitment are part of subordination, the more these other elements will be present along with whatever obedience is asked.

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Although the account in Genesis 2 concentrates on the sameness of nature between the man and the woman, the account also portrays a subordination in their relationship. To be sure, there is no explicit statement that the woman has to obey the man. Nor is there a point at which the man gives the woman a command. But there is an overall sense of her being subordinate to him in God's creation of the human race. There is a clear sense of partnership in Genesis 2, but within that partnership exists a real subordination.

The first indication of the presence of subordination is that the man is the center of the narrative of the creation of woman. He is the first formed. Then God provides him with all that he needs for life: an occupation, land and wealth, and a wife. Woman is created to be a helper for the man.* She is created from him and brought to him. He is the one who names her. To say that man is the center of concern does not necessarily mean that woman exists only for the sake of man and is only desirable for her helpfulness to man. But it does mean that her life is oriented toward his in such a way that direction for her life comes through him. In the narrative, then, the woman's role is understood in relationship to the man, which indicates some kind of subordination.²³

Secondly, it is the man who is called "Man" or "Human" and not the woman. He bears the name which is the designation of the whole race, and, as was pointed out above (see footnote, p. 19), he keeps that name even after woman is formed and he is no longer the only human. What we meet at the end of Genesis 4 is Human and his wife. Feminists today strongly object to using "male" terms to refer to groups that include men and women or to an individual of indeterminate gender (for example,

* Recently there has been some emphasis on the part of feminist authors that the Hebrew word used here (*ezer*) does not necessarily imply subordination of any sort. The word is often used of God as a help for human beings and in such a situation does not by any means imply that God is subordinate to human beings. The word is, in short, similar to the English word "help" which also does not necessarily imply any subordination. The psalms speak of God as our "help" in English as well as in Hebrew. But the observation about the word *ezer* is only a first step in looking at the phrase in which it occurs. Indeed, to focus on the word by itself, without considering its context in the phrase and in the passage, is not very helpful. The actual phrase says that God created woman to be a help for man; that is, the purpose of her creation was to be a help to the man. Taken in its context, there is clearly some sort of subordination indicated by the phrase as a whole. The sense of this subordination will be explained more fully in the next section.

using “Man” or “Mankind” as the term for the human race). Here there is a similar linguistic situation: The term for the human race in Genesis is the proper name of the man who is half of the first human couple. Some object to such usage on the ground that it makes men seem more important than women, or at least makes men the part of the human race that is most important to take into account. In the modern world such an argument has something to recommend it. But the goal at this point is not to deal with the modern world, but to interpret an Israelite document that was written millennia ago. Part of this interpretation involves understanding the significance of the document’s language. Genesis clearly uses the word “Man” or “Human”—the term for the race—as a name for the male partner (Adam). He is the embodiment of the race. The woman (Eve) is the mother of all human beings, but she was not the embodiment of the race. Rather, she was woman (wife) to the man who was the embodiment of the race. That too indicates a kind of subordination.²⁴

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Thirdly, man is created first, before woman. He is the “first-born” and hence would have a natural precedence by birth. There are possible objections to this view. Precedence by birth is something that holds between children born of the same parents. Furthermore, there are instances of the younger son being chosen over the elder. Yet the choice of the younger is clearly an act of special election, normally an act of God’s sovereignty. Moreover, in scripture the principle of the precedence of age applies more broadly than just among children of the same parents, and the narrative structure of the account puts the fact of the man’s coming first as an important part of the narrative. In Genesis, woman is created out of the man and for him. The New Testament sees this precedence as being of decisive importance. According to Paul, woman’s subordination to man is grounded in man’s being created first (1 Tm 2:12–13; 1 Cor 11:8–9).*

There are other indications that the woman is subordinate to the man. He is the one who names the animals. He also names the woman.[†]

* For a helpful discussion here, see Kline, 84; Vos, 18n24. Some feminist interpreters today would prefer to say that being created out of man cannot indicate subordination to him. After all, it is argued, Adam was created out of the earth, and if woman’s being created out of man indicates her subordination to him, then Adam’s being created out of the earth would indicate his subordination to the earth—which is patently absurd. It is actually the objection itself which is absurd. Man was “made” from the earth, but he was not “taken out” of it in the way that woman was “taken out” of man. Woman’s creation is much closer to “generation” and the whole principle of subordination by precedence is a principle of “generation.” It is by no means applied to the material from which something is made. Probably more relevant in this context is the fact that involved in his creation was man’s receiving God’s breath into him.

† For helpful observations here see Vos. See also Vawter, *On Genesis*, 75. Tribble (254–255) makes an objection concerning this point, holding that the man’s naming of the woman is not really parallel to his naming of the animals. Much of the weight of her argument rests on a distinction

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God speaks to him and apparently leaves him to pass on his commands to her. This order continues into chapter 3. God holds the man accountable for the original transgression (3:9). He continues to hold him accountable after the “curse” (3:21), even summing up the Fall in terms of what happened to the man. The man gives his wife a new name (3:20). The most normal reading of the account would indicate that the woman is subordinate to the man throughout chapters 2 and 3.*

The nature of that subordination needs to be understood more clearly in order to grasp what is being taught. The subordination in Genesis 2 is difficult to understand because it is an expression of a social structure that is increasingly foreign to modern Western society. In Genesis 2–3 and in Israelite and early Christian society, the man functioned as “the head” or “the representative” of the woman. The family or household was seen as the basic unit of the people. The Israelite people as a whole was seen as a collection of tribes which in turn were seen as collections of clans which in turn were seen as collections of families. The basic unit of the people was not an individual human being, but a social grouping—the family or

between “calling” the woman and “calling the names” of the animals. This, too, is a creative, new, feminist interpretation of the passage. However, it is one that is not well substantiated in the text. It is difficult to see that the distinction in the phrases can bear the weight which she tries to put upon them. Tribble also attempts to distinguish between woman’s being called *ishshah*, a common name (recognizing sexuality, but not specifying person), and her receiving a proper name (which doesn’t occur until Gn 3:20). She asserts that the first naming was not of the same kind as the naming of the animals. However, it makes no sense to suppose that the man gave proper names to all the animals either. It is far more likely that he gave them common generic names (their species name, so as to identify them) than that he composed proper, personal names for each animal.

- * Some interpreters take two elements in Genesis 2 as signs that woman was not subordinate to man before the Fall. The first is the phrase that man cleaves to the woman, a phrase that could easily connote some kind of subordination of man to the woman (for example, see Vos, 18n25; also Jewett, 127–128). As indicated above (pp. 19–20), however, the phrase “cleaves to his wife” indicates the formation of a committed relationship, not subordination, and in its context refers to forming a new family unit. The second possible pointer is woman’s placement in creation. She is created last. Hence it is possible to view her as the climax of creation, as some have recently held (see Tribble, 251; Vos, 18n25; John A. Bailey, “Initiation and Primal Woman in Gilgamesh and Genesis 2–3,” *JBL*, June 1970, 143). However, this view is not sensitive to the different literary structures of Genesis 1 and 2. The view is based upon a correct understanding of Genesis 1, where the creation of the human race last is the climax of creation, but it misapplies this principle of superiority to Genesis 2, where the literary structure is very different. In Genesis 2, the woman’s being created last has nothing to do with the climax of creation. Nor, to be sure, does it indicate her inferiority. As Cassuto points out (135), the model for the creation of woman is probably a father finding a wife for his son. She is brought to the man last after a search to find a partner who is truly fitting for him. Though not the climax of all creation, the making of woman in the narrative is the climax of all those animals created in the search for a proper partner for man. Her place last indicates her excellence as his partner, not her superiority to him. In fact, if her creation last were an indication of her superiority, the man would be inferior to the animals as well as to woman.

household. The woman's role was primarily within this basic social unit, the household. The man's role was to govern the household and represent it to others. He related the household to other households and to the people as a whole. In a real social structural sense, he summed up the household in his own person. When he took a wife to himself, she left her father's house and became part of her husband. His children likewise were seen as a continuation of him or his house.²⁵

Genesis 2 >
Subordination

Many contemporary writers discuss the social organization of Israelite society with hostility, because such a structure allegedly oppresses women. This view will be considered at various points in this book, especially Chapter Three. Here the social structure of Israelite society from which Genesis arose needs to be understood as a safeguard against the error of reading contemporary values and social structures into Genesis—a mistake made by more than one modern interpreter.

In Israelite society the woman did experience real subordination to her husband and a certain anonymity in her life. She was part of the man's family. On the other hand, it is a mistake to look at her as being his property, as some do.* There was a genuine reciprocity in the relationship. His family was not simply something he ruled over for his own benefit or pleasure. It was an extension of his own person; he cared for the family and identified with it personally. He governed the family as the head of it, not as the conqueror of it. Moreover, it was not so much his family that it was not hers as well. His life was the center of attention and the woman's life received direction from his life, but not because her life was unimportant but rather because as the head his life set the direction for the whole family. She was called by his name and considered part of him not because she was of no value in herself, but because the family was structured around him and he represented it in its relationships to the rest of the people. The key to understanding the relationship between man and woman is understanding that the relationship was formed around the family unit and the husband was the head of that unit.

There is a subordination in Genesis 2, but it is a very specific kind of subordination—the kind that makes one person out of two. According to Genesis 2, woman was created to be a help to man, not to be a servant or a slave. She was created to be a complement to him, making a household

* See, for example, *gune* in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 1:781. There is, to be sure, a way in which the woman "belonged to" the man. But to use the term "property" with its modern meanings is surely misleading. The Israelite man did not view his wife as a thing, but as his woman.

and children possible. He in turn protected her, provided for her, and considered her part of himself, a partner in life. He was the head of the relationship, head of a relationship that was “one flesh.”

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Genesis 2–3 is about the man-woman relationship. It is most concretely about the man-woman relationship in marriage, the husband-wife relationship. However, because the narrative concerns the beginnings of the human race, Genesis 2–3 is about more than the husband-wife relationship. It is about the man-woman relationship throughout the whole people. As we shall see over and over again, the scriptural teaching on men-women relationships primarily focuses on marriage because the marriage relationship is foundational to men-women relationships in the whole people. The pattern in the broader community is an extension and reflection of the pattern in marriage. Moreover, the unity of husband and wife is meant to be a model for the greater unity of the whole people.

SIN AND THE NEW ADAM

THE THIRD CHAPTER OF GENESIS—the story of the original transgression and its aftermath—introduces a new set of considerations into the account of the origins of the human race. The first two chapters of Genesis considered God’s creation as he originally intended it to be. With Genesis 3, creation no longer reflects God’s intentions; something has gone wrong. After this original transgression, one must always ask whether something reflects God’s purposes for his creation or whether it is a distortion of these purposes caused by the alienation of the human race from God.

The outline of the narrative in Genesis 3 is straightforward. The man and the woman are living in the garden in close communion with God. One day the serpent finds the woman alone and discusses with her the prohibition against eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The serpent tells the woman that she does not have to worry about the prohibition. She will not die, but rather she will become like God (or possibly “gods”), knowing good and evil. The woman sees that the fruit is attractive and accepts the serpent’s reasoning. She eats the fruit and gives some to her husband. He also eats. The eating changes the man and woman so that they begin to see things in a new way. They notice for the first time that they are naked, and they make clothes for themselves. When the Lord God arrives, they hide from him, and when he asks the man the reason for their strange behavior, their disobedience is revealed. The man blames the transgression on the woman; the woman blames the serpent. Then God states to the serpent, the woman, and the man the consequences of their disobedience. Finally, he puts them out of the garden and life “after the Fall” begins.

Most of the many questions connected with the events in Genesis 3 are not directly relevant to the concerns of this book. Here it is enough to observe that the heart of the narrative concerns disobedience to God. God had given a commandment, and the original human couple transgressed that commandment (v. 11). Moreover, this act of disobedience caused a major change in the life of the human race. In seeking to be like God, knowing good and evil, the man and the woman had come under the influence of evil and had impaired their free relationship with God. From now on their lives are not lived according to God's original purposes and the relationship between them as man and woman is changed.¹

The man and the woman take part in the transgression in different ways. The woman, who is not in the company of her husband, is the first to be tempted. Most commentators have seen this as significant. The more common view holds that she was tempted first because she was more vulnerable to deception than the man.² While not exactly taking this approach, the New Testament writers and many of the early Fathers see as significant the fact that the woman was deceived and not the man. Although the Genesis account does not state with any clarity the reason why the serpent began by "beguiling" the woman, the New Testament accurately notes that the Genesis account attributes some importance to the woman's being deceived first.* The man falls at the suggestion of the woman. Much less is indicated about the reason for his disobedience. Perhaps he simply wants to accommodate or please his wife. At any rate, he does sin because of listening to his wife (v. 17), and afterward God confronts him first and holds him accountable. God treats him as the head of the family. Responding in a way that has since become a common male pattern, the man blames his actions on his wife and by implication blames it on God himself, who first brought him the woman. She in turn blames it on the serpent.

The man and the woman fall together, in complementarity, as one flesh.

* Some recent feminist writers have asserted that because scripture states no specific reason for why the woman fell first, nothing whatsoever can be said about or based upon this point. Several points in regard to this question are worthy of note. First, the New Testament makes no claim that woman fell because she was more vulnerable or more deceivable. (The significance of this point will be considered more fully in Chapter Eight, which discusses the passage in 1 Timothy 2.) Secondly, the Genesis passage does seem to give some indication that there is a significance to the fact that the woman fell first. Her dialogue with the serpent and her fall are presented much more fully than the man's fall. In view of this, it appears a bit rash to state that there is no significance to the fact that the woman fell first. Thirdly, most commentators, both traditionally and at the present time, hold that there is something in the author's mind concerning the woman's greater vulnerability. The manner in which the narrative is presented would seem to point to something in this regard, although such an opinion derives more from a feel for what is happening in the text than from anything explicitly stated therein.

Both fall. The woman transgresses first and draws the man into transgression with her. The man accepts what the woman has done and follows along. God puts the primary responsibility on the man. Both the man and the woman are jointly responsible for the consequences of their actions.

Genesis 3 ▸ The Man's Rule

AFTER the transgression and after his interrogation of the human couple, God states the consequences of their actions to the serpent, the woman and the man. His statements have been traditionally referred to as "curses."^{*} God judges them and states what will happen to them because of their disobedience. For the man, these consequences rest upon his work. As some put it, the man is affected in his role as provider. For the woman, the consequences rest upon her childbearing and possibly her marital relationship. She is affected in her role as wife and mother. At the same time, in the curse upon the serpent, the statement appears about the "seed of woman" who will crush the serpent's head. This was seen later as the protoevangelium, the first announcement of the good news of the one who would redeem the human race from the curses.

The curse which is of most interest here is the one for the woman in Genesis 3:16:

To the woman he said,
 "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing;
 in pain you shall bring forth children,
 yet your desire shall be for your husband,
 and he shall rule over you."

Genesis 3:16 is of central concern here because it deals directly with the husband-wife relationship and because it raises the question of subordination between men and women.

* Recently it has been suggested that only the serpent and ground were cursed and that what God speaks to woman and man is not "cursing." God simply judges them, or predicts in a prophetic way what will happen to them because of their disobedience. This view is acceptable; however, if we keep in mind the fact that cursing need not necessarily include the idea of personal hostility or malice, but could simply be a judicial action, the idea of God's cursing the woman and man does not have to be seen as anything more than his punishing them for their disobedience by assigning consequences to their wrongdoing. Thus, the curse need not involve a direct command, but simply a punishment. Often it is predictive of what will happen, rather than being directly enforced by the person who gives the curse.

There are three main views of how the “curse” on the woman affects the relationship of subordination between men and women resulting from the Fall:

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1. *Subordination comes as a direct consequence of the transgression and the curse.* According to this view subordination of woman to man is a punishment for sin and not at all desirable. Some of the conclusions that have been drawn from this view are that (a) subordination was lifted in Jesus (Gal 3:28) and is no longer binding on Christians; (b) that subordination is a result of an original transgression which has not been completely eradicated by the redemption in Jesus but should be worked against by Christians; or (c) that subordination is something Christians have to live with, but will be lifted when Jesus comes again. This first view has recently become very popular because it supports any approach that holds that man-woman subordination is evil.
2. *Domination (subordination based on force) or oppressive subordination between man and woman stems from the transgression and curse, marring the original form of subordination present in creation.* According to this view, man should be the head of woman, at least in marriage, and was her head from the first moment of woman’s creation. However, because of the transgression and curse, man dominates woman and causes her pain through something that should have been a blessing to her. Those who hold this view usually say that this form of oppressive subordination should be overcome in Jesus and that the original form of subordination was restored. This has been the most common view among scripture scholars and among Christians writing about man-woman subordination without a polemical position.
3. *The husband’s role and the wife’s subordination to him is not a curse, but is rather a blessing intended as a consolation to the woman in her role as mother.* According to this view, subordination was an original element in creation, and it is reaffirmed in Genesis 3:16 as a help to woman in the difficulties she will experience as mother. This view is not a common one, but it is worth noting.³

The first view—that subordination of woman to man was instituted with the curse—seems to derive from a strongly negative evaluation of all forms of subordination and especially of the subordination of woman to man. Such an evaluation leads some to conclude that either the scripture teaches that subordination is a result of sin, or that the scripture (at least

the Old Testament) is misogynist or sexist or male chauvinist. Many modern people will cheerfully dismiss the scriptures in the latter way. However, most Christians and Jews who hold such a view of subordination are unwilling to dismiss scripture and rather tend to see subordination as something that comes from sin and is founded upon the curse. The strongest points in their favor are the lack of an explicit statement in Genesis 1 or 2 saying that woman was created to be subordinate to man, and the obvious concern of Genesis 1 and 2 to state that woman was created as a being of the same nature as man, a sharer in the call of the human race.

Genesis 3 >
The Man's Rule

The strongest objection to the first view is the presence of subordination in Genesis 2. Subordination does not begin with chapter 3, but begins with the creation of woman, as was considered earlier. In addition, the New Testament view of the origin of subordination also provides a serious objection to view one, which a Christian must consider. Whenever the New Testament talks about the importance of the subordination of woman to man, it normally makes reference to Genesis 2, the creation account, and not to Genesis 3.* The New Testament never refers to the curse on woman as the foundation of any recommended form of Christian subordination. In fact, the New Testament bases none of its directives on the curses. Instead, the foundation of New Testament teaching is the purposes of God in creation.

A number of considerations support the second view that the curse does not institute subordination but rather institutes a form of subordination painful for the woman. The chief consideration is again the presence of subordination in Genesis 2. A second consideration is the analogy between the curse on man's work and woman's childbearing and the curse on the marital relationship. In both cases, a function that is good and that is part of God's plan for the human race even before the Fall becomes painful or at least burdensome through the Fall. Work is perhaps the clearest analogy: Adam was explicitly entrusted with responsibility to till and care for the garden before the Fall (Gn 2:15), but, with the curse on the ground, work becomes burdensome for him. Therefore, it is likely that in the curse on woman, something basically good (man's headship) becomes burdensome or even painful.†

* The one commonly mentioned possibility is 1 Timothy 2:14. But for a discussion of the way in which that view is a simple misunderstanding, see Chapter Eight. The passage that has a better title to be a possibility here is 1 Corinthians 14:34, and that will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

† A further consideration is the possible analogy between woman's desire for her husband and man's work. There are two alternative interpretations of this section of v. 16. The first would read the beginning of that line of the curse as "yet" or "nevertheless" (the Hebrew word can be translated in this way). If this interpretation were correct, the curse would be primarily stating

A third consideration is the words of the verse. Both in Hebrew and in the Septuagint,* the words for “rule” which occur in the verse can easily mean the kind of rule that involves conflict or compulsion. They were used instead of other words which could more readily designate a rule that was good or neutral. The Hebrew word (*mashal*) is commonly used for cases of domination. Genesis 4:7 provides us with a good comparison passage:

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The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master (*mashal*) it.” (Gn 4:6–7)

Whether we translate the Hebrew as meaning that sin will master Cain or that Cain should master sin, the verb clearly indicates a use of force. A word like *radah* or *shalat*, which might designate a less dominative form of ruling could have been used instead. Something similar is true of the word in the Septuagint (*kyrieuō*). It can be translated “lord it over,” and it is used in New Testament passages to indicate the kind of rule that Jesus does not want his followers to practice (Lk 22:24). It is used in a context that indicates there is a right kind of government and a wrong kind, and *kyrieuō* is the word for the wrong kind. There are words like *hēgeomai* or *proistēmi* which could designate the right kind of government. All of these considerations would lead us to think that the curse is referring to a kind of rule that is dominative, but not to all forms of subordination.

The third view of the effect of the curses on subordination is somewhat

the burdensomeness of childbearing. It would be understood as follows: Bearing children will be a source of burden and difficulty. Nevertheless, you will be eager for your husband (a relationship which will get you into having children and hence will bring you this burden). The second interpretation of the desire holds that all four lines of v. 16 are basically parallel, and that line 3 should begin with “and” (the Hebrew word can also be translated in this way). Therefore, woman’s desire for her husband is part of the curse. The first interpretation is difficult, because it does not provide a good meaning for the line describing the husband’s rule. Hence, if we take the second interpretation, and if we do not see all desire of woman for her husband (sexual or otherwise) as evil, then we can say that the curse here is the corruption of something basically good (woman’s desire for her husband) so that it becomes, as a result of the curse, an excessive desire for her husband. Hence, it is analogous to the curse on work.

* The Septuagint is the first Greek translation of the Old Testament that we have—significantly earlier than any extant subsequent translations. It also depends upon a textual tradition that appears to have at times advantages over the Masoretic text that is most commonly used as a basis of English translations. Finally, it is the translation that the New Testament writers used. For all these reasons, the Septuagint can provide at times an illuminating insight into the Old Testament that has authority, either in terms of the Old Testament itself, or in terms of indicating how the Old Testament was understood by New Testament writers.

more complex than the first two views. To understand it, we have to observe that scripture contains a number of “curses” which have consolations included in them. The best example (and the closest parallel to Genesis 3) is found in the story of Noah. When Noah is born, his father Lamech says, “This boy will bring us relief from our work, and from the hard labor that has come upon us because of the LORD’s curse on the ground” (Gn 5:29). The fulfillment of this prediction is seen in Genesis 9:20: “Noah, a man of the soil, began the planting of vineyards.” Wine was seen as the consolation or relief to the hard labor that resulted from the curse (cf. Prv 31:6–7). Two further examples would be in the blessing-curse on Esau in which his father “predicts” that he will serve his brother, but gives him the consolation of liberation (Gn 28:40), and the blessing-curse on Gad in which his father “predicts” that he will be raided frequently but gives him the consolation of successful retaliation (Gn 49:19). If Genesis 3:16 is a similar curse with a consolation, the woman’s desire for her husband and her husband’s rule would be seen as a consolation in the labor that has come to her from the curse. The curse would then mean: You will have labor and difficulty in your motherhood, yet you will be eager for your husband and he will rule over you (in the sense of care for and help you, not in the sense of dominate and oppress you).

Genesis 3 ▶
The Man’s Rule

This third view has some difficulties. One consideration, mentioned earlier, is that the words *mashal* and *kyrieuō* seem to indicate a dominative and not a consoling form of subordination. Yet, neither word has to have that sense. There are positive uses of both in the scriptures.⁴ A second difficulty is the consideration that the purpose of the curse is to institute something new for the human race. Hence the curse should refer to something new, not to an earlier situation. Yet, if the last part of the curse is read as a consolation to the first part, it would not be as important for the consolation to contain something new. In fact, it would be reasonable for the Lord to reaffirm the role of the husband as support to the wife in her new situation. The third view is at least possible.

Of the three views of the curse in Genesis 3:16, the second—that the curse brought a dominating form of subordination—has the strongest scholarly support at the moment as well as the strongest support in Christian tradition.⁵ The third view is a possibility, but does not have support that is nearly as strong. The first view is possible only if Genesis 3:16 is considered alone although it is not even the most likely interpretation of Genesis 3:16. If Genesis 2 or the New Testament are also considered, it looks very unlikely. In other words, the view that man-woman subordination

in scripture derives from the curse after the Fall is not a highly tenable interpretation.

The New Mankind

THE previous chapter of this book began by considering the importance of “the beginning” to Jesus. The first chapters of Genesis, the story of the first man and woman were of foundational importance to Jesus because he perceived in that story a revelation of God’s purposes for the human race. This revelation took precedence over the law of Moses and over subsequent stages of God’s dealings with man after the Fall. God’s creation “at the beginning” was an ideal pattern for men, women, and the whole human race. Paul followed Jesus in this view when he taught about men and women, marriage and community. But Paul also saw something else in Genesis that allows us an even wider perspective on God’s purposes and on the place Genesis and the roles of men and women occupy in God’s plan. The perspective is difficult for a contemporary person to grasp. Nonetheless, this perspective will help clarify the significance of Genesis and the roles of men and women and will also show some of the distinctive elements of Christianity in a new light.

In Romans 5:14, Paul says, “Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.” By “the one who was to come,” Paul meant the messiah who was anticipated in the Old Testament and who came in the person of Jesus. In speaking of Adam as a type of the one who was to come, Paul indicates that there is an important correspondence between the role and significance of Adam and the role and significance of Jesus. (A type is a person or event that corresponds to a later person or event in such a way that there is a kind of identity between the type and what it foreshadows.) The same kind of thing was happening in Adam that happened later in Jesus. Adam was a foreshadowing of Jesus. Jesus repeated Adam’s role, but in a fuller, more complete way; hence he is the new Adam.⁶

To understand the significance of Christ as the new Adam, one must return to an earlier observation about the first Adam. Adam was the first man. His name means “Man” or “Human.” He is the father and prototype of the human race. In fact, at one point he *was* the human race, just as Abraham’s descendants were in Abraham (Heb 7:9), all of the human race was in Adam. Hence, when Adam fell, man (or humanity) fell. He embodied

the human race, and his story embodies the destiny of the human race. Moreover, his nature and place is passed on to his descendants and determines their lives. Adam's descendants are the sons of Adam, and therefore they are like Adam and are successors to his position. For a contemporary man, this line of thought is strange, because family, kinship and race have lost much of their significance in the social structure of technological society. But for the early Israelites, the Jews of Jesus' time, and the early Christians, the principle was quite comprehensible. For them, family life and the kinship network exercised a predominant influence upon their social structure and hence on the course of their lives.

The New
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Jesus is the new Adam, which means that he is the new man or new human. He is the head and prototype of the new human race.⁷ His nature and destiny as "the son of God" is passed on to those who belong to him and who become "sons of God" by sharing in his Spirit. Jesus reversed what Adam did. As Paul says:

Then as one man's [Adam's] trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's [Jesus'] act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men. . . . If, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. (Rom 5:18, 17)

Jesus' reversal of the history of man leads to a new Man, a new human race, the body of Christ:

For he is our peace, who has made us both one [Jew and Gentile], and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end. (Eph 2:14-16)

And Jesus' work leads to a restoration in the members of this new humanity of the image of God and enables them to live as a new man, a new type of human being (or better still, a human being restored to what "man" was supposed to be according to God's original purpose):

The first man was from the earth, a man of dust, the second man is from

heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, let us also bear the image of the man of heaven. (1 Cor 15:47-49)

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Put off your old man which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new man, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. (Eph 4:22-24)

Paul's teaching on Jesus as the new Adam offers a fuller perspective on Christianity and on God's purposes for the human race. God's purpose for creation, at least for this earthly creation that the human race is part of, was to some extent frustrated by Adam's failure. God therefore sent his only-begotten Son into the world as a remedy for the consequences of the Fall, to restore the human race to its original purpose, men and women alike. God's strategy or plan was for Jesus, his own Son, to be a new Adam and to succeed where Adam failed. He would thus become "the first-born of many brethren" (Rom 8:29), the head of a body which would be a new Man, a new Humanity. In so doing he would fulfill God's original purposes in creating man.⁸ As Paul says in Ephesians 1:9-10:

For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite [*or*: unify under one head, *or* sum up under one head] all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

Therefore, the Christian people are the new humanity, and should show by the way they live together what God intended the human race to be. They are the fulfillment of God's purposes for human history, the human race united with him and with one another in love.

Paul's teaching in this area has more implications than can be explored here. However, it does have two important implications. The first is that all Christian teaching on men-women roles presupposes a new creation and a new nature (or to use scriptural terms, a new man or person). This teaching is intended for the redeemed community, a new humanity living under the headship of Christ and leading a transformed life in his Spirit. It is not primarily intended for the mankind that wears the image of the old Adam. The teaching in scripture is not a teaching for contemporary society as it exists (what the New Testament often refers to as "the world"),

but for a redeemed community of men and women living new lives in the power of the Spirit. To be sure, the Christian teaching in this area of men-women roles is based on creation and not on redemption, and therefore the Christian teaching does have implications for what is to be regarded as truly human.* Nonetheless, it is elaborated as practical teaching for those in Christ, not for those who are not.

The second implication is equally important: The goal of Christ's work is the creation of a new human race, one which lives the way God originally wanted the human race to live. Christ is creating a body of people who love one another and who are one in the Spirit (Eph 4:1–6). He is creating unity, unity among human beings and between them and their heavenly Father. To put it another way, using a common contemporary word which will be used throughout this book, he is creating a new human "community."[†] Genesis teaches that God did not create an aggregate of individuals; he drew the second human being out of the first so the two could live together as one. This teaching shows God's intention for the human race and for the marriage relationship. Genesis teaches that unity is God's desire for human beings and for every human grouping. The work of Christ is intended to restore that unity by recreating a new humanity, the church, in which that unity is actualized (Eph 5:32) and in which every grouping, including families, lives according to that unity. Genesis is the model both for the Christian community (Eph 5:32) and for the Christian family (Eph 5:33).

The New
Mankind

Community and Subordination

GOD desires oneness: the oneness that makes a Christian community "one new man" and oneness that makes a man and woman "one flesh." This

* The basis of the Christian teaching on the roles of men and women in creation or human nature will be taken up later on in the book, partly in the chapters which study the role of the Genesis passages in the New Testament (see the summary in Chapter Nine), partly in the chapters on the scientific evidence for the biological basis of the differences between men and women (Chapters Sixteen and Seventeen). For those who work with the concepts of "the order of creation" and "the order of redemption," the view of this book is that the New Testament approach to roles of men and women is based in the order of creation, but for simplicity's sake, these terms and discussions connected with them have been avoided. The concepts of natural law and human nature could possibly likewise be applied here, but the various discussions of these ideas have for the most part been avoided as unnecessary for the purposes of the book.

† "Community" is often a troublesome term. Many equate the word with something like a commune or religious community. Here the word is used solely to indicate the kind of unity that the New Testament presents for the body of believers. The word "brotherhood" (a brotherhood involving *koinōnia*) is probably the closest New Testament equivalent.

perspective allows us to take another look at the question of subordination and community in Genesis and at the differing interpretations of passages in Genesis.

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Subordination in Genesis 2 and 3 was discussed earlier. If the question of subordination is examined from the new perspective of God's desire for oneness, the reasons for many of the disagreements in interpretation will become clearer.

Some interpretations differ because of disagreement over what subordination is and why it is worthwhile. Interpreters who disagree about whether subordination is to be found in Genesis 2 often will not differ in their interpretation of the text. Rather, they use the term "subordination" in different ways. This is a continual problem in scriptural interpretation. When one interprets a passage, one restates or translates the meaning and teaching of that passage into a different set of terms than those used by the people who wrote scripture. One translates scripture into a cultural "language" that speaks to people who live in a different social situation with different customs and in a different environment. Therefore, anyone who tries to restate the meaning of a passage accurately must pay attention to the terms they use. This is necessary in interpreting Genesis. In fact, interpreters of Genesis have invested relatively little effort in the task of clarifying the various types of subordination. To be sure, there exists an even larger question of interpretation, namely, how to translate into one social system teaching that was originally taught in terms of another system. This question will be considered in later chapters. Here "translation" problems in the term "subordination" and related terms will be dealt with in order that the kind of subordination Genesis portrays can be more accurately stated.

Subordination is an aspect of a relationship. The term, as was discussed in Chapter One, concerns the way a relationship can be ordered. There are many ways of distinguishing forms of subordination, but here the focus will be on distinctions which follow from the origin of subordination and from the way subordination is conducted.* In terms of the origin of subordination, it is helpful to notice three main types:

* There are many other distinctions one could make in terms of subordination. The distinction between formal and informal subordination is sometimes useful (that is, subordination that is explicitly recognized and subordination that occurs through informal influence). Another distinction is that between subordination in functional matters and subordination in personal or "life" matters. Often people will find functional subordination acceptable, but will not find personal subordination to be so. It is helpful to keep in mind that the main kind of subordination under discussion here is personal life subordination and not merely the kind of functional subordination that occurs, for instance, in business.

1. *Domination or coercive subordination.* Domination is subordination based on force. A slave or a conquered person is subject to domination. Domination could possibly be for the person's good. The domination involved in our mental hospitals is, at least according to some theories, for the good of the patient. God sometimes exercises domination (1 Cor 15:24–27).
2. *Mercenary subordination.* Mercenary subordination is a relationship in which there is some kind of bargain. The head or ruler in the relationship gains from the subordinate's services. The subordinate in turn receives reward. The relationship can be just (both get a fair gain) or unjust (either the head or the subordinate gets an unfair proportion of the gain).
3. *Voluntary subordination.* Voluntary subordination is freely chosen by the subordinate. Both persons in the relationship want the relationship. Even when the subordinate does not get an explicit choice (as children do not) the relationship is voluntary because it is willed by them.

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In terms of the way in which subordination and governance are conducted, it is helpful to notice three main types:

1. *Oppression.* Oppressive subordination occurs in a relationship that works for the benefit of the ruler and the harm of the subordinate. Conquest normally leads to oppression as the conqueror exploits the conquered. But oppression is not always based on force. For example, some would hold that the capitalistic system oppresses even where it cannot exercise force.
2. *Care-subordination.* Care-subordination characterizes a relationship in which the head is dedicated to the care of the subordinate and engages in the relationship for the benefit of the subordinate. The parent-child relationship is the most obvious example of such care-subordination (when parents rear their children well). The master-disciple relationship is also an example of such subordination.
3. *Unity-subordination.* Unity-subordination occurs in a relationship that is carried on for the sake of a unity or a higher cause. This is the kind of subordination that is integral to genuine community. Care-subordination and unity-subordination can often occur in the same relationship.*

* This distinction is framed according to the way in which subordination and governance actually

In much of the contemporary discussion about Genesis 2, writers assume that all subordination is dominative or oppressive or both.⁹ To be sure, a marriage or other relationships can be characterized by a dominative or oppressive type of subordination.

Genesis is primarily concerned with unity-subordination (in this case, unity-subordination which is voluntary). The goal of the marriage relationship as presented in Genesis is oneness, the oneness described as “one flesh.” The woman is voluntarily subordinate to the man so that the two might be one and thus be in a position to fulfill the call the Lord gave to the human race. This kind of subordination is also the key to the unity which God intended for the whole human race and for the new human race which is the Christian people.

The picture of subordination in Genesis rests upon a fundamental human reality. Genuine community cannot exist without unity-subordination. Many have attempted in recent years to form community without any subordination. But if community is genuine, there must be some subordination of people’s lives to the greater unity, and there must be some person or body which provides the order that makes that unity actual. Depending on the situation, such a subordination could lead to nothing but benefit for those who are subordinate. Such subordination could also involve self-sacrifice on the subordinate’s part. But in genuine communal or unity-subordination, the head (whether individual or body) will govern the relationship out of a concern for the community, and the subordinate will enter into it out of a desire to be one with others and a desire to support them and serve the common goals. Such subordination is more than just obedience to commands when those commands are necessary. It is a subordination of lives for the sake of a greater unity.*

Unity-subordination and community raise many further questions. Some hold that there should be subordination to the unity of the relationship without subordination to an individual person. Some hold that

occur, not in terms of intention. Someone could, for instance, intend to be very beneficial in their manner of governing and actually prove to be oppressive. According to this distinction, such subordination would be oppressive. When it is actually conducted in such a way that it is truly for the benefit of the subordinate, it is “care-subordination.”

* It sometimes is also helpful to distinguish between some ways in which unity-subordination can function. It can function for the sake of the relationship itself (i.e., the community as an end in itself), in which there could be subordination for the sake of a unity which could exist simply for creating and maintaining community. The community, on the other hand, could exist for some cause or goal, and the unity could therefore exist for the sake of uniting the group in a way that allows it to effectively serve that goal. Finally, it could be for the sake of some other person outside of the community, as is the case at least in part with the Christian church as it exists for the sake of the Lord, and subordination in this case draws the community together in such a way that it can be dedicated to the Lord as a body.

there should be a subordination to the life of the community or marriage and normally to an individual person but no consistent role differentiation between men and women. These are further questions. The issue here is only to understand the kind of subordination presented in Genesis. The subordination in Genesis—the subordination God intended in the original creation—is a unity-subordination. It is a subordination in which some are subordinate to others for the sake of oneness and for the sake of something outside the relationship. This is also the kind of subordination that the New Testament ordinarily presents. The New Testament is concerned with other kinds of subordination as well, but the major goal is community, and the main kind of subordination taught is the kind which brings lives into greater unity in the new humanity, the body of Christ.

A further problem of conceptual background often confuses the discussion of subordination in scripture. This is the issue of the superiority of man and the inferiority of woman. The foreword to a recent book on the roles of men and women includes the following statement of a frequently held view:

The author is too consistent to argue that although woman is equal to man, she must nevertheless obey him as her superior in the social hierarchy. To my knowledge, he is the first evangelical theologian to face squarely the fact that if woman must of necessity be subordinate, she must of necessity be inferior.¹⁰

Another work from a similar viewpoint offers a similar comment:

Many Christians thus speak of a wife's being equal to her husband in personhood, but subordinate in function. However, this is just playing word games and is a contradiction in terms. Equality and subordination are contradictions. But evidently some writers and speakers are motivated by good intentions, hoping to soften a bit of the harshness and injustice of traditional teaching on wifely subjection.¹¹

On the basis of this view, authors sometimes argue that if Genesis and other parts of scripture teach equality between man and woman, they cannot teach subordination at the same time, because subordination necessarily involves inferiority. Beginning with such a premise, one could never arrive at the interpretation of Genesis given in this chapter—even if one knew that this was what the author of Genesis intended.

The word “inferiority” can have several very different meanings. First

of all, “inferiority” can mean simply “being subordinate.” The relationship of subordination is often expressed in scripture in the spatial metaphor of over and under. In this sense, when someone is ordered “under” someone else, they are in the inferior (lower) position. Modern English rarely uses the word “inferior” in this sense, though such usage was once common. In modern English, “inferior” often means “of lesser worth,” or sometimes “of lesser ability or competence” or “of lower social class.” The same observation can be made about the word “equal.” “Equal” can mean “not subordinate.” But it can also refer to such things as equality of worth, social status, ability, or legal rights. Neither “inferiority” nor “equality” have any conceptually necessary link to “subordination” unless the terms are defined with such a link. The head and subordinate can both be of equal worth and value. In fact, they can be equal in many other ways, and still be in a relationship involving subordination. The subordinate can even be of greater rank and dignity, as Jesus was in relationship to his parents. To equate subordination with inferiority or inequality is either a confusion, or an attempt to win an argument by defining the terms in a way that is advantageous to one’s own side. The equation of subordination with inferiority is often an attempt to exploit the ambiguity involved in English usage to obscure the real issue.

For some, the equation of subordination and inferiority is a consciously chosen value judgment that is a premise of their system of thought and approach to life. Many believe that one human being should never tell another human being what to do or give directions to another (unless the person directed suffers from some kind of incompetence or disability). In this view, adult human beings are, by definition, people who make their own decisions, chart their own course, live their own lives. They can delegate decision-making to someone else, but whenever subordination is unnecessary, it is oppressive. This ideal is clearly expressed in the following passage from a feminist book on the role of women in the church:

Hardly anyone today—either Christian or Jewish—can get very enthusiastic about a lecture or book on Women in the Bible. We don’t expect anything useful or pertinent to the twentieth century, and we usually discover our expectations were correct. Very few of the women presented in the Old Testament can serve as models to an independent woman today.¹²

One could also say that very few of the men in the Old Testament could serve as models to an independent man today. Nor can the men and women

in the New Testament serve as models to independent people today. They were much too involved in communal relationships involving subordination. The issue today, in fact, is joined right at this point. A dominant value in modern society is an ideal of independence and freedom to find self-fulfillment that stands against the ideal found in scripture. This difference precedes any investigation of the meaning of the text of Genesis.

Much of modern society consciously fosters independence and individualism. "Independence" here does not mean the opposite of dependence that comes from weakness and need. "Independence" here is the opposite of "interdependence," the relationship that exists when people freely belong to committed personal relationships that do not leave them free to move on their own but tie them to a body of people. "Freedom" for many in modern society means the freedom from being told what to do. The ideal held by many contemporary people is to become a strong individual who charts his or her own course, who enters into relationships on the basis of equal decision-making rights or carefully specified contracts, who pursues his or her own career or fulfillment. Some have labeled this as an elitist ideal in a technological age. There is much truth to that label. However, it must be recognized that such an ideal permeates non-elite levels of our society and stirs up a desire for personal independence in people who are tied to dependence by their lack of resources. The ideal that regards all forms of personal subordination as harmful is a common one today.

The ideal of scripture is not independence. It is community. The independent individuals of today confront in scripture a very different ideal of human relationships. They confront God's desire to form one body out of many different self-willed, selfish individuals. They confront the call of Jesus to lose their lives so that they can gain them. The contemporary world demonstrates little real community. This is no accident, because the principles by which so many people live do not allow real community. Contemporary people need a conversion to a whole new ideal, to the call of God to lose one's life and to be united with other members of the body of Christ. They must be ready to subordinate their lives to the Lord and to other human beings.

▶ 3

THE FAMILY ▶ HUSBANDS AND WIVES

GENESIS 1:27–28 links the creation of the human race as male and female with God’s command to be fruitful and multiply. The existence of the two sexes in the human race arises from the need for human community and reproduction. The two sexes, male and female, are differentiated in such a way that their joining together allows children to be born and raised. Human reproduction begins with sexual intercourse, but the full process of reproduction moves beyond the conception of the infant; human reproduction includes raising children and transmitting human society from one generation to another. Throughout human history, the basic social unit structured for the full process of reproduction has been the family. The roles of men and women in human life cannot be understood without understanding the structure of the family.

The second chapter of Titus begins with an exhortation to “teach what is in keeping with wholesome doctrine.” It then continues with directions for teaching older men, older women, younger women, and younger men. As the life of the Christian community developed, it more and more clearly expressed a concern for soundness in the most important structures of daily life. The gospel, the message which gives birth to the Christian community, centers upon Jesus and his salvation for the human race. But that salvation brings a new life, a life which expresses itself in patterns which reflect God’s plan for how life is to be lived. There is Christian teaching on the pattern of family life, a pattern which develops Old Testament teaching on family life. The New Testament teaching on family life provides the basis for all New Testament teaching on men and women, because the family is the primary place in which man and woman join together in partnership.

This chapter will focus on the roles of husband and wife in the family.

This is by no means a complete discussion of Christian teaching on the family. A complete treatment of the family would include discussion of the sexual relationship, courtship and marriage, divorce, and many other topics. However, the concern of this book is with the roles of men and women in Christian teaching. Therefore, when studying the family, the primary concern is with the differentiation of roles between the man and the woman in the family as taught by the scriptures.

This chapter and the rest of this book are primarily concerned with the *Christian* teaching on the roles of husband and wife, and therefore primarily with New Testament teaching. Since the New Testament teaching builds upon Old Testament teaching, the chapter will frequently refer to the Old Testament, but the Old Testament is helpful here only insofar as it provides useful background for the New Testament. The New Testament contains the most authoritative Christian teaching of God's plan for family life.

The fullest and most directive teaching in the New Testament on the roles of husband and wife appears in Ephesians 5:22–36, Colossians 3:18–21, and 1 Peter 3:1–7. These passages will be discussed in Chapter Four. However, to understand these passages properly, one must obtain a fuller grasp of the roles of husband and wife than these passages themselves provide. The directives for husband-wife relationships found in Ephesians, Colossians, and 1 Peter are misleading unless understood within the wider context of the roles of husband and wife in daily family life among the early Christians. This chapter will describe this wider picture of husband-wife roles. It will primarily make use of passages in the New Testament which illustrate features of the roles of husband and wife among the early Christians that are often misunderstood by people in Western technological society. The Old Testament and occasionally other early Christian sources will be drawn upon as a means of filling in the picture.*

* The fullest treatment in the New Testament of the roles of husbands and wives can be found primarily in what has been called the household codes (the *Haustafeln*), that is, in Eph 5:22–6:9, Col 3:18–4:1, and 1 Pt 2:18–3:7. The next fullest treatment can be found in the pastoral epistles. In the Old Testament, the most helpful material can normally be found in the wisdom literature, with legal material providing the next most helpful source. The wisdom literature is especially helpful because it is designed to provide an orientation toward daily living and practical problems. The legal material is more helpful for some of the underlying questions of social structure. Since the focus in this book is on daily living of social roles, the wisdom literature is cited more frequently. Much of the New Testament material in the areas of daily life, in fact, can be traced back to teaching in the wisdom literature. The value of the wisdom literature for the understanding of the New Testament is being increasingly stressed by some (see Crouch, *The Origin and Intention of the Colossian Haustafel* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1972], 95, for some remarks and further references). The bulk of the treatment in this chapter covers material from the pastorals and the wisdom literature, and the following chapter will deal with the material in the household codes.

In general, the scriptural material will be used to illustrate the roles of husband and wife rather than to narrate a social history of family life.¹

The Husband's Role

THE basic unit of society in scriptural times was the household, a household that differed greatly from households in modern technological society.² First, Jewish or Greco-Roman households were more important to society than most contemporary households are to our society. More constructive activity went on within them. They were not just places where people rested and spent some of their leisure time, and where children were raised for the first years of their lives. First-century households—both rural and urban—were economic units. The farm family worked together, caring for the family's economic life as a unit. A similar arrangement existed among urban families. Craftsmen and merchants normally worked where they lived and their family members shared their work. Much more of the childrearing happened in the family than is the case today. Children grew up in the family, received much of their schooling in the family, obtained vocational training in the family by working in the family business, and found most of their social life in the family (and not with a peer group). Moreover, children usually did not leave the family after reaching an adult age except for girls when they married. Adult men and unmarried women either lived and worked along with their parents, or kept a close tie to them which usually included some kind of economic partnership. Finally, the family provided health care, financial aid, and insurance in cases of sickness and accidents. For Christians, the family was the place where children received their Christian instruction (catechism classes for children are a recent invention). In the early centuries of the Christian church, the family seems to have been a center for evangelism, care of the needy, and care of travelers.

A second characteristic of the first-century household was its extension beyond the nuclear family to include a wider family network spanning generations. Relatives play an important role in some contemporary families, but the extended family was much more significant in the times the scriptures were written. The nuclear family was part of a vital, wider system. The father possessed active authority over his sons until he died, and the elder brother possessed some kind of authority over his younger brothers. Clan chiefs and tribal chiefs could exercise some authority over

the extended network. This is not to say that the nuclear family always lived in the same dwelling with other nuclear families. Sometimes they did (see Mt 10:35–36), but often they did not. Still, wider family ties were more important and the clan system provided a great deal of support for the nuclear family. The wider family would pass on its own good fortune to its members and would be a source of help in times of financial and personal need. The “insurance system” was not just the nuclear family, but it was the extended family. The extended family was the nuclear family’s greatest resource. The extended family was probably somewhat less important among the first generation of Christians than among their contemporaries, Jew and Gentile alike, because they would often have to sever or weaken their family ties to become Christian. Nonetheless, the extended family network was likely to be much more important to the church in the scripture than it is to a contemporary reader of scripture.

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These facts are helpful background for understanding New Testament passages. When scripture talks about the husband, it means a man who has a wife and children. The husband could be the head of a larger household, possibly including his children and their families and his servants and their families. Or the husband could be the head of a unit within a household, or simply the head of a nuclear family living in its own dwelling. Later chapters will directly consider the implications of the differences between the family in scriptural times and the family today. This chapter—which is mainly concerned with the scriptural teaching on husbands and wives—will consider these differences only to the extent that they assist understanding our topic.

1 Timothy 3:1–7, a passage concerning the selection of “bishops” for the Christian community, includes a few lines that provide a helpful understanding of the role of the husband in the family. The following is one of the qualifications for a prospective bishop:

He must rule his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way [*or*: keeping his children submissive with all dignity]; for if a man does not know how to rule his own household, how can he care for God’s church? (1 Tm 3:4–5)*

This passage contains a number of significant features. First, it says that one

* The quotation is from the RSV, but the word “rule” has been retranslated in accordance with the commentary given below. The translation in brackets is a leading alternative translation of the passage.

qualification for a new bishop is the man's ability to rule his own household. The reason behind this criterion is important: There is something very similar about ruling a household and ruling the Christian community. In fact, a few lines farther on, the Christian community is described as "God's household." Thus, there is a parallel between being head of a household, the smallest unit in the Christian community, and being head of the whole community.³

Second, the passage talks about the man's "ruling" his household. The Greek term here (*proistamenon*) could be translated "preside over" or "govern" or "manage" or "control" as well as "rule."⁴ The word refers to the function of governing people. The passage singles out one aspect of the man's government that would show that he is governing well—he must keep his children "submissive" or "subordinate," to use the translation used in the last chapter. A man's ability to successfully exercise authority with his children is an indication of his ability to exercise authority in the Christian community. He must rule his household in such a way that his children conform to the standard of Christian character (see Ti 1:6). In short, the head of a Christian community has to be the kind of person who can direct others and direct them successfully. One test of his ability to do this is his success in directing his own household. Here is one of the clearest teachings on the role of the husband. The man in the family must govern the family well. He should govern in a way that produces submissiveness in the children and causes them to mature into stable Christian adults.

Finally, the term "to rule his house" parallels the term "to care for God's church" in such a way that the term "care for" is the counterpart to "rule." "Ruling" and "caring for" are seen as different aspects of the same activity, or possibly even different ways of describing the same activity. Someone cannot "rule" in the sense used in scripture without also "caring for." The Greek term translated "care for" (*epimeleomai*) is not common in the New Testament.⁵ One of its other uses is the parable of the Good Samaritan where the Good Samaritan finds the man who fell prey to robbers:

... When he saw him he had compassion, and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast

* This term appears three times in the New Testament: twice in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:34–35) and in 1 Tm 3:5. It signifies a "taking care of" which involves forethought and provision. The prefix *epi* indicates the direction of the mind toward the person or thing that is cared for. The related term *melō*, which occurs in the Good Shepherd passage in John 10:13, indicates that something is an object of care. *Melō* occurs ten times in the New Testament, in Mt 22:16; Mk 4:38; 12:14; 1 Cor 9:9; and 1 Pt 5:7. The last passage, from 1 Peter 5, is a clear example of care operating in the context of headship and subordination.

and brought him to an inn, and *took care* of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper saying, “*Take care* of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.” (Lk 10:33–35)

Jesus pointed to this care as the kind of care one neighbor should give to another to fulfill the commandment of love of neighbor. The Good Samaritan provided for the needs of the wounded man and did whatever he could to see that he healed properly. He expressed this care partly by helping the man personally, partly by entrusting the man to another and paying for the help.

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A similar picture of “caring” appears in John 10, which portrays Jesus as the good shepherd. In John 10, “caring” and “ruling” are explicitly linked in the person of Jesus. The term “shepherd” was a term of authority in the scripture.⁶ The kings and other rulers of Israel were known as the shepherds of Israel. When Jesus describes himself as the shepherd of his followers, he says that he cares for the sheep (10:13), and he cares for them even to the point of laying down his life for them (10:15). He cares for his followers so that they might have abundant life (10:10), that is, so that they might prosper. In other words, the kind of ruling Jesus claimed involves care for the well-being of the people. Such ruling, in other words, involved both the unity-subordination and the care-subordination discussed in the last chapter. This kind of care provides for a person’s needs, protects the person from harm, and sees that the person’s life is going well.

To return to the passage in 1 Timothy 3, then, the head of the family is protector-provider (carer) as well as ruler. The head rules his household and expects submission, but he rules the household so that he can care for its members. It might not be drawing too much out of the text to say that one reason he rules them is to care for them better. His ability to care for them, then, also would depend on how well they are subordinate.

Another picture of the ideal head is found in the account Job gives of himself in Job 29.⁷ This passage helps fill in the picture of the role of the husband because it shows the life of a man who rules well outside the family. The description shows Job as something of an ideal type:

Oh, that I were as in the months of old,
 as in the days when God watched over me;

 as I was in my autumn days,
 when the friendship of God was upon my tent;

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when the Almighty was yet with me,
 when my children were about me;
 when my steps were washed with milk,
 and the rock poured out for me streams of oil!
 When I went out to the gate of the city,
 when I prepared my seat in the square,
 the young men saw me and withdrew,
 and the aged rose and stood;
 the princes refrained from talking,
 and laid their hand on their mouth;
 the voice of the nobles was hushed,
 and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth.
 When the ear heard, it called me blessed,
 and when the eye saw it, it approved;
 because I delivered the poor who cried,
 and the fatherless who had none to help him.
 The blessing of him who was about to perish came upon me,
 and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.
 I put on righteousness, and it clothed me;
 my justice was like a robe and a turban.
 I was eyes to the blind,
 and feet to the lame.
 I was a father to the poor,
 and I searched out the cause of him whom I did not know.
 I broke the fangs of the unrighteous,
 and made him drop his prey from his teeth.

 Men listened to me, and waited,
 and kept silence, for my counsel.
 After I spoke they did not speak again,
 and my word dropped upon them.
 They waited for me as for the rain;
 and they opened their mouths as for the spring rain.
 I smiled on them when they had no confidence;
 and the light of my countenance they did not cast down.
 I chose their way, and sat as chief,
 and I dwelt like a king among his troops,
 like one who comforts mourners.

(Job 29:2, 4-17, 21-25)

Several features of this portrait of Job would characterize a good head of a family. First, Job is a man who commands respect. He does so partly from the position he holds. Job was apparently a village elder (v. 25) and also a man of economic means and of power. In much of Old Testament times, a man with communal authority had to have wealth and a leading position in a family. But the passage also indicates that Job commanded respect because of the way he lived. He fits much of the description in 1 Timothy 3:1–7. He is portrayed throughout the book as someone who lives righteously, and also as a man who is trained in wisdom. People rise to greet him out of respect, wait for him to speak, listen to his words, value his opinion. He is a man who wields authority, formal and informal, and who does it effectively. He is in a position to see that the life of the village goes well. He would be the kind of man who might speak the words of Psalm 101, the psalm of a ruler:

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I will sing of loyalty and of justice;
to thee, O LORD, I will sing.
I will give heed to the way that is blameless.
Oh when wilt thou come to me?

I will walk with integrity of heart
within my house;
I will not set before my eyes
anything that is base.

I hate the work of those who fall away;
it shall not cleave to me.
Perverseness of heart shall be far from me;
I will know nothing of evil.

Him who slanders his neighbor secretly
I will destroy.
The man of haughty looks and arrogant heart
I will not endure.

I will look with favor on the faithful in the land,
that they may dwell with me;
he who walks in the way that is blameless
shall minister to me.

No man who practices deceit
 shall dwell in my house;
 no man who utters lies
 shall continue in my presence.

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Morning by morning I will destroy
 all the wicked in the land,
 cutting off all the evildoers
 from the city of the LORD.

(Ps 101)

Another characteristic of Job is equally important: Job cares for people, especially for those who are in need. He cares for the poor, the crippled, the widow, and the orphan. He sees that they are provided for and protected. In fact, he sees that righteousness prevails everywhere he has influence, not just among the disadvantaged. He uses the strength that the Lord has given him in the cause of justice. He expresses his authority by caring for people and by seeing that life goes well among those he is responsible for. Job takes a concern for the life of the community that is similar to the concern a father takes for his family.

A few important points emerge from the passages considered so far. Ideally, the husband exercises authority over his family in an effective way. He does not have to be harsh or overbearing, but he does have to govern effectively. He is not the “nice guy” that is sometimes the model for the loving Christian husband, an amiable man who is always willing to yield to the pressure of his wife and children. To the contrary, the husband in scripture is not primarily guided by a desire to accommodate others’ wishes (although he will do so when it is right to do so), but by an understanding of what will be most effective in leading the family to where it should be.

Second, the husband cares for the members of the family. He provides for their needs, sometimes directly and sometimes by seeing that others do what is needed, and guards the family against danger and misfortune. The husband’s authority means that he has a responsibility for the family and a responsibility that he has to give account of (Heb 13:17; 1 Sm 3:13).

Finally, the husband not only cares for his family and house, but also takes a concern for the life of the community. If his family life is going well, he can be effectively responsible for the life of the community. How he exercises that responsibility differs according to his position. He may be a village elder, or an elder in his kinship grouping, or simply one of

the heads of households (or families) in the community. However, his responsibility within his family is always the model for (and the basis of) his responsibility outside of it.

Modern people cannot easily understand the scriptural portrayal of the husband's role in the family unless they understand the difference between the biblical and contemporary view of authority. Contemporary people often react against the ideas of rule, government, and exercise of authority. Some of the reasons for this reaction were considered in the last chapter. But there is a further reason that bears upon one's understanding of the role of the man in the family and community. Contemporary Western people often react against the exercise of directive authority in the lives of others because they see direction mainly as the imposition of one person's will and way on others. Indeed, since people in modern society often do not have any objective standard of right and wrong or good and bad, they cannot imagine directive authority being anything but arbitrary. Contemporary Western society especially lacks a consensus on values, particularly values that apply to people's personal lives. Consequently, the only way someone could give a directive to another person, except when working under a policy laid down by some institution, is to impose his or her values or preferences on another person.

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The scriptural writers were familiar with the arbitrary exercise of authority in which one person imposed his decisions and preferences on another. However, they normally did not consider this exercise of authority inevitable. The scriptural writers could have a real alternative because they believed in an objective right and wrong and an objective good and bad standard of right living revealed by the Lord. In their view, the Lord revealed a pattern of human life that reflects his own character. Therefore, a ruler or a head can know what is right and good. He can know if the life of his household, community, or kingdom is healthy because he possesses a standard that both he and his subordinates acknowledge as objective.⁸ In fact, scripture teaches emphatically that a ruler must first submit to the Lord's standard and become a righteous man in order to become a just ruler over others (see Dt 17:18–20).⁹ His rule then becomes an extension of the Lord's rule.

Christian (and Israelite) teaching of objective moral truth makes a great difference in government and the exercise of authority. The head of the family, as well as the heads of the community, are expected to know what should be happening in people's lives. Their responsibility rests primarily in governing according to a pattern and standard that the Lord provides.

Indeed, without a clear understanding of the Lord's teaching, heads are not in a good position to govern. According to Old and New Testament tradition, wisdom played an important part in government. If the head was to govern the family and the nation well, he needed to be wise.

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To be sure, modern society presents a very different situation. Modern people are faced with many decisions that do not seem a matter of right and wrong or good and bad. Today one must decide which of many entertainments would be best, which food among our abundance of food one should eat, what styles of clothing one should wear. Modern people face choices about occupation, residence, manners, and opinions that people in traditional society did not face in the same way. Not all of these decisions are arbitrary, but there is a greatly expanded number of decisions that cannot be handled easily in terms of traditional wisdom. At this point, however, it is enough to observe that the scriptural ideal of the exercise of authority functioned according to a standard that was objective to both the head and the subordinate. It was not based upon arbitrary decision-making or the imposition of personal preferences and values.

The Wife's Role

THE most concrete description of the wife's role in the New Testament occurs not in any of the celebrated passages on husbands and wives, but in a passage in 1 Timothy about widows. The early church established an order of widows, partly as a way to support needy widows and partly to organize a group of older women who could offer special service in the community. 1 Timothy 5:13–16 contains instructions on when and how to enroll widows in this group. Two sections of this passage are particularly helpful for understanding the life of a Christian wife. The first is the verse which includes a list of the activities a woman should have performed over the years in order to be enrolled as a widow. This list therefore describes particularly meritorious services that a good wife performs:

She must be well attested for her good deeds, as one who has brought up children, shown hospitality, washed the feet of the saints, relieved the afflicted, and devoted herself to doing good in every way. (1 Tm 5:10)

The second relevant section is the verse which lays down instructions for younger widows who should remarry. This verse provides a summary of her responsibilities as a wife:

So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, rule their households, and give the enemy no occasion to revile us. (1 Tm 5:14)

One further passage from the pastoral epistles helpfully amplifies the picture of the wife's role. Titus 2:4–6 contains a description of the duties the younger women are to be trained in:

... and so train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be sensible, chaste, domestic, kind and submissive to their husbands, that the word of God may not be discredited. (Ti 2:4–6)

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These passages reveal several significant features about the role of the wife. First, the description of the wife's role is household-oriented. The wives are directed to have a concern for the homes that they belong to. The center of this concern is love for their husbands and children. The passages do not forbid wives to leave the house or to take a concern for anything outside of the house. However, the home is certainly the center of the wife's concern.

Second, the wife has a ruling function within the household. This is most clearly expressed in 1 Timothy 5:14, which states that wives are expected to "rule their households." The Greek word here is *oikodespotein*, to "house-rule." The verb *despotein* is related etymologically to the English word "despot." The wife's role thus involves a real governmental function. Although the husband is head of the house, the wife functions under him as someone who rules the house. Chrysostom describes her as a "second authority."¹⁰ In other words, the husband's headship over the house neither relieves the wife of responsibility nor makes her passive. Nor does it make her a simple servant in the house. Instead the wife's subordination to the husband expresses an order of authority with the wife's ruling function carried out subordinate to the husband's.

Third, 1 Timothy 5:10 lists worthy services that wives should perform in the course of their lives. The list contains what we might call "charity work" or "works of mercy" or even "social services." The widow who is being enrolled should have served people's needs. She should have brought up children. She certainly should have raised her own children, but possibly the passage here refers to orphan children as well. She should have received and provided for guests, whether long-term guests or daily visitors. The widow should have refreshed others in the Christian community by caring for their physical needs and, most likely, by her good Christian conversation as well. She should have cared for those who were suffering, providing

them with food or clothing or nursing. This verse mentions activities that might be called charity work today, but in New Testament times these services were often provided in the context of the home.

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As with the husband, a passage in the wisdom literature fills out the New Testament picture of the role of the wife. Proverbs 31:10–31 has been called “the portrait of the ideal wife,” but a more accurate and more traditional title would be “the woman of valor” or “the wife of valor” (“the courageous wife”).¹¹ In recent Jewish tradition (and possibly during the years the New Testament was written), the husband and children recited this passage at the sabbath ceremony to honor the wife. It is a passage that the New Testament writers were undoubtedly familiar with and which was therefore a background to their thoughts on the role of the wife:

A good wife who can find?
 She is far more precious than jewels.
 The heart of her husband trusts in her,
 and he will have no lack of gain.
 She does him good, and not harm,
 all the days of her life.
 She seeks wool and flax,
 and works with willing hands.
 She is like the ships of the merchant,
 she brings her food from afar.
 She rises while it is yet night
 and provides food for her household
 and tasks for her maidens.
 She considers a field and buys it;
 with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.
 She girds her loins with strength
 and makes her arms strong.
 She perceives that her merchandise is profitable.
 Her lamp does not go out at night.
 She puts her hands to the distaff,
 and her hands hold the spindle.
 She opens her hand to the poor,
 and reaches out her hands to the needy.
 She is not afraid of snow for her household,
 for all her household are clothed in scarlet.
 She makes herself coverings;
 her clothing is fine linen and purple.

Her husband is known in the gates,
 when he sits among the elders of the land.
 She makes linen garments and sells them;
 she delivers girdles to the merchant.
 Strength and dignity are her clothing,
 and she laughs at the time to come.
 She opens her mouth with wisdom,
 and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.
 She looks well to the ways of her household,
 and does not eat the bread of idleness.
 Her children rise up and call her blessed;
 her husband also, and he praises her:
 “Many women have done excellently,
 but you surpass them all.”
 Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,
 but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.
 Give her of the fruit of her hands,
 and let her works praise her in the gates.

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(PRV 31:10–31)

The above passage is part of the wisdom literature in the Old Testament. It is placed within the book of Proverbs, which is a somewhat miscellaneous collection of materials that might be described as an anthology of wisdom literature.¹² Wisdom literature presents its own special difficulties of interpretation. Not all of it is straightforward teaching and some of it is even written tongue-in-cheek.¹³ Proverbs 31 is predominantly serious in tone, but not descriptive in the normal sense. One woman, commenting on Proverbs 31 after a first reading, asked if the vocation of a wife was to work herself to death. The poem certainly seems to be describing an Israelite “super-woman.” It describes many characteristics of the ideal wife, yet the description of them is deliberately stated in a strong or exaggerated way. It is probably intended to be an ideal portrait highlighting the element of valor, the soldierly element in a good wife’s life.¹⁴ The passage’s usefulness lies in the way it portrays many features of a wife’s life that shatter some common misunderstandings of scriptural teaching on the role of woman.

First, the wife in Proverbs 31 is clearly the ruler of the house. Moreover, the house she rules is a sizable enterprise. Her husband is a wealthy man, one of prominent position (a village elder, as we shall see later on). She could have been, for example, Job’s wife. As the ruler of the house, she assumes responsibility for a large number of people. She directs them,

corrects them, and teaches them. Some men may be included in this group. Although on a large family farm most of the men and the sons would have worked primarily under the husband's direction, there might well have been men working at the house under the wife's supervision.¹⁵ Moreover, the whole passage suggests that she had some overall concern for the whole farm-household, especially when her husband was absent on community responsibilities.

Secondly, the wife in Proverbs 31 is strong, active, and competent. One writer describes her as something of an Amazon. The language of the poem stresses this aspect of her character. The word "valor" in "woman of valor" (v. 10, translated somewhat weakly in the RSV as "a good wife") is also the word for "soldier" and is used occasionally for "army." Hence the term implies strength like that of a soldier. The word translated "gain" in v. 11 is the word for "booty" and the word translated "food" in v. 15 is the word for "prey." In other words, the woman goes about her work as a wife in a soldierly way, with valor.¹⁶ This portrait of the woman amazes many modern people. They have the mistaken idea the scripture pictures woman as weak, passive, and over-emotional. The mistake comes from identifying the Victorian ideal woman with the scriptural ideal. The Victorian woman was supposed to be somewhat delicate, much in need of her husband's help. The Israelite ideal wife was a sturdy helper, able to shoulder significant responsibilities.

Modern people are also surprised because the modern tendency is to identify personal subordination with weakness. Much contemporary thinking about subordination presumes that subordination is rooted in the weakness of the subordinate. Traditionally, however, some of the best examples of subordination come from armies—groups of strong men who are all subordinated so that they can be united and able to fight together more effectively. Traditionally, men have had the role of physical protector and have been physically stronger. However, it does not follow that women therefore have to be weak (or are ideally weak) in order to be subordinate. On the contrary, a strong subordinate strengthens the unit the head leads and makes the head more effective. The woman of valor in Proverbs 31 is a strong woman, even physically strong, and her strength is an advantage to her husband.

Moreover, the woman of valor is competent. She does not always need to have her husband telling her what to do. She is not devoid of initiative. Again, many modern people have the mistaken notion that subordination must rob an individual of initiative and competence. To be sure, some

subordinates—such as the traditional foot soldier in an army—are rarely expected to take personal initiative. However, other forms of subordination prize initiative highly. Many athletic teams and certain kinds of army units such as the officer corps are not composed of passive automatons. Their training creates men who are well-drilled and able to obey orders, but they are also able to take personal initiative when required. Subordination in the Old and New Testaments does not produce weakness or incompetence; it is a relationship of unity which produces greater effectiveness.¹⁷ The early Christians did not hesitate to apply army imagery to the family to illustrate just this point. For example, Chrysostom does this in his Homily 20 on Ephesians where he explains why Paul enjoins subordination on wives:

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Role

For there is nothing which so welds our life together as the love of man and wife. For this many will lay aside even their arms, for this they will give up life itself. And Paul would never without a reason and without an object have spent so much pains on this subject, as when he says here, "Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, as to the Lord." And why so? Because when they are in harmony, the children are well brought up, and the domestics are in good order, and neighbors, and friends, and relations enjoy the fragrance. But if it be otherwise, all is turned upside down, and thrown into confusion. And just as when the generals of an army are at peace one with another, all things are in due subordination, whereas on the other hand, if they are at variance, everything is turned upside down; so, I say, it also is here. Therefore he says, "Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, as to the Lord."¹⁸

Two activities included in the description of the ideal wife's role in Proverbs 31 may be especially surprising. The first is her teaching function. Like the husband, the wife was expected to teach in the household. Verse 26 says, "She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue." It does not suggest that she holds formal classes (although that is not necessarily ruled out). Teaching is often most effective when it is done informally. But the verse does describe this function in terms which are drawn from the wisdom literature's vocabulary for teaching. First, the wife speaks wisdom (*hokmah*), the kind of wisdom taught in the book of Proverbs. Then, the teaching (*torah*) of kindness (*hesed*) is on her lips. The word for "teaching" is the Hebrew word used for the first five books of the Bible, a word often translated "the law." It refers to the kind of instructive activity that a scribe or sage would engage in, or even

that Moses and God would engage in. *Hesed* is the term for the kind of love that characterizes committed faithful relationships. “Kindness” is a reasonable English translation, but all English translations are somewhat weak as equivalents. The woman of valor, then, gives instruction in what we might call personal relationships and in the obligations involved in different personal relationships. She instructs the household, possibly men and women alike, in how to live according to God’s teaching. In a similar vein, earlier in Proverbs, men are exhorted to “hear your father’s instruction and reject not your mother’s teaching” (Prv 1:8; see also 6:20). Teaching, then, was an important part of the work of the wife and the husband.

The wife in Proverbs 31 also engages in economic activity. She not only performs housework in the contemporary sense of housework, but, in her ruling or management of the household, she has a substantial amount of managerial responsibility in economic affairs. She not only organizes a large work force, but also takes the initiative to make some investments out of money that she has saved.¹⁹ Of course, her economic activity derives from the life of the household.²⁰ But the household itself is a locus of economic activity and not just a place for rest and leisure. The household was probably the main economic unit of the society in which the woman of valor lived.

Lastly, the woman of valor has an important effect on the life of her husband. Proverbs 31:23 says, “Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land.” This does not mean, as some modern people think, that the husband was sitting around, out talking with the other men, neglecting his family and living off his wife’s work—a classic picture of the exploited woman. To the contrary, the men at the village gate were conducting important communal and commercial business. The gates of the village in Israelite society were the place where the important commercial transactions were handled.²¹ It was also the place of justice, government, and other public business—analogueous to city hall or the county court house. The elders of the village—the rulers of the village and the judges for the local area—held court at the gates.

Verse 23, then, says that the woman who has been depicted is the wife of a famous magistrate. He is a man who was probably known for his wisdom as a judge and competence as a ruler. The wife’s competence in ruling her household freed her husband to assume greater responsibility for the affairs of the community. The passage does not imply that he took no responsibility for the household. Other parts of the wisdom literature discuss the folly of neglecting household and wife. Nor does the passage

imply that the husband did not provide for his family. As with Job, his effective management of his wealth undoubtedly allowed him to provide for his family and for many others. But the passage does show that he trusted and respected his wife and was able to entrust to her a great deal of responsibility, confident that she would alert him if he needed to handle something. She was probably even able to fill in for him in his area of household responsibility. His wife was his partner, not in the sense that they did everything together, but in the sense that their complementary partnership in life allowed them to be a family which set a pattern for other households and ruled in society through the husband.

The
Wife's
Role

The same relationship between husband and wife was the proper pattern for all men, even those who were not elders. In the book of Sirach, a work written by a Jerusalem sage in the early years of the second century BC, we find one of the best expressions in all of Jewish tradition of the importance of a good wife to her husband:

If a woman's tongue is kind and gentle,
her husband has no equal among the sons of men.
A man who takes a wife has the best of possessions,
a helper that suits him, and a pillar to lean on.
If a property has no fence it will be plundered.
When a man has no wife, he is aimless and querulous.
Will anyone trust a man to carry weapons
who flits from town to town?
So it is with the man who has no nest,
and lodges wherever night overtakes him.

(Sir 36:23–27)

Without a wife, a man cannot function well. Only when he has a wife does stability enter his life. She is a source of strength to him and makes it more possible for him to work and contribute to the life of the community. If she is a good wife, the man is very fortunate. In other words, the wise Israelite understood the importance of his wife in making him a strong effective man. The early Christians understood this too.

To summarize, the passages examined here illustrate some important elements in the role of the wife in scripture. The wife is the ruler or manager of the household. She is the heart of household life, ordering the life of the household and seeing that the needs of the people in the household are met. She takes an active responsibility for the affairs of the house

The Family ▶
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and is expected to handle them competently. She rules the household in subordination to her husband, but she rules the household nonetheless. Within the household, her special concern is to see that the members of the household are served in their needs: fed, clothed, provided with what each needs to function well. She makes the household a home, a place where others are strengthened and refreshed. The wife is a source of strength to her husband and to the other members of the household because of her personal service to them. Finally, she is actively involved in what we call charity work. She serves the needy of the community either personally or by seeing that other members of the household provide help.

Raising Children

SO far, this study of the roles of the husband and wife in the family has only incidentally noted the parents' responsibilities for raising children. But as was noted at the beginning of this chapter, family life and its structure can only be understood from the perspective of the passing on of life from one generation to the next. Thus childrearing is a central element in the roles of men and women in the family. Childrearing involves a differentiation of roles between men and women, a differentiation which endures from their different roles at the moment of conception to the death of either the parents or the children. The man in the family—the husband—is also the father, and part of his role in the family is to engender and raise children. The woman in the family—the wife—is also the mother, and part of her role is to bear and raise children. The roles of husband and wife in raising the next generation are closely related to their roles in all aspects of family life.

Three passages in the New Testament provide a useful orientation to the raising of the sons in Jewish and early Christian families. The first is found in the Gospel of John where Jesus speaks about his relationship with his father. The second is Luke 15:28–31, the elder brother section of the parable of the prodigal son. The third is Hebrews 3:5–6, another description of the relationship between Jesus and his father.

In John 5:19–20, Jesus says,

Truly, truly, I say to you, the son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the father doing; for whatever he does, that the son does likewise. For the father loves the son and shows him all that he himself is doing . . .

Some scripture scholars understand these lines as a type of parable.²² Jesus uses a common understanding of the father-son relationship in his society to explain his own relationship to his heavenly father. Jesus' words refer to an important feature of the Jewish family that is rarely part of contemporary Western families. In Jewish society in Jesus' day, the mother had primary charge of all the children from their birth until approximately five to seven years of age.²³ At that time care of the boys would pass from the mother to the father. From this age on, boys would be raised by their fathers or, in some cases, by another male relative or male friend of the family. This meant that the boy would live his life with his father. He would work along with his father, helping him and thereby gradually learning farming or his father's trade. During that time the father would form his son as a man. He would raise his son in his own presence and teach him what he knew. In fact, much of the son's training would consist of the father's example. The son would see what the father was doing, and would thus learn what the father knew. This is the father-son relationship Jesus is referring to in John 5.

The rabbis summed up a man's responsibility for his son by saying that the father had to "circumcise him, redeem him, teach him torah, teach him a trade, and get him a wife."²⁴ Circumcision and redemption refer to the initiation rites shortly after birth by which the newborn boy was received into the people of Israel. The other duties occurred during the rest of the boy's early life. His father was expected to equip him to function as an adult male. The father had to teach his son torah—the basic truths about God and man and the basic understanding of how to live in accordance with God's commandments. He had to train his son in a skill (usually the father's own) that would allow him to earn a living. Then, the father had to provide him with a wife. The boy was not really raised until his father had equipped him to function as a man.

The elder brother section of the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15:28–32 reveals another important feature of the father-son relationship that is rarely seen in contemporary Western families. The elder brother returns from the fields, finds a welcoming party for his prodigal brother, and responds as follows:

He was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered, "Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured

your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!" And he said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to make merry and be glad; for this your brother was dead, and is alive, he was lost, and is found."

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Two of the statements in this passage are particularly helpful for seeing how the father-son relationship functioned. First is the elder brother's statement, "these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command." The second is the father's statement, "you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours." Hebrews 3:5-6 is another passage which illustrates the same aspect of the father-son relationship. This passage occurs in another description of the relationship between Jesus and his father:

Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, but Christ was faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house if we hold fast our confidence and pride in our hope.

Both of these passages show how the father and son in Jesus' time continued to have a relationship of mutual obligation even after the son reached adult years. In most contemporary families, an adult son lives a life that is independent of his father; the contacts between them are normally mainly social. The father even provides for himself in his old age if he can. But in Jesus' time the relationship was different.²⁵

The exchange between the elder brother and the father shows the normal pattern of this relationship. The father-and-son relationship continued throughout the father's life. Father and son were often part of the same household, and the son would function both as son and heir while the father was alive. He would exercise his father's authority in the household, but subordinate to his father. The household would be his as the heir as well as his father's. The son might continue to live in the same building with his father, as did the older son in the parable, or he might live separately. But he would still be tied to his father (and to his brothers) by kinship links and mutual obligations that were well understood.

In a Jewish household, some readjustment did occur when the son became an adult. There were even ways in which the relationship could be redefined. The younger brother in the parable of the prodigal son chose one of the ways in which the relationship could be significantly redefined.

However, even the prodigal son did not separate from the father as thoroughly as would a modern son who had decided to leave home. The elder brother's accusation "this son of yours has devoured your living" indicates that the father still had a claim on the part of the inheritance that he had given to the younger son. The younger son, rebellious and reckless as he was, still was expected to fulfill certain obligations toward his father. Much of the seriousness of the younger son's actions came from what he did to *his father's* living that his father had given him to use as the heir but from which the father could still expect support in his old age.²⁶

These two passages point to a feature of Jewish and early Christian experience that stands in sharp contrast to contemporary Western society. In New Testament times, the father-son relationship was as much a relationship among adults as between an adult and a child. In fact, the adult relationship was the paradigm of the father-son relationship. When New Testament writings speak about "sons" (or "the son") they normally are referring to adults in an adult relationship with their father.²⁷ The son carried on the father's house and family. He had been raised to continue on the line, to take his father's place.²⁸ He would succeed to his father's place after he died. It was the eldest son, not the mother, who became the head of the family after his father's death, although the mother held a special position within the family. Most significantly, the son shared in his father's position and authority even while his father was alive. The adult son had been raised in his father's image and likeness and was able to represent his father and act on his behalf. He was subordinate to his father, serving him and obeying him, but, if the son had been raised properly, the father and son were one. The elder son had the title of "the son" or "the heir," which conferred authority upon him within the household, an authority that was almost identical with the father's.

It is important to note one qualification to our description of the father-son relationship. Sometimes the son was not raised by his own father but was apprenticed to another man (usually a relative, although not always).²⁹ A boy might be apprenticed because his father was dead, ill, or otherwise incapable of raising him. Or a son might be apprenticed because his parents wanted him to be raised in a different way than his father was able to raise him, usually so that the son could be trained in a different trade or occupation than his father. The rabbi-disciple relationship was an example of this kind of apprenticeship, and the Jews understood the rabbi-disciple relationship as a father-son relationship.³⁰ The disciples of a rabbi carried on his life and work just as a craftsman's or farmer's sons

would carry on his life and work. This understanding of the rabbi-disciple relationship provides a context for understanding the meaning of Jesus' training of his disciples and his giving of his Spirit to them.

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Daughters were raised in a way similar to sons.³¹ The daughters would stay with the mother when the sons went to their father to be raised, although a daughter could in certain circumstances be sent to another family to be raised just as a son could be. The daughter was reared by living and working with her mother. The mother would teach her daughter how to live as a good Jewish or Christian woman and would train her to rule a household and be a good wife and mother. When she reached marriageable age, her father would see that she was married to the right kind of man. After marriage, the daughter would go with her husband and consequently would not stay with the mother in the same way that the son might remain with the father. Yet marriage would not break the bond with her family. In fact, her marriage might have been arranged to link two families more closely.³² The daughter was raised to carry on her mother's life, just as the son carried on his father's life.

The parents had a joint responsibility for raising the children but each had different roles. The father had the overall responsibility and authority. For instance, the father would have final responsibility for the discipline of the family.³³ If the children were not submissive, he was responsible for their punishment and reformation (1 Tm 3:4). However, the mother had authority as well. Sons and daughters were expected to honor both parents (Eph 6:2), and this honor included obedience (Eph 6:1). The sons were not subordinate only to their father; they were subordinate to the parents who were one person in their joint responsibility for the family. At the same time, the husband and wife had a clear division of responsibility in the raising of the children. The mothers were primarily responsible for the daughters and boys too young to work; the fathers were responsible for boys over about age five to seven. There was a unity of concern and authority, yet a division of care.

Contemporary parents often think of their childrearing responsibilities in terms of pre-school training. When children reach age five to six, parents then turn them over to schools and other social institutions for the bulk of their formation and training. New Testament childrearing practices differed drastically from this model. The parents were expected to raise the children to become mature adult Christian men and women. This is the reason for the concern expressed in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1

that a man be able to raise his children well. This is also the context for accurately understanding the instruction in Ephesians 6:4:

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

The term “discipline” (*paideia*) in this passage is particularly significant. The word could also be translated “training,” “instruction,” “punishment,” or even “formation.” The Hebrew equivalent (*musar*) appears often in the wisdom literature of the Old Testament. “Training” is perhaps a better translation than “discipline” in this context, because discipline of children in English almost always refers to punishment. Although punishment plays a role in *musar-paideia*, the concept is broader. “Training” in the scriptural sense is an educational activity which changes the way a person lives. It does not mean only knowledge or mental understanding. It means training to act in a certain way. Moreover, the teaching a person receives when he is trained in the scriptural sense is authoritative teaching backed up by punishment. The trainer bears responsibility for how people turn out. He does not just provide them with ideas and let them do with those ideas as they will. He forms them as people.†

Raising
Children

Some conclusions about childrearing practices in the New Testament can now be made. First, the process of bearing and raising children was intended to carry on the life of the parents. The fathers raised the sons to be men like themselves; the mothers raised the daughters to be women like themselves. The sons carried on the family of the father, but sons and daughters together carried on the life of the people as a whole. Secondly, raising children meant that the parents trained or formed their children. Parents did not simply give their children physical life and send them out to society to be formed and established. The parents trained them in the training “of the Lord.” Children were formed to be like their parents.

* The phrase “of the Lord” here refers to either the content of the training or the manner of the training (i.e., “train them the way the Lord trains”) or both. The term “instruction” in the RSV is a translation of *nouthesia*, which could be almost an equivalent of *paideia* or could possibly mean “reproof” or “correction.” In the first case the phrase would be a hendiadys. In the second it would be a New Testament example of the common pairing in the Proverbs of *musar* and *tokahat* (e.g., Prv 12:1). See also Bertram, *TDNT*, 5:596–625.

† In the wisdom literature, “training-instruction” is commonly used for the activity of both parents and masters in a master-disciple training relationship. In the Proverbs, in fact, it is sometimes impossible to tell for certain whether the exhortation “my son” is spoken by a father or a master.

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For Christian parents, this meant forming the children to be men and women of God. They taught their children how to live as Christians, and thereby the image of God was formed in them. They trained their children to carry on the life of the body of Christ. The parents passed on to their own children the way of life they themselves had received. This is why some Christian writers have called the Christian home “the school of Jesus Christ.” Finally, formation as men and women was part of the children’s Christian formation. The fathers trained the sons or any other young men they were responsible for to be men. The mothers trained the daughters and any other young women they were responsible for to be women. They trained them by living and working with them, passing on their lives as they lived it.

The above description of childrearing in the Christian family brings more clearly into focus the two main structural lines of the Christian family. In some contemporary writing, it is common to stress only the husband-wife relationship as being truly constitutive of the family. In this view, raising children is then a task that the husband and wife take on together. Those who take such an approach will often lay great stress on the idea that man and wife are one flesh. However, there is another structural line of great importance—the parent-child link, especially that between father and son, but also the link between the mother and daughter. Not only was the one flesh important, as a truth of family life, but the passing on of the image and likeness so that the life of the parent could be carried on was likewise important in scripture as a truth of family life. In fact, the father probably spent more time with his sons, especially as they grew older, and the mother spent more time with her daughters, than husband and wife did with each other. The children did not grow up into someone else’s family (their parents’), but they were as much part of the family as the parents were. The eldest son, in fact, had the same authority as the father, though subordinate to him while the father was alive. In short, the bond between the generations was as strong as the bond between the husband and wife, and both bonds together allowed the family to fulfill its functions effectively.

FINAL REMARKS

The New Testament presents a simple pattern of roles of men and women in the family, a pattern rooted in Old Testament teaching, especially in the teaching of the wisdom literature. There are some variations in approach

to family life and to the roles of men and women from book to book of the New Testament. There were also variations through the evolution from early Israelite society to later Jewish and early Christian society. These variations and changes will be noted as they are relevant, especially in Chapter Eleven. However, the basic relationship of husband and wife, their relationship to their children, and the basic division of responsibility noted in this chapter characterize most of both Jewish and Christian tradition. The Christian teaching on the roles of men and women in the family and in the Christian community can be understood only by seeing the basic patterns and structure of the Christian household. The next chapter will examine other features of Christian teaching on household and family life, and then will summarize the New Testament teaching on the roles of the man and the woman in the Christian family.

3 ◀

▶ 4

THE FAMILY ▶ KEY TEXTS

FOR THE CHRISTIAN, the scripture is a source of life. Psalm 119:105 says, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” The scripture is more than an interesting source book for theological discussions. The scripture teaches one how to live; it contains the way of life. When approached rightly, the scripture imparts spiritual life, in good part by teaching a spiritual way of life, that is, how to live in the Holy Spirit.

This chapter discusses the key texts on the roles of men and women in the family. This book as a whole is an investigation of the Christian teaching on the roles of men and women. The primary concern of the book is not exegesis, although exegesis is an important element in the book. Nor is the primary concern biblical theology, although the book contains material that could be described as biblical theology. If this book were a book of exegesis or biblical theology on the subject of men and women, it would contain a great deal more material on such topics as the approaches of the different biblical authors and the evolution of the subject in scripture.¹ The focus of this book, however, is not scripture itself, but what scripture teaches and how we should apply that teaching. Exegetical and biblical theological material enter in only insofar as they contribute to an understanding of what the scripture is teaching about the roles of men and women.

A “key text” on the roles of men and women, then, is a text which contains explicit teaching on the roles of men and women. A “key” text is one which directly addresses the subject of this book and offers authoritative teaching. Key texts are not the only texts in scripture relevant to understanding the roles of men and women. Texts which show us how Jesus, the apostles, and the early church approached men and women provide important background which helps one to understand and evaluate the key

texts more concretely. Background texts are also important in themselves, because the pattern of early church life has some authority for Christians in later centuries, as will be discussed in Chapters Twelve and Thirteen. However, the key texts are the major focus of concern because they contain explicit and directive teaching on the subject of men's and women's roles.

This chapter will examine three passages in the New Testament which are the primary key texts for teaching about the roles of men and women in family life: Ephesians 5:22–33, Colossians 3:18–19, and 1 Peter 3:1–7. These focus on the role of the husband and wife in family life. Other New Testament texts, which will be discussed later, treat men's and women's roles in the wider Christian community. Still other passages discuss divorce and entering into marriage. All three passages to be examined here appear in sections of epistles which tell the Christian how to approach certain important relationships. These passages all attempt to instruct husbands and wives in how to relate to one another. Two of these passages—Ephesians 5:22–33 and Colossians 3:18–19—are very similar to one another and can be treated together. This chapter will therefore discuss at some length the teaching from Ephesians 5:22–33 (Col 3:18–19) and 1 Peter 3:1–7 on how husbands and wives should relate to one another. The discussion will primarily aim at putting one in a position to state more clearly the New Testament teaching on the roles of men and women in family life. It will also note places where these passages reinforce or develop the picture of the husband-wife roles sketched in by the previous chapter. This chapter will conclude by summarizing the New Testament approach to the roles of men and women in the Christian family, drawing together material from both chapters on the family.

4 ◀

Ephesians 5:22–33² ▶ As Christ

SOME Christians have spoken of Ephesians 5:22–33 as the great New Testament passage on marriage, containing everything a husband and wife need to know to have a successful marriage. However, it is difficult to sustain this point of view on several grounds. For example, Paul* tells husbands to love their wives, but does not direct wives to love their husbands. Does this mean that love is only for the men in marriage? Some say that Paul

* There has been much discussion over the question of authorship of Ephesians and various other New Testament letters. The issue will not be addressed here, and the author of the letter to the Ephesians will simply be referred to as “Paul.” The reasons why the authorship question is not central to the argument of the book will be considered in Chapter Five.

presumed that the wives would love their husbands, that husbands especially needed instruction on love. While this particular opinion about husbands and wives may have some merit, the whole line of reasoning misses the point, because Ephesians 5:22–33 is not a short treatise on marriage. Rather, Ephesians 5:22–33, and Colossians 3:18–19 as well, concern the order between husband and wife in marriage, and view marriage only from that aspect. However, to establish the right understanding of husband-wife order in marriage, Paul in this passage also considers the purpose of marriage and compares Christian marriage to the relationship between Christ and the church. Thus only Matthew 19:3–9 (and parallel passages) rival Ephesians 5:22–33 as a significant New Testament statement of the place of marriage in God’s plan.

The Context

Ephesians 5:22–33, like its parallel passage in Colossians 3:18–19, forms part of a section of the epistle commonly described as a “household code” (*Haustafel*).³ Both Ephesians and Colossians contain a series of exhortations to wives and husbands, children and parents, and slaves and masters. These exhortations are paralleled by similar exhortations in 1 Peter which show something of the same structure. The household codes in Ephesians and Colossians—along with their close parallel in 1 Peter—are part of a wider category of teachings, including sections of the pastoral epistles and material in the apostolic Fathers, which instruct Christians on how to approach important relationships according to God’s design. Teachers in the early church probably taught about relationships in this way as they instructed new Christians. The household codes in Ephesians and Colossians are examples of how this teaching was done.

The teaching on how to conduct particular relationships, such as the husband-wife relationship, was part of an even larger body of Christian teaching on personal relationships found in many places in the New Testament. The household codes in Ephesians and Colossians are embedded in larger sections (beginning with Eph 4:1 and with Col 3:1 or 2:8) that could be entitled “how to live in the body of Christ.” In Ephesians, this larger section begins with an exhortation to live in a united way as members of the body. It then proceeds through discussions of the old life and the new life, loving one another in Christ, and living in holiness, and then to “the household code.” Just before the passage on order in marriage, Paul gives exhortations like, “Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,” and “let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and

slander be put away from you, with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” These exhortations occur as part of a long instruction on how members of the body of Christ should love one another as brothers and sisters in the Lord, as those who have put on the new person (“man”) in Christ. It is this part of the epistle that contains the bulk of Paul’s instruction to married couples and everyone else. This portion of Ephesians contains as much about how husbands and wives should live in marriage as the passage which actually addresses the husband and wife (5:22–33). In other words, the context for the teaching on order in the husband-wife relationship is the teaching on basic Christian love. To successfully live in God’s order for marriage, husbands and wives must put away bitterness, wrath, anger, and other sinful activities and be kind and tenderhearted to one another.

Ephesians
5:22–23 ▶
The Context

The “household code” in Ephesians (and Colossians) then, does not teach on everything which goes into the relationships it considers. Rather, this part contains a very specific kind of exhortation, an exhortation on order in those relationships. The household code follows a statement (Eph 5:21) that says, “Because you fear Christ, subordinate yourselves to one another.” Paul then develops this statement by exhorting wives to be subordinate to their husbands, children to obey their parents, and slaves to obey their masters. Each of these exhortations has a complementary exhortation to husbands to love their wives, to fathers to avoid provoking their children, and to masters to treat their slaves well. In other words, the whole passage from Ephesians 5:21 to 6:9 (likewise Col 3:18–4:1) treats subordination in several relationships among people who make up the same household. Paul directs his primary attention to the subordinates in the relationships, urging them to subordinate themselves to those who are over them. He then urges the “heads” to behave in such a way toward the subordinates that they can be peacefully and gladly subordinate. Thus the passages on husbands and wives in the household codes concern one aspect of relationships in the household—the aspect of order (subordination). This perspective gives us a key to reading Ephesians 5:22–33.*

* It may surprise some that I do not discuss mutual subordination. Many modern commentators (e.g., Sampley, 116–117; Barth, 609–610; F. W. Beare, *Interpreter’s Bible*, 1:717–719) would understand Ephesians 5:21 as urging mutual subordination, wife to husband *and* husband to wife. They explain the idea of mutual subordination by saying that the wife is exhorted to be subordinate by subordinating herself to her husband and the husband by serving his wife, the children by obeying the parents, the parents by caring for the children, etc. The content of such an understanding of mutual subordination is in basic harmony with the main point of the text, and hence does not provide a serious difficulty that needs to be addressed in the text. I do not, however, think that Ephesians 5:21 is urging mutual subordination for the following reasons:

1. The main objection to the idea of mutual subordination is structural or contextual. Follow-

The Structure of the Passages

Ephesians 5:21–33 reads as follows in Markus Barth’s translation:

The Family ▷
Key Texts

Because you fear Christ, subordinate yourselves to one another—wives to their husbands, as to the Lord. For in the same way that the Messiah is the head of the church
—he, the savior of his body—
is the husband the head of the wife. The difference notwithstanding, just

ing on Ephesians 5:21 is a series of exhortations in which one partner to a relationship is urged to be subordinate (or obey) and the other is urged to relate to that subordinate person in a way that makes the subordination work well. The three following exhortations are most easily understood as explanations of what is meant by subordinating yourself to one another. This is confirmed by the use of the word “subordinate” in the exhortation to the wife. As a repeat of the idea of subordination in Eph 5:21, it is a good choice of a word. As an explanation of the wife’s part of mutual subordination in distinction from the husband’s, it lacks new content and hence makes the passage seriously deficient as an explanation of mutual subordination. This view is also strengthened by observations made in the text about the specific form of relationship teaching we find in Ephesians, Colossians, and 1 Peter. In this form, the exhortation is made to the subordinate. The corresponding exhortations to the husband-parent-master are secondary and supportive of the main exhortation and even missing in 1 Peter 2:18–25 (cf. Crouch, 121–122). This is, in fact, a uniquely Christian form for such exhortations.

2. The second objection to the idea of mutual subordination comes from the meaning of the word itself. To subordinate oneself means to order oneself under. The image behind it is a spatial image with someone over and someone else under. The parallel uses of the term in the New Testament (in noun, verb, and adjectival forms) all have someone under someone else. The parallel uses of the term in secular Greek frequently refer to battle formations in which there is some kind of chain of command and order of operation in the army or fleet. These uses also reappear in Christian understandings of the term (see 1 Clement 37–38, quoted on pp. 127–128). They are reinforced by places in the New Testament where subordination is involuntary but results from the victory of one person over another (e.g., Lk 10:17; Rom 8:26; 1 Cor 15:28; Heb 2:8). The meaning of the word “subordination” then, contains the idea of an order to the relationship where one person subordinates him or herself to another who provides direction.
3. The interpretation of the husband’s service to the wife as being his subordination to her is based upon the connection of service and subordination. It fails, however, to make a necessary distinction. A servant is subordinate, but not to everyone he serves. When a servant waits on table, he serves the guests and he serves the master. But he serves the guests in a different way than the way he serves the master as master. The guests do not give him direction. They only make requests. It is the master that he is subordinate to. The husband’s care for the wife is analogous to service of the guests, and hence involves no subordination. The master in the husband’s service of the wife is the husband’s own head, Christ.
4. The main reason for the idea of mutual subordination is the phrase in the New Testament text “to one another.” However, there is another passage in the New Testament where the phrase “to one another” (*allēlois*) could also be understood with an order to it and not mutually, and such an understanding would make better contextual sense. James 5:16 contains the phrase “confess your sins to one another,” and the context would suggest that it is the sick person who is confessing his or her sins as part of the process of healing (cf. Ps 32) and hence the elder, presumably well, is not called upon to confess his sins in turn. In other words, the main word used to establish the idea of mutual subordination does not have to contain the idea of reciprocity. The phrase then could simply mean “let there be subordination among you” (i.e., “let each of you subordinate himself or herself to the one he or she should be subordinate to”).

as the church subordinates herself to the Messiah, so wives to your husbands—in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as the Messiah has loved the church and has given himself for her to make her holy by his word and clean by the bath in water, to present to himself the church resplendent free from spot or wrinkle or any such thing so that she be holy and blameless.

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The Structure
of the Passages

In the same manner also husbands owe it to love their wives for they are their bodies. In loving his wife a man loves himself. For no one ever hates his own flesh, but he provides and cares for it—just as the Messiah for the church because we are members of his body. “For this reason

A man will leave his father and mother
And be joined to his wife
And the two will become one flesh.”

This (passage) has an eminent secret meaning: I, for one, interpret it (as relating) to Christ and the church. In any case, one by one, each of you must love his wife as himself, and the wife . . . may she fear her husband. (Eph 5:21–33)⁴

The parallel passage in Colossians reads as follows:

Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. (Col 3:18–19)

The Ephesians passage is obviously the more complicated one. Its structure as situated in the household code in Ephesians can be outlined as follows:

Subordinate yourselves to one another:

- A. Wives to husbands
 1. Wives, subordinate yourselves to your husbands in everything—just as the church subordinates herself to her head, Christ
 2. Husbands, love your wives—just as Christ loved the church, his body
 3. Summary: husbands love your wives and wives fear your husbands
- B. Children to parents
- C. Slaves to masters

The Ephesians passage becomes complicated because of the insertion of the comparison to Christ and the church. The comparison, in fact, takes up more space than the basic exhortation. Nonetheless, the passage contains a basic exhortation (as is clear from the comparison with the Colossians version as well as from the considerations made above about the household codes), and in that exhortation wives are exhorted to do only one thing—to subordinate themselves to their husbands. Then husbands are exhorted to do only one thing—to love their wives. If we remove the comparison, the passage reads as follows:

Because you fear Christ, subordinate yourselves to one another—wives to their husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife. So wives subordinate yourselves to your husbands—in everything.

Husbands, love your wives. Husbands owe it to love their wives, for they are their bodies. In loving his wife a man loves himself. For no one ever hates his own flesh, but he provides and cares for it.

One by one, each of you must love his wife as himself, and the wife . . . may she fear her husband.

The comparison of marriage to Christ and the church receives a great deal of development for reasons that will appear later, but it should not overshadow the basic fact about the passage: It speaks primarily about wives subordinating themselves to their husbands and about the corresponding care husbands should give their wives. This explains why wives are not urged to love their husbands. Indeed, it explains why much more material is not included. Additional material is unnecessary because the passage is not a general teaching on marriage, but is a specific exhortation to subordination in the husband-wife relationship. If one understands the structure and purpose of the passage, one will be better able to understand the meaning of the various ideas contained in the passage, as well as its general significance for men's and women's roles.

The Basic Exhortation

The core content of the exhortation in Ephesians 5:22–33 is the wife's subordination to the husband and the husband's love of his wife. However, before discussing the content of these exhortations, two phrases that appear early in Ephesians 5:21–33, "Because you fear Christ" and "as to the Lord" need to be considered. These two phrases invoke the authority of the Lord

with regard to these directions. The order prescribed in the household code is not just a pragmatic human approach. Paul presents it as Christian teaching calling for obedience as a response to the Lord.

The first phrase occurs in Ephesians 5:21: "Because you fear Christ, subordinate yourselves to one another." The fear of Christ is a reason or motivation for subordination. The phrase "fear of Christ" is analogous to "fear of the LORD/Yahweh" in the Old Testament. Some English versions translate the word "fear" as "reverence" or "respect" (5:21, 31, RSV). Such translations remove some measure of strength from the term. "Reverence" and "respect" often connote attitudes or actions which simply show consideration for someone else. "Fear" contains a greater note of seriousness and obligation, as well as the implication that bad consequences might follow from not fearing.⁵ The wisdom literature presents "fear of the LORD" as the response which produces obedience to the commands of the Lord. Those who fear God are those who obey him. "Fear" in this case does not primarily mean a servile terror, or a fear simply of punishment or harm, although "fear" properly reminds us that we cannot disregard God's will with impunity. The "fear" in the wisdom literature is the first step in wisdom. It recognizes God's power and position and our position as his dependent creatures. "Fear" is an inner attitude of submission. In scriptural teaching, this type of fear is an appropriate response to the objective truth of our position before God. We should fear Christ because of who he is. If we lose our fear of the Lord, we have lost our ability to respond properly to spiritual realities. Fear in this sense cannot be replaced by love.⁶

The close connection of fear to submission and obedience clarifies the significance of the phrase "because you fear Christ." To subordinate oneself out of fear of Christ means that one is subordinate out of reverence and obedience. Christ stands behind the order of subordination in the Christian community. One motive for accepting the authority of another (in this case, the husband) is acceptance of the authority of Christ who has delegated that authority.⁷

The phrase "as to the Lord" in Ephesians 5:22 has a meaning related to the meaning of "because you fear Christ." Both state that the wife's relationship with Christ should have something to do with her subordination to her husband. There are two main ways of understanding the meaning "as to the Lord." Some hold that it means "because the Lord wants it." The wife should be subordinate to the husband as she would be to the Lord who stands behind the authority of her husband. "As to the Lord" in this sense would simply be a repeat of "because you fear Christ." Some hold

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that “as to the Lord” refers to the manner of the wife’s subordination. She should subordinate herself to her husband the way she would if he were Christ. She should learn how to act toward her husband by considering how she would act toward Christ. These interpretations are not mutually exclusive, and both interpretations could be correct.⁸ The main conclusion relevant here is that both interpretations point to Christ’s role in the Christian community’s order of subordination.

Subordination in the Christian community is not simply a human affair, a matter of convenience or wisdom. Christ stands behind it, because he is concerned for the good order which makes his body functional (Col 2:5). The husband has authority over his wife not simply because of nature and not simply because of some social custom, but because Christ has delegated that authority to him, so that when the wife subordinates herself to him, she is obeying Christ. The husband is the representative of Christ.* This does not mean that the wife should relate only to Christ and regard her husband as the medium or occasion for her obeying Christ. Paul is trying to create a relationship of subordination between people, and he is encouraging her to subordinate herself to her husband. His instruction is not “subordinate yourself to the Lord and pretend that your husband is the Lord.” His exhortation is rather “subordinate yourself *to your husband*, because of the Lord.” The husband is a human being, but he bears the Lord’s authority in this relationship. Thus, Paul takes what could be a natural subordination and situates it within the order of the Christian community, an order that Christ stands behind.

To understand this passage and its teaching about order in the husband-wife relationship in the Christian community, first the exhortation to the husband, and then the exhortation to the wife will be considered. The husband is exhorted to love his wife. Paul is not here talking about erotic love, sexual desire—the love of contemporary popular songs. The exhortation does not mean “husbands, desire your wives.” The love that Paul speaks of here is service-love, the love Christ has as he cares for the church, the love he had when he laid down his life on the cross. That Paul means service-love and not erotic love can be presumed from the general New Testament use of the word “love” (*agapē, agapaō*) and also from both the context and content of the passage.[†]

* Some have suggested that because of the husband’s position as a representative of Christ, a woman’s *only* access to Christ would be through her husband. This is not, however, a necessary implication of the husband’s position.

† A good basic discussion of *agapē/agapaō* can be found in Stauffer, *TDNT*, 1:21–55. Some further observations of the meaning of “love” in this exhortation could be helpful:

The context of the passage is a discussion of subordination in human relationships. The kind of love Paul is referring to is one which corresponds to the wife's subordination to her husband.⁹ It is the kind of love which makes it easier for her to be a subordinate (cf. the parallel passage in Colossians where the husband is urged to avoid harshness to his wife). It is the kind of love which the person who governs in a Christian relationship should have for a subordinate. Like 1 Timothy 3:4–5, Ephesians 5:22–33 is concerned with the head's care for a subordinate.

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The same point can be seen in the content of the teaching in the passage. Paul says that the kind of love which the husband should have for his wife is the same kind of love he has for his own body. This is neither an erotic love a man has for his own body, nor even the kind of self-acceptance that much contemporary popular psychological literature considers so desirable. Rather, Paul is referring to the man's desire to provide well for

1. The kind of strong distinction between *eros* and *agapē* that is associated with the name of Nygren is not tenable, especially in view of the use of *agapē* in Hellenistic Jewish sources, particularly the Septuagint. It is not necessary to make a strong distinction between *eros* and *agapē*, however, to justify the view that in this passage *agapē* refers to service-love or care rather than erotic desire. The general New Testament use of the term *agapē* is a consistent teaching on making another's welfare one's own concern, and there is no instance where the word is clearly used with erotic love as its meaning. Moreover, *hesed* is in some ways as important a background to *agapē* in the New Testament as *ahab* (which is at the root of LXX translations which seem to point to a more erotic love), for instance, in the Good Samaritan parable. The husband's *hesed* for his wife, that is, his faithful commitment to care for her, would seem to be an important antecedent to the use of *agapē* in Eph 5:22–31. Finally, asserting that the controlling meaning is care rather than erotic desire does not completely rule out erotic desire as being present in the meaning. For recent discussions of this issue, see Barth, 621, 715–20, and Crouch, 111ff.
2. Ephesians 5:22–33 contains a contrast between love and hate: loving his flesh and hating it. "Hate" here does not mean emotional dislike for it. The usage is a parallel to the passages in the gospel which speak of hating parents (Lk 14:26) or masters (Lk 16:13) and where the meaning concerns choice of loyalty and service rather than emotional feeling. Love and hate refer to "care for" or "serve" and "neglect" or even "reject as an object of care."
3. The husband's love for the wife is summed up at the end (5:33) with an exhortation to the husband to "love his wife as himself." This phrase is undoubtedly a parallel to Leviticus 19:18, 34, "Love your neighbor as yourself." See Sampley's discussion (30–34) of the relationship of Leviticus 19:18 to Eph 5:33. The exegesis the rabbis often gave of Leviticus 19:18 confirms this parallel because they applied it primarily to the husband-wife relationship (Strack/Billerbeck, 3:600). Some contemporary homilists use Leviticus 19:18 as an occasion to encourage self-acceptance, explaining that the scripture enjoins self-love here. While their point may have some validity, their exegesis is distorting. The scripture does not enjoin self-love, as Barth (631–633) establishes. Rather, it presumes that human beings take care of themselves quite well, and instructs them to care for their neighbor in addition. They should make their neighbor's welfare their concern just as they make their own. Likewise, a husband should care for his wife as he does himself, and here Paul points out that she really is part of him (he could, of course, make a similar point about other Christians). The link between the husband's love for the wife and Leviticus 19:18 strengthens the interpretation of "love" that is given in this chapter. The link is especially graphic in the Good Samaritan story which is a teaching on love of neighbor (as the Martha and Mary story is a teaching on love of God in Lk 10), and which portrays love of neighbor as care for the needs of the neighbor.

himself. The words which Paul uses to describe the way the man takes care of his flesh refer to activities like feeding and sheltering. Paul is saying that the husband should care for his wife the same way. The husband, then, is being exhorted to take care of his wife, to be dedicated to her welfare, to provide for her needs. When Christ entrusts the women who are part of his body to husbands, he commands the men to care for them.¹⁰

The Family ▸
Key Texts

The wife, correspondingly, is exhorted to subordinate herself to her husband (5:21–22). The subordination that Paul urges here stems from the unity of the husband and wife in the family, a point which the comparison with Christ and the church makes particularly clear. The purpose of the subordination is to provide a deeper and more solid oneness between husband and wife as they function together in the household. The Greek term translated “subordination” (*hypostassō*) has a military use that makes a helpful comparison. It was used to describe an ordered army or a fleet drawn up in battle array, ready to function together as a unit. According to the New Testament, something similar should be true of husbands and wives. Their subordination has a practical aspect in that it creates a greater effectiveness in their working together as one.¹¹

The subordination that Paul encourages is something that the wife must choose to do.¹² This feature of the household codes in Ephesians and Colossians and the related passage in 1 Peter is without parallel in similar materials in the ancient world. Paul speaks directly to the wife, the subordinate member, and urges her to subordinate herself willingly, out of a dedication to the Lord and a concern for good order in the body of the Lord. The apostle does not want an imposed subordination, but a consciously chosen subordination. The fact that Paul addresses the wife equally with the husband (in fact, prior to the husband) indicates that Christian teachers held men and women alike responsible for the welfare of the community. They were concerned for the woman’s role as well as the man’s.

The wife’s subordination involves obedience to her husband. This point could be taken for granted if it had not been called into question by some recent feminist literature.¹³ To be sure, as was seen in Chapter Two, subordination involves more than just obeying commands. However, obeying commands is part of subordination. A subordinate is expected to obey. This can be seen from the common application of the term in secular Greek to military situations. It can also be seen from the way forms of the word “subordination” are used in the New Testament to describe the relationships between fathers and children (1 Tm 3:4; Ti 1:6) and between masters and slaves (1 Pt 2:18). Even more evidence that subordination in-

volves obedience comes from examining the parallel passage in 1 Peter 3. Here wives are exhorted to be submissive to their husbands, and obedience is given as a development of the notion of subordination. Finally, Ephesians 5:22–33 itself connects subordination and obedience. The comparison between Christ and the church certainly suggests obedience. The church obeys Christ. It should respond to Christ’s decisions and desires with the same immediacy that a body responds to its head. Moreover, the phrase “may the wife fear her husband” parallels the exhortation to the wife to subordinate herself to her husband, and the term “fear” involves obedience, as was discussed above. Paul certainly envisioned obedience to commands as included in his exhortation to “subordinate yourself.”

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Paul exhorts the wife to subordinate herself to her husband “in everything.” This phrase has evoked comments dealing with the question of limitations to the wife’s obedience to the husband. Such a question arises out of the modern desire to define authority relationships. People in modern society limit authority by controlling the scope of someone’s authority, specifying what decisions a person in authority can make. The scripture writers rarely define or limit authority in such a way. For them, it is righteousness—obedience to the teaching and commands of the Lord who stands behind the head’s commands—which limits authority and protects the subordinate. The phrase “in everything” probably does not even raise the question of limitation of authority. It does not address the issue of whether the wife has to obey the husband regardless of what he commands. Rather, the phrase “in everything” means that the wife is to be subordinate to her husband in every area of her life. No part of her life should be outside of her relationship to her husband and outside of subordination to him. We should see the exhortation to be subordinate “in everything” in its immediate context in the passage. The husband and wife are to be “one flesh” or “one person” with the husband as head. As was seen in the discussion of Genesis, the purpose of the woman’s subordination is to create a oneness between the man and the woman, the kind of oneness that lets them be one person in society. This oneness means that the whole of the woman’s life (everything she does) has to be subordinate to her husband so that together they can have one life.¹⁴

The Grounding of the Exhortation

Throughout Ephesians 5:22–31 (though not at all in Col 3:18–19), Paul grounds his exhortation in a view of the husband-wife relationship as a head-body relationship. He compares marriage to the relationship between

Christ and the church, which he also sees as a head-body relationship. Behind the teaching in this passage, then, lies a larger view of the Christian community and an understanding of the way that community is structured as the body of Christ. What Paul says in developing this larger view reinforces many of the points already made in discussing the passage, but it also provides a helpful perspective for understanding further passages on men's and women's roles.

Ephesians 5:22–31 asserts both that the husband is the head of the wife and that Christ is the head of the church. To be a “head” means to have a governing and representative function. The term “head” is first of all an anatomical term, but in many languages it is readily applied to human beings who hold governing positions. The term “head” was used in Hebrew to designate leaders of groupings in Israelite society, that is, rulers or people with governmental positions. When the Hebrew word *ros* was used in such contexts, the Septuagint regularly translated it by the word *kephalē*, the common Greek word for “head” and the word that is used in Ephesians 5:22–31. For the Hebrews (and New Testament writers generally), the head of the human body was not the seat of the thought processes. Thinking took place in the heart. But they saw the head as having a governing function, possibly because it was on top of the body, possibly because it spoke for the body and hence represented it, or acted on its behalf. Some early Christian writers thought that the head performed a governing function because it contained the eye, and the eye oversaw or supervised. The Greek word for bishop (*episkopos*) means the one who looks over things, who “keeps an eye on” things.*⁵

* There seems to be a tendency, especially in recent popular feminist writings, to attempt to obscure the “governing” connotations of *kephalē* by stressing that *kephalē* can mean “source” and should be interpreted that way in Eph 5 and other similar passages. To be sure, *kephalē* can have the idea of “source” (see Eph 4:16 as a likely example of this). But it is difficult to see how such a possible interpretation can cancel the idea of governance in “head.” First, these writings do not attempt to state what the sense is of the husband being the source of the wife (Adam was the source of Eve, clearly, but husbands in New Testament times do not seem to have performed that same function for their wives). Second, if the husband is actually the source of his wife, that would seem to make his authority and governance over her more complete (rather than less complete or absent as some of these lines of exposition would hope to imply). S. Bedale, in fact, who seems to have been the first to propound this view of *kephalē* as meaning “source” in his article, “The Meaning of *kephalē* in the Pauline Epistles,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 5, no. 2 (October 1954): 211–215, observed that the view of husband as head-source was another way of understanding the authority of the husband over the wife. Thirdly, interpreting head as “source” rather than “governor” creates an unnecessary opposition between the two meanings. Finally, it ignores the associations *kephalē* would likely have had because of its use as a translation for *ros*, and ignores the context of Eph 5:21–6:9 itself which is speaking of relationships of authority and submission in the Christian community. For good discussions of the husband as head of the wife, see Barth, 618, who holds that the meaning of the husband's headship is

Paul's use of the word "head" is founded on the Old Testament use of the word, but Paul uses the term with more of a clear reference to the head-body image. Probably the earliest place in his letters where the term is used is 1 Corinthians 11, a passage which will be discussed at length in Chapter Seven. In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul does not make explicit reference to the wife being the husband's body, but there is reason to believe the idea was present in his mind. In 1 Corinthians 12, the following chapter, Paul first describes the church as the body of Christ, but without referring to Christ as the head. Here his primary purpose is to illustrate how many gifts can operate within one human grouping in a way which maintains a perfect unity. In the passage under consideration, Paul first explicitly develops the idea of the husband being the head of the wife by adding that the wife is his body. Ephesians is also the letter in which the phrase "body of Christ" enters into a new use. Here he applies it to the whole body of Christians throughout the world; the term "body of Christ" is an image of Christians' relationship to Christ and, by extension, their relationship with one another. The primary focus is no longer the more practical question of the functioning of spiritual gifts in harmony, although this is not totally absent, as can be seen in Ephesians 4:7–16. Rather, the primary purpose is to describe the unity of the body with and in Christ as the fulfillment of God's purposes for history. The image of one human body provides an explication of the meaning of Paul's phrase "in Christ."

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Several sources could be behind Paul's usage of the head-body image, including some suggestions from Hellenistic medicine and possibly ideas from proto-Gnostic currents. But the more important source for the image is its origin in the kind of Hebrew thought that we saw in Genesis 1–3. Adam, the first man, summed up in his person and represented the whole human race. Likewise, the new human race is "in Christ"—the new Adam. Moreover, Adam, the first husband, governed and represented the family. He embodied the family as a unit, including the wife, and he could act on its behalf. Paul uses the head-body image to express this very same relationship. Ephesians 5:31, in fact, suggests strongly that Paul might have understood this image as simply a restatement of Genesis 2:24's view that husband and wife are "one flesh" or "one person."¹⁶

determined by the double meaning of the Hebrew word *ro's* (that is, "head" and "chief"), and even more importantly by the example of Christ's headship; and Sampley, 123, who comments on the use of the term "head," saying that to speak of Christ as the "head" of the church is to speak of him "as the one who exercises authority and power." He states (12.4) that the husband's headship over his wife is analogous to this headship of Christ over the church.

An inner connection thus exists between being the head or progenitor of a people and being the head of a family or a wife. This inner connection allows the relationship between Christ and the church to serve as a comparison for the husband-wife relationship. As Christ and the church are one body with Christ as the head, so the husband and wife are one body with the husband as the head. Christ and the church therefore can be the model for how the husband and wife should relate. Moreover, the head-body image, especially as derived from Genesis 2:24, provides a grounding for the teaching on subordination in marriage that the parallel passage in Colossians lacks. The husband and wife are supposed to be one person; within that oneness the husband stands to the wife as the head to the body (and as Christ does to the church). Both the idea of the husband as head of the wife, his body, and the idea of the wife's subordination in everything point to the same reality: The two are supposed to function as one, and consequently the wife's life must be completely under the authority of the husband as head. The comparison with Christ and the church reinforces this point. Just as the church is called to be part of Christ, and therefore has to be subordinate to him as head in everything and responsive to all of his directions, so the wife has to be one with her husband.

The image of Christ and his church has a significance for Paul beyond a reinforcement for his teaching on the husband-wife relationship. To be sure the passage is structured in such a way that the discussion of Christ and the church primarily provides a comparison for the husband-wife relationship. Paul uses the comparison to strengthen the exhortations to the wife and to the husband. Yet he develops this discussion of Christ and the church with a fullness and enthusiasm that suggests that this theme has a further interest for Paul. Indeed a central concern of Ephesians is to show that the Christians are "in Christ," as part of his body and sharing in his history. This theme comes to life again as Paul presents the husband-wife relationship and considers how this teaching is grounded in Genesis. Paul sees the one flesh passage—Genesis 2:24 which he quotes in Ephesians—as not only a teaching on marriage, but also as a revelation of the nature of Christ and the church. Just as the old Adam took a wife for himself and joined himself so completely to her that they became one person, so the new Adam takes the church, making this new people his body, his own flesh. He did not consider his relationship with the Father as something to be held onto (Phil 2:6), but "left his Father" and descended to become one with human beings.¹⁷ As his people become one with him, perfectly subordinate to him, he will be able to unite them with the Father, perfectly subordinate to the Father through his own subordination. Through their

obedience he will triumph over all enemies, thereby overcoming the consequences of the original rebellion (1 Cor 15:20–28) and fulfilling the call of the original Man.

Ephesians 5:22–33, then, contains the same parallel between human marriage and the unity of a human social grouping as does Genesis 1–3.* The husband and wife are supposed to become one person (one human being, one man) in the same way as the Christian community with Christ is supposed to become one new person (a new humanity). The husband is united to his wife as head to body and sums up in his person their life together in such a way that he can represent and govern their life. In the same way, Christ is the husband of the church and its head. There is a close link between unity and subordination in the Christian community and in the family. In both, the unity and the subordination (with the head's care) work together to create the new being and to fulfill God's purposes in love. The parallel between human marriage and the unity of Christ and the church illustrates how similar the Christian community and the Christian family are for Paul and how much they operate according to the same principles. At the same time, to understand the text adequately we must remember that Paul introduces the comparison with Christ and the church primarily to reinforce the basic exhortation on subordination and care in marriage. Christ and the church reveal something essential about the nature of the husband and wife relationship, but Paul does not make the comparison with the terms reversed. Although this idea frequently appears in wedding sermons on this text, Paul does not say that a Christian marriage reveals or teaches us about Christ and the church. He only says that the marriage of Adam and Eve reveals or is a type of Christ and the church. The marriage of Christians should imitate Christ and the church; the "marriage" of Adam and Eve prefigures Christ and the church.¹⁸

The word "mystery" in Ephesians 5:32 can be accurately understood only from the same perspective. It is not uncommon for marriage to be referred to as a great mystery on the basis of this passage. Yet, the term "mystery" here does not refer to marriage, but to the relationship between Christ and the church as revealed in a prefigurative or prophetic way by Genesis 2:24. Markus Barth's translation as given above proves helpful.

* There is another important background to the teaching on Christ and the church as husband and wife, namely, the theme of God as the husband of Israel, found most notably in Hosea. Adam and Eve are much more central to Eph 5:22–33, but a more complete discussion would have to refer to Hosea and the marriage imagery in it as well as the Song of Songs and its interpretations in Jewish tradition and early Christian tradition. Feuillet, 178–187, discusses both Hosea and the Song of Songs in relation to Eph 5. Sampley, 45–49, also discusses the Song of Songs as well as Ezekiel 16 at some length.

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Grounding of
the Exhortation

In Greek, a *mystērion* is something hidden. The phrase translated by the RSV as “This is a great mystery” is translated by Barth, “This has an eminent secret meaning.” The mystery or secret is the mystery of Christ. (Eph 3:3–4 has a comparable usage.) It is the hidden truth about Christ and the church always intended by God in Genesis 2:24 and in the whole story of Adam and Eve, but that we can only see now because of God’s work of revelation to the human race. Now that God has sent Christ and revealed the full extent of his plan for the salvation of the human race by showing how the Gentiles can become part of the body of Christ though remaining Gentiles, we are able to see more clearly how Genesis 2:24 has its fulfillment in Christ and the church.¹⁹

Ephesians 5:22–33 has been romanticized a great deal. The passage is often used to discourse about the mystery of marriage and about how the love of husband and wife reveals Christ and the church. While the content of such discourses may not be erroneous, to base them on Ephesians 5:22–33 distorts the main thrust of the text. The text has a practical function in regard to marriage. It does not exalt the married couple, but rather instructs them in their marriage. The passage teaches the husband and wife about the importance of the wife’s subordination and the husband’s care. Their love for one another is not primarily a matter of deep feelings (although these will be present to a great extent if Paul’s teaching is followed). Instead, it is a matter of their living together daily with the husband responsible to care for his wife and the wife responsible to respect and obey him. Moreover, the goal of this family order is unity, an internal oneness that allows the family to be an effective cell in the Christian community.

1 Peter 3:1–7 ▷ Joint Heirs

THE second main passage in the New Testament about the relationship between husbands and wives occurs in 1 Peter 3:1–7. This passage resembles the Ephesians passage both in its focus and its context.²⁰ It occurs in a section of 1 Peter that teaches about relationships in a way similar to the household codes of Ephesians and Colossians. However, the passage also shows significant differences from the household codes, differences which contribute to a deeper understanding of the New Testament teaching on husbands and wives.

1 Peter approaches relationship teaching in a broader context than the household codes. The household codes focus primarily on the kind of rela-

tionships that exist within a living unit. 1 Peter treats the relationships of subjects and governors, slaves and masters, husbands and wives, and elders and community members. It omits consideration of children and parents. The teaching in 1 Peter also is formed by a concern for the relationship of Christians to non-Christian authority, while the household codes seem to revolve about relationships among Christians.*

1 Peter
3:1–7 ▷
Joint Heirs

At the same time, the section on husbands and wives in 1 Peter 3 resembles teaching in the household codes in two ways. Like the household codes, 1 Peter 3:1–7 is the only part of the relationship teaching in 1 Peter in which exhortation is directed to both members of the relationship. Also, along with the section directed to elders and community members, it is the only one which seems to explicitly consider the relationship as occurring among Christians. The discussion of 1 Peter 3:1–7 which follows will presuppose much of what was said about Ephesians 5:22–33 and Colossians 3:18–19 and concentrate on those aspects of the passage which fill out the picture we have already gained. The passage is as follows:

Likewise you wives, be submissive to your husbands, so that some, though they do not obey the word, may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, when they see your reverent and chaste behavior. Let not yours be the outward adorning with braiding of hair, decoration of gold, and wearing of fine clothing, but let it be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. So once the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves and were submissive to their husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are now her children if you do right and let nothing terrify you.

Likewise you husbands, live considerately with your wives, bestowing honor on the woman as the weaker sex, since you are joint heirs of the grace of life, in order that your prayers may not be hindered. (1 Pt 3:1–7)

Like the passage in Ephesians, 1 Peter 3:1–7 focuses on the subordination of the wife and begins with an exhortation directed to her.²¹ However,

* Two further major characteristics of the material in 1 Peter are worthy of note. This material, like the rest of the letter, teaches a great deal about how to handle persecution, both as it occurs within the relationships taught about and also as it occurs in general. The 1 Peter passage also shows many parallels to Romans 12 in addition to the parallels to Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3. Worth noting is also the fact that many of the points at which 1 Peter differs from the household codes are points of similarity with relationship exhortations in 1 Clement and Ignatius of Antioch.

it develops this exhortation at significantly greater length, adding a number of considerations not found in Ephesians 5:22–33. First, submission is related more explicitly to “obedience” than in the Ephesians passage, mainly through the example of Abraham and Sarah. 1 Peter 3:5–6 presents Sarah’s relationship with Abraham as a model for the obedience of wives to their husbands. Genesis 13:12 (LXX) seems to lie behind the reference to Sarah calling Abraham “lord” which the passage in 1 Peter sees as an expression of submission. Here, it is enough to note that 1 Peter 3:6 sees subordination and obedience in Sarah’s relationship to Abraham and especially in her calling Abraham her lord, and that such obedience is being commended.* 1 Peter 3:6 indicates that obedience cannot be separated from subordination; and in fact the passage uses the two terms in some equivalence to one another.

1 Peter 3:1–7 also raises a new question in regard to a wife’s subordination. Does she have to be subordinate regardless of her husband’s nature or is she required to be subordinate only to a husband who actually cares and provides for her? Unlike the teaching in Ephesians and Colossians, the teaching in 1 Peter specifically deals with a situation in which the husband is not a Christian.† Since persecution of Christians is a major concern in all of 1 Peter, perhaps in the background of the third chapter is concern for

* Genesis 12:10–20 seems to be behind the reference to Sarah’s obedience. Feminist exegesis of 1 Peter 3:5–6 often discusses at length Sarah’s obedience as portrayed by Genesis. Two observations are important for avoiding some of the confusions introduced by such exegesis. First, if Genesis 12:10–20 is the reference behind 1 Peter 3:5–6, Sarah is being praised for being obedient, not for the specific approach Abraham (and Sarah) took to the situation. The principles of Old Testament interpretation that underlie New Testament arguments do not involve endorsing the sexual and marital customs of the patriarchal world which antedated both the law given on Sinai and New Testament teaching. In interpreting 1 Peter 3:5–6, it is crucial to pick out what aspects of Abraham and Sarah’s relationship are being pointed to as a model or authority. Second, when Sarah directed Abraham to take her servant Hagar for the purpose of producing an heir, she was not taking a position of independence or equality of direction-setting in the relationship. In Mesopotamian law of the patriarchal era, the barren wife had a right to substitute her servant for herself, so that the servant might produce a child which would be considered her mistress’s child. Sarah was simply exercising her right, not directing Abraham or “taking a role of equality.” On Mesopotamian law and its relation to this episode in Genesis, see von Rad, 184; E. Speiser, *Genesis*, Anchor Bible, vol. 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1964), 117; and John Otwell, *And Sarah Laughed* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1977), 102–103.

† Some feminist writers (e.g., Scanzoni and Hardesty, 83–94) obscure the import of this passage by placing it in a category of a special instruction—that of an evangelistic strategy for wives with non-Christian husbands—and therefore with little relevance to Christian marriage. Verse 7, clearly addressed to Christian husbands, is then labeled a counterbalancing instruction for Christians. Such an interpretation cannot be warranted either by the content of the passage (e.g., the Abraham-Sarah example in vv. 5–7 should apply to believers), nor by the context (that of Christian personal relationship teaching, broadened to include relating to certain non-Christians). See further, Selwyn, 183, 435.

the treatment Christian wives might receive from their pagan husbands. The teaching on this question is stated plainly: The wife should subordinate herself regardless of her husband's lack of Christianity. In fact, she may be able to win her husband to the Christian faith by her conduct. Although the Christian teaching on order in marriage will reach its full realization only in the body of Christ, this teaching applies also to marriages that are not fully in the body of Christ, because it states the order of the husband-wife relationship as God intended in his original creation. Some have concluded that 1 Peter tells the wife to do whatever her husband tells her even if it is wrong. However, this conclusion is unwarranted, because the passage deals with normal situations, not with situations of special difficulty. The early Christians could modify their general approach under special circumstances (see 1 Cor 7:12–16). 1 Peter 3:1–6 simply states that the wife should be subordinate to an unbelieving husband, just as the preceding passage states that slaves should be subordinate even to masters who are harsh.

1 Peter
3:1–7 ▷
Joint Heirs

The New Testament teaching on family order is never phrased in a conditional way, even though it may not be applicable in special cases. It does not tell the wife to be subordinate to her husband if he cares for her, nor does it tell the husband to care for his wife if she is subordinate. Each partner should do what the Lord directs; the Lord will see about the other. In fact, 1 Peter 3:1–2 says that following the Lord's directions obediently may produce a change in the other partner. Chrysostom, addressing the Christian husband who is dealing with an unsubmitive wife, develops this point in his commentary on Ephesians:

“But what,” one may say, “if a wife fear me not?” Never mind, you are to love, fulfill your own duty. For though that which is due from others may not follow, we ought of course to do our duty. This is an example of what I mean. He says “submitting yourselves one to another in fear of Christ.” And what then if another submit not himself? Still you should obey the law of God. Just so, I say, is it also here. Let the wife at least, though she be not loved, still fear notwithstanding, that nothing may lie at her door; and let the husband, though his wife fear him not, still show her love notwithstanding, that he himself be not wanting in any point. For each has received his own.²²

The remarks in 1 Peter 3 on “fear” can best be understood in this context. 1 Peter 3:2, translated literally, says that some unbelieving husbands

might be won to the Christian faith “when they see your chaste behavior in fear.” The verse possibly refers to the fear of the husband, possibly to the fear of the Lord, or perhaps to both. 1 Peter 3:6 says, “you are now [Sarah’s] children if you do right and let nothing make you fear.”²³ Righteous subordination to the husband is given as an alternative to behavior based on being afraid of him. One could even interpret 1 Peter here as saying that the antidote to the fear of human beings which might make a wife behave unrighteously is the fear of the Lord, as taught later in 1 Peter 3:14–16.* The passage in 1 Peter 3:14–16 is based upon Isaiah 8:12–13 which reads:

Do not call conspiracy all that this people call conspiracy and do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread. But the LORD of hosts, him you shall regard as holy; let him be your fear and let him be your dread.

With the perspective provided by fear of the Lord, a Christian can look at difficulties and even suffering with a new peace and confidence. Sirach has a helpful expression of this teaching in 34:14–16:

He who fears the Lord will not be timid,
nor play the coward, for he is his hope.
Blessed is the soul of the man who fears the Lord!
To whom does he look? And who is his support?
The eyes of the Lord are upon those who love him,
a mighty protection and strong support,
a shelter from the hot wind and a shade from noonday sun,
a guard against stumbling and a defense against falling.

The cure for the fear of harm or danger is fear of the Lord—that fear which consists of respect and awe before his greatness and a zealous concern to obey him. Such holy fear wins God’s protection and favor.²⁴

1 Peter 3:1–7 also discusses how the woman reflects subordination in her behavior, another topic not raised in the household codes. The woman is exhorted to avoid expensive or luxurious modes of adornment and in-

* 1 Peter 3:6, taken by itself, simply encourages wives not to be afraid but to do what is right. The fact that a different use of the word “fear” occurs in 3:2, and that there is a scriptural teaching on the two types of fear in which one type, the fear of the Lord, works as an antidote to the other kind of fear, fear of harm, a teaching which is particularly applied in Christian teaching to situations of persecution (Mt 10:26–31) and which comes to expression in 3:14–16, all are indications that the broader teaching is being applied in 3:6.

stead to be clothed in a meek and quiet spirit, that is, a submissive spirit (cf. 1 Tm 2:11). This exhortation may have been common in the early church.²⁵ (See the commentary in Chapter Eight on 1 Tm 2:9–10, a parallel passage.) This exhortation seems to have been included not because of a great concern with woman’s dress, but because of a concern for her subordination.²⁶ “Meekness” and “quietness” are character traits possessed by those who have a submissive spirit. “Meekness” (translated “gentleness” in the version above) could also be translated “respectfulness” or “courtesy” or even “submissiveness.” Like “humility,” this quality is the trait of a servant and is closely related to being in a subordinate or lower position. Scripture speaks of Jesus as meek, and the New Testament lists of Christian character traits commonly include meekness. It is, for example, one of the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:23. “Quietness” could also be translated “calmness” or even “peacefulness.” Forms of the word are used to describe situations when someone ceases to object or argue, as well as situations when someone ceases to interfere in something that is not his or her concern.²⁷ Likewise, “quietness” is advocated for all Christians (1 Th 4:11).

1 Peter
3:1–7 ▸
Joint Heirs

Although “subordination” primarily describes a way of relating to another person, it also involves a character trait, a disposition to respond in a certain way. Subordination extends beyond obedience to commands to also include respectfulness and receptiveness to direction. “Submissiveness” is probably the best English term in such contexts. “Submissiveness,” in this sense, is an overall character trait related to humility which all Christians should possess. The Christian character is portrayed in scripture as respectful of authority, not rebellious.²⁸ Men as well as women should be submissive in their subordinate relationships. However, 1 Peter 3 especially urges wives to be submissive in their relationship with their husbands. They are to have a respectful and quiet spirit, qualities which derive from their fear of and trust in the Lord. The passage says that a wife’s quietness and peacefulness are rooted in her acceptance of God’s order for her life and a trust in him. The wife can be submissive because she knows that God stands behind Christian order, and he cares for her, either through her husband or sometimes in spite of her husband.

The final verse of the passage, the exhortation to the husbands, contains a great deal of important material. A more literal translation would read as follows: “Likewise you husbands, live with your wives according to knowledge, bestowing honor on the woman as the weaker vessel, since you are joint-heirs of the grace of life, in order that your prayers may not

be hindered.” The “knowledge” referred to here is undoubtedly the knowledge of God.²⁹ Husbands should live with their wives according to God’s revelation.

The Family ▸
Key Texts

Then the passage exhorts the husbands to take concern for their wives. As in Ephesians 5, the wives are first urged to subordinate themselves to their husbands, then the husbands are urged to behave toward their wives in a corresponding way, a way which expresses the proper functioning of their role. In Ephesians, husbands are urged to care for their wives. In 1 Peter they are urged to honor them. Scripture sees both care and honor as appropriate for the relationship and as qualities which make subordination easier for the subordinate, allowing the head to rule more effectively. The husband is urged to explicitly express his wife’s value and importance. Since some may construe subordination to mean being of less value, the husband should take care to express his esteem for his wife. Moreover as he, the head of the house, expresses his esteem for her and as he takes care to establish her in her position as the second authority in the house, the others in the household will be drawn to a greater respect for her. If her husband treats her with honor, she will gain respect through her subordination rather than lose it. One of the more important tasks of the father in a family is to treat all the household members in such a way that they gain respect. He is, in fact, the one in the best position to create respect for his wife and children. (See Jn 5:19–23 for an application of this teaching to the father-son relationship.)

1 Peter gives three reasons why the husband should bestow honor on his wife: her “weakness,” her status as “joint-heir,” and “in order that your prayers may not be hindered.” There are two common interpretations given the wife’s “weakness.” One view would understand weakness in reference to the fact that Eve was deceived. “Weakness” would then mean the woman’s susceptibility to deception, perhaps especially spiritual deception. The second interpretation understands weakness as simply a reference to woman’s physical weakness in comparison to men. Whichever interpretation is correct,³⁰ the passage refers to a tendency for men not to respect women, and therefore urges the husband to take care to show that he respects and values his wife. The teaching here is similar to Paul’s teaching in 1 Corinthians 12:22–25 that the “weaker” members of the Christian community—those who in natural or worldly terms would get less respect have to be honored so that they and others can experience that they are valuable and indispensable.

The other reasons why the husband should honor the wife—because

they are joint-heirs of the grace of life and so that their prayers might not be hindered—are related to one another. Both point to the spiritual equality of the man and the woman in the family. This point will be discussed in detail later in the discussion of Galatians 3:28 in Chapter Six. Here it should be pointed out that the statement that husband and wife are joint-heirs of the grace of life is one of the key statements about the importance of the woman in the family and the Christian community. In Jewish inheritance law, as in most ancient inheritance law, the woman was not normally an heir. The inheritance went through the male line. Similarly, the Jewish woman was not, to use a Christian phrase, a full spiritual heir. Yet the Christian woman is an heir of Christ equally with the Christian man. She had the same relationship with God and lived the same life of Christ as the man. She was as important as her husband while being subordinate to him in the marriage relationship.

1 Peter
3:1–7 ▸
Joint Heirs

The phrase “in order that your prayers may not be hindered” is also important because it points to a life of worship in the Christian family that one would not expect from the Jewish family, at least according to rabbinic teaching. The Christian husband and wife were expected to pray together. They would come before the Lord together as one person in their home and worship their father and creator. Thus, according to the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 5:23, disunity in marriage would obstruct the worship of God and hinder family worship.³¹

In summary, 1 Peter 3:7 urges the husband to honor his wife, even though he may be tempted to disrespect her because of her “weakness.” He should honor her because she is equal to him in what is most important to both of them, their life in the Lord. Thus there should be harmony and unity between them in such a way that they can come before the Lord and pray as one.

The Roles of Husbands and Wives

A summary of the roles of husband and wife in the family as taught by the New Testament should distinguish between principles which are clearly enjoined and the presupposed pattern of roles that makes sense of what is clearly enjoined. The New Testament presents only two explicit commands for husbands and wives. It says that the wife should subordinate herself to her husband, and that the husband should care for his wife. It is helpful to realize how sketchy is the explicit New Testament teaching for what

husbands and wives must do. It is also, however, enlightening to see that subordination (with its correlate—care) is the key element that the New Testament stresses. Any presentation of the New Testament teaching on husbands and wives which leaves out subordination has neglected one principle that the New Testament has explicitly enjoined. However, the New Testament includes a great deal more material than what is presented as an explicit injunction. This larger context of the teaching on husband-wife subordination can be summarized in these two additional points:

1. Social roles differ from person to person according to age and sex.
2. Role differences based on sex are most importantly expressed in the relationship between husband and wife in the household, the basic Christian social unit.

There is, in short, an overall view of men's and women's roles in the community and an overall view of family-community structure within which husband-wife subordination finds its place. This broader view of both men's and women's roles and family-community structure is taught as God's plan and is most commonly based on the teachings about Adam and Eve and about Christ and his body.

The pattern of daily life in the family household further clarifies the meaning and importance of husband-wife subordination. For the husband in the family, four main elements combine to form the predominant pattern:

1. The husband is the head and governor of the family, the one who is primarily responsible for the good order and discipline of the family. He is either the head of the whole household, or the head of a sub-unit if he is living as son or servant in the household.
2. The husband takes the primary concern for relations outside the family. He represents the family in community affairs, and governs the relationship between the family and other families and between the family and the society in which it finds itself.
3. The husband raises and forms his sons and sometimes other young males in the household.
4. The husband is the protector and provider. He bears primary responsibility for seeing that danger is averted and that the members of the family are cared for. In this regard, he has the main responsibility for what we would call the economic work—the work that procures food, clothing, shelter, and other necessities.

For the wife in the family, four corresponding elements form her role:

1. The wife is subordinate to her husband, in the sense of subordinating her life and not just in the sense of taking directions.
2. The wife is the ruler of the family household under her husband and is primarily concerned with the internal order and organization of the family household.
3. The wife raises and forms the small children and raises and forms the daughters and sometimes other younger girls in the household.
4. The wife serves the needs of the members of the household. She bears the primary responsibility for seeing that the immediate needs of the people in the household are met in a way that strengthens them to live and work. In this regard, she bears the main responsibility for what we would call housework, work such as preparing the food, clothing the household members, and cleaning and adorning the home.

The Roles
of Husbands
and Wives

The above description has been stated primarily in terms of household or family members, but applies as well to people who do not belong to the household but are cared for by the household: guests and the afflicted or needy. The husband governs the external service of the household and functions there also as provider and protector. The wife either serves needs directly, or organizes the work of other members of the household which ultimately serves the needs.

In the above description, the fourth element of the husband's role is summarized by saying that he is the provider and protector and the fourth element of the wife's role is summarized by saying that she bears the primary responsibility for seeing that the immediate needs of the people in the household are met in a way that strengthens them to live and work. The terms "provider" and "seeing that the immediate needs are met" were chosen to describe an aspect of two similar but nonetheless different roles.* Both husband and wife concern themselves with the welfare of the members of the household. The man takes a concern as provider. He makes certain that sufficient resources are present to meet the family's needs and that these needs are being met. He is more occupied with the work and the order of the household than with the person who has the need. The woman is more directly involved with the person experiencing the need

* These two phrases are chosen to be a summary of the roles of men and women in the family as sketched in this chapter. They are intended primarily as a shorthand description of roles that have been more fully described earlier. For a discussion of this distinction from the psychological perspective, see Chapter Sixteen, pp. 398–402, especially the footnote on pp. 398–399.

and serves that person directly. The man provides the food; the woman prepares and serves it. The man sees that the family members go to the doctor and he pays for the medicine; the woman nurses the sick. The man receives the guest and sees that he is cared for. The woman gets the guest something to eat, prepares his room, washes his clothing. The men and women take concern for the same people and the same activities, but in different ways.*

In dealing with the roles of men and women in the family, we are dealing with two social roles. The historical importance of social roles in structuring effective human societies will be discussed in Chapters Seventeen and Eighteen, and the value of social roles in general will be considered in Chapter Twenty-One. However, a failure to properly understand the social roles of men and women and the way they have functioned historically has led to many contemporary interpretations of the New Testament teaching on family life that amount to being serious misconceptions. Some observations on the New Testament teaching that draw upon the perspective provided by social history will therefore help to avoid some common mistakes made by people in a contemporary technological society in their attempts to use the New Testament passages.

First, the New Testament pattern of men's and women's roles is not primarily a matter of activities but of relationships. Women in the early Christian family would be more likely to cook the food while the men would be more likely to grow it, but their roles in this and other matters are not defined as much by the activities which end up being the province of one or the other as by the way they relate to one another. The husband does the farm work because he is the provider for his wife and children. The wife does the cooking because she serves the immediate needs of the family. For the most part, men and women perform certain activities because these activities express a fundamentally different social role, not because certain activities are intrinsically the man's or the woman's. For example, the wife in a hunting society might do the farming as a household task, and yet she and her husband might still fulfill the same fundamental roles in the family as would their counterparts in an agricultural society.

Second, the roles of man and woman are interdependent. The man's role depends on the woman's role being performed and vice versa. For instance, the husband's role is not designed so that he can live with no

* The distinction is not primarily one of task but of responsibility. The woman, for instance, could care for all her responsibilities by directing servants, rather than by doing it herself.

help from a woman. If his wife dies or is absent and there is no daughter or sister to take her place, he must perform many of his wife's functions. The same applies to the woman if her husband is absent or dies.* An analogy between head and heart can be helpful here. The head (or brain) is the center or director of the nervous system. The heart is the center or director of the circulatory system. Both systems are essential to each other's proper functioning; indeed, both are essential to the health of the body as a whole. They perform corresponding or complementary functions. The heart is subordinate to the head in its functioning, but it is not therefore less essential to the body (the head included). Likewise, the wife in the household is the "heart," the "inside center" of the family. She directs a set of family activities essential to the functioning of the family. The husband is the "head." He both directs a set of family functions and is over the wife's activities, but he cannot "keep the body alive" without her.

Third, the roles of husband and wife comprise a partnership, but a partnership of a particular kind. They are complementary partners, not comrades who work together on identical tasks. Each has a separate sphere of responsibility that complements the other's. This point is especially relevant for contemporary Christian efforts to strengthen the family by strengthening the partnership of the husband and wife, but in a way that obliterates the complementarity of husband and wife. These attempts often focus on "companionship." They aim to get the husband and wife to do as much as possible together. Their goal is not to strengthen each partner in his own role and to strengthen the union of the two. To be sure, modern husbands and wives often fail to spend the time together that they should in order to have a real union. Some of these contemporary Christian attempts are designed to correct this situation so that they can actually be in unity. However, many of these efforts to strengthen family life destroy the strength of family roles, and thus advocate an approach to family life that differs greatly from New Testament teaching. The New Testament approach attempts to create "one person," a husband and wife united, but with a division of labor that allows each to extend the ability of the other to function. The husband and wife become engaged in a relationship of reciprocal service and interdependence without competition. They are, in short, complementary in role.

Fourth, the above understanding of the husband's and wife's roles

* One could reasonably surmise that Lydia (the cloth merchant in Acts 16:14–15) was in a situation of this sort.

indicates that spending a great deal of time at home is not intrinsic to the New Testament view of the role of the husband. Today there is often an emphasis on the husband spending time at home. To be sure, as the functions of the family have diminished in scope, a husband may not naturally spend enough time at home to fulfill his role as father and husband. Contemporary conditions may make it necessary for husbands to be more conscious of spending time at home, but the ideal of being home is not taught in the New Testament. Among the Israelites and early Christians, a man invested significant time at home because of the definite functions that were fulfilled at the household, not because of an ideal of spending time with his family. When he was not obliged to be with the family, he would often be out in the village or neighborhood, or he would invite male friends into his home. In other words, his orientation would be more toward the external community. He would bring his sons with him and hence fulfill much of his function as father while he was out in the community; he would not be oriented to staying at home. It would be different for the woman, because her responsibility for the household life would orient her more toward being present in the home. In short, the emphasis on the presence of the man in the family may make good sociological sense under contemporary conditions, but it is not a New Testament emphasis. Moreover, the New Testament emphasis for creating unity and strength of family life is on mutual commitment and subordination rather than time spent by husband and wife together.

Fifth, this understanding of the husband's and wife's roles raises the question of how the old statement "a woman's place is in the home" relates to New Testament teaching. The New Testament does indicate that the woman's role in the family is primarily within the household. She is expected to rule the household. The picture of the wider pattern of social relations in the early church also indicates that the woman's responsibility in the home entails her being in the home more than the husband. But the New Testament does not teach in any explicit way that the home is the only place the woman can be or serve. Moreover, the indications that the woman's role is primarily in the household occur alongside indications that the household is a place of major service in the Christian community. If many of the educational, social service, and economic functions of the household have been removed, it does not automatically make sense to leave the woman behind so that she cannot take an active responsibility for these services. In order for her place in the home to have the significance

it had in New Testament times, the home would have to be restored to its importance as a place of service.

Chapters Three and Four have tried to make clear that there are significant differences between family life in the times of the New Testament and family life today. Those differences raise a number of questions about how to apply New Testament passages on family life in the modern world. Those questions will be dealt with in the last two parts of the book. Here the concern is simply with understanding the New Testament teaching without some of the misconceptions caused by contemporary Western perspectives. The New Testament approach to the roles of men and women in the family cannot be grasped properly without seeing that we are dealing with social roles, with a whole approach to structuring human life.

The Roles
of Husbands
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▶ 5

THE PEOPLE ▶ SERVICE AND POSITION

FROM THE VERY BEGINNING OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, the Holy Spirit is poured out on men and women alike. Both men and women are added to the Christian people, undergo persecution, endure suffering for the sake of the Lord, bring others to faith in Jesus, and build up the body of Christians. This pattern, seen in the earliest Christian community, continues through the following centuries in the church of the Fathers. Both men and women participate in the life of the Christian people and in taking responsibility for it. The previous two chapters considered the roles of men and women in the family and household. This chapter focuses on the broader life of the Christian people and the ways in which men and women participate in that life. This chapter traces some of the main features of the pattern of men's and women's roles in the early Christian community.

The social structures of the early Christian community differ significantly from those of modern technological society. Moreover, Christian churches in twentieth-century Western society function more like modern social institutions than they do like the early Christian community.* Chapters Eighteen and Twenty-Four will discuss these differences more fully. At this point it is enough to note that contemporary discussions of men's and women's roles in the early church are often confused by reading modern church structures back into the New Testament. This chapter will often note differences between the early church and later church structures, but a fuller treatment of those differences and their significance must wait until later chapters of this book.

* See below, pp. 114–115, for a discussion of this distinction.

The sources for this study of role differences in service in the early Christian community are primarily the picture of Paul and his co-workers in Acts and in Paul's epistles, and the instructions for the ordering of Christian service in the pastoral epistles. The work of Paul and his companions was part of the missionary efforts of the early church. The instructions in the pastorals were directed to a well-established community and they demonstrate a preoccupation with establishing a social order and sound doctrine.

This material is somewhat sketchy. In fact, it is difficult to outline the pattern for the roles of men and women in the New Testament very fully because the scriptural information is scarce. For example, it is known that deacons existed in many New Testament churches and there is also evidence for the existence of deaconesses. Yet the material in the New Testament does not allow one to say much about either of these positions. There are three major ways of filling out the pattern. One approach is to presume a diversity of practice in the early church. Hence, some people have concluded that the ordering of men's and women's roles and community positions in the Jewish Christian communities, about which we know little in our area of concern, differed markedly from the order in the Pauline communities about which we know a fair amount.¹ Another approach is to rely heavily upon plausible conjectures about the details of men's and women's roles in the daily functioning of church order. There is a third approach to filling out the pattern, namely, to examine the early church after the New Testament and see how the roles of men and women and positions like those of deacon and deaconess were patterned in situations we know more about.² This approach has the advantage of relying on actual data rather than speculative reconstruction.

The approach in this chapter will be the third. The overall pattern will be determined by the life of the church in the first few centuries. The material from the life of the post-New Testament Christian community will be used primarily to give a concrete picture of how broad features noticed in the New Testament might have looked, to fill in the outline the New Testament gives us.* The Christian church of the first few centuries followed a pattern of men's and women's roles in community life very similar

* The basic elements in the New Testament pattern (see pp. 134–135) were preserved in the patristic church. Patristic literature, however, gives us a much fuller and more concrete picture. To state the point more precisely, patristic literature gives us a number of specific pictures of how different Christian communities worked out men's and women's roles in Christian service. Insofar as the evidence is available, the approaches of different Christian communities of the first few centuries show the same basic outlines as the pattern in the New Testament. For a fuller discussion of the patristic evidence, see Chapters Twelve and Thirteen.

to that found in the New Testament church. While we cannot always trace all aspects of the later pattern back to origins in the New Testament church, the church of the first few centuries is at least a close descendant of the New Testament church. By judiciously examining the post–New Testament data, we can gain a more complete sense of how the New Testament pattern might have worked.

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The chapter will begin by considering whether men and women performed different activities in the early Christian community. The structure of positions of communal service for women and for men will then be taken up. The chapter concludes with an outline of the overall pattern of men’s and women’s roles in communal service in the early church. This pattern of service will be related to the pattern of family life found among the early Christians.

Prophecy, Teaching, Charitable Service

THE preceding two chapters discussed the difference between the roles of husband and wife in the family and the activities they performed. The difference between the role of the husband and that of the wife was not in the activities they performed. The difference lay rather in the way in which husband and wife related to one another in their life together. The same principle guided service of men and women in the wider community. The difference between the roles of men and women in community service does not lie in particular activities. Both engage in all the activities which go into building up the body of Christ. This section will consider three activities which are central to building up the life of the community: prophesying, teaching, and charitable service. Both men and women actively participated in all three activities.

Prophecy

Both men and women prophesied among the early Christians. No one questions that men prophesied in the early church. Women, however, prophesied as well. The Acts of the Apostles mentions the daughters of Philip in this role: “And he had four unmarried daughters who prophesied” (Acts 21:9). In his *History of the Church*, Eusebius quotes an unknown second-century author who implies that the early Christians remembered Philip’s daughters as being of significance in the area of prophecy:

But they cannot point to a single one of the prophets under either the Old Covenant or the New who was moved by the Spirit in this way—not Agabus or Judas or Silas or Philip’s daughters; not Ammia at Philadelphia or Quadratus; nor any others they may choose to boast about though they are not of their number.³

In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul seems to recognize the presence of women who prophesied regularly in the worship services of the Christian community: Prophecy

Any man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, but any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled dishonors her head. (1 Cor 11:5)

Chapter Seven will consider a dispute about the interpretation of this passage, but the likely opinion is that Paul expected women to prophesy in the Christian assembly.

The view that women prophesied regularly in the early church is confirmed by the account of the events on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the followers of Jesus. In explaining the event, Peter quotes a prophecy from Joel about the outpouring of the Spirit upon all of God’s people. He quoted the following lines from the prophecy:

And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams;
yea, and on my menservants and my maidservants in those days
I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.

(Acts 2:17–18)

There is some probability that Peter used this prophecy in part because the group of onlookers saw women as well as men prophesying (Acts 1:14; 2:1–4). In any case, he did use the prophecy from Joel to explain what would happen when the Spirit was given, and that prophecy clearly speaks of women as being equipped to prophesy. The view that women prophesied among the early Christians is consistent with the Old Testament practice. Many women prophesied in the prophetic age of Israel; their gift was often significant for the development of the people. Deborah and

Huldah are the most outstanding examples, but not the only ones. The early Christians, following Joel, would have expected the gift of prophecy to be given to Christians more widely, not more narrowly, than in the Old Testament.

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Some commentators have tried to examine the kind of prophesying done by women in the early church. Some have observed that prophecy was often connected with prayer in gatherings for worship, and thus have held that the only prophesying done by women was prayer-prophecy, a contribution to the worship of the community. Some have observed that women who prophesied in the Old Testament seemed to give directive but not teaching prophecies, and that their prophecies were not written down for use as were those of some male prophets. Hence they deduce that women prophesied in a different way than men. Both of these opinions are possible, but there is not enough evidence to establish them. All that we know is that women prophesied in the early church.

Another question about women prophesying in the church concerns an interpretation of scripture which equates prophecy with preaching. Some commentators, equating prophecy with preaching, conclude that women in the early Christian community could not have prophesied, at least not in the assembly of the community, because women were prohibited from teaching or speaking to the whole church assembled (1 Tm 2:12; 1 Cor 14:34). Hence they would not be allowed to prophesy (preach). There are some scriptural grounds for seeing prophecy as what we would now call "preaching." The best evidence is from Acts 15:32 which shows a connection between the role of prophet and a kind of exhortation. However, interpreting New Testament prophecy as simply "preaching" is a deficient understanding of prophecy. The core of the prophetic role is to be a messenger for God, to deliver a message on his behalf. The prophet depends upon special inspiration to speak a message which is more than a product of human thought, a message which could validly be described as "the word of the Lord."* A prophetic inspiration could be behind an exhor-

* Among those who interpret prophecy as preaching are commentators who see such a connection as that of Acts 15, yet who also do not experience the actual gift of prophecy functioning in the Christian groups to which they belong. Rather than failing to claim for their churches a function that was so important in the life of the early church, they interpret preaching, or certain kinds of preaching, as prophecy. This also leads them to believe that women must not have prophesied, at least in the assembly of the community, because of the prohibitions on women's teaching or speaking to the whole assembly. Another source of biblical evidence for preaching as prophecy is the understanding of the evangelistic message as the word of God, i.e., a prophetic message (Lk 3:2; 5:1; see also Rv 1:2; 19:10). The modern English word "preach," however, commonly means teaching and exhorting the Christians, and it is on the basis of the equation of "preaching" with prophesying that it is used to decide whether women should or should not prophesy. For such an argument, the passages on evangelism are not relevant, for

tation, but the normal form of prophecy is a message delivered as words from the Lord.

The evidence points to the fact that women did prophesy in the assembly. The relation of women's prophesying to the scriptural prohibitions on the women's role in the assembly hinges upon a correct understanding of the prohibitions. This question will be discussed in Chapter Seven. Once prophecy is distinguished from preaching, teaching, and other forms of addressing the Christian people, there is no reason to believe that women were not allowed to prophesy among the early Christians.

Prophecy

Finally, one should ask whether women held the office of prophet(ess) among the early Christians. The New Testament recognizes prophets as holding some kind of position in the community (see 1 Cor 12:28; Eph 3:5; Acts 13:1, among others). There even seems to have been some distinction between people who prophesy (there are indications that almost any Christian might prophesy on occasion) and those who hold the position of prophet. We know of men who were considered prophets. We do not know of any women who held this title or were described in this way. The Acts of the Apostles only says of the daughters of Philip that "they prophesied." Such phrasing might indicate that these women had a strong gift of prophecy but that women did not hold a position of prophetess in the early church. However, the fact that women were recognized prophetesses in the Old Testament might suggest that Christian women held this position as well. Since the distinction between prophesying and holding the position of a prophet(ess) is not clearly drawn and elaborated in the New Testament, and since the specific references to women's prophesying are so few, conclusions must be made cautiously. The most that can be said is that women prophesied in the early church and that some were known to be gifted for prophecy. However, scripture does not contain a clear reference to a Christian woman being given the title of prophetess.⁴

Teaching

The pattern of men's and women's participation in teaching activities in the early church resembles the pattern of their participation in prophecy.

the argument is based on an ambiguity in the English word. It is worth noting that feminists, too, are fond of equating prophesying with preaching, for entirely different reasons. Beginning with the position that women prophesied, they use this equation to hold that women actually did preach and teach in the assembly, despite all evidence to the contrary. Such an argument suffers from both a serious misunderstanding of prophecy and from a misreading of scripture. For some helpful discussion on prophecy as more than preaching, see A. Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 194ff.; and B. Yocum, *Prophecy* (Ann Arbor: Servant Publications, 1976).

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Here again there is no doubt that men taught among the early Christians, but there is much dispute about whether women taught. Many hold that women's participation in teaching activities is simply prohibited by 1 Corinthians 14:34–36 and 1 Timothy 2:12. However, these prohibitions probably referred to something very specific, as will be discussed in Chapter Seven. This section will simply mention the New Testament references to women teaching.

First, Acts 18:24–28 describes a woman teaching in the course of missionary work. In this passage Apollos, a recent convert, is speaking about Jesus in the Ephesian synagogue. Priscilla and Aquila, Paul's co-workers, see him, and "when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him and expounded to him the way of God more accurately." Some significance may or may not lie in the fact that Priscilla's name comes first in this particular passage. There is likely significance in the fact that Apollos was taken into their home before Priscilla instructed him. The passage indicates clearly that she worked with Aquila to instruct Apollos. The instruction must have proceeded at a fairly high spiritual and intellectual level, because Apollos was a learned man and he went on to continue teaching afterwards. Therefore, Priscilla must have been well-educated as a Christian and capable of a high level of instruction. Later sections in this chapter which concern women in missionary work and deaconesses will provide more evidence for women teaching in a way similar to Priscilla. Early church evidence indicates that women did much if not all of their teaching in homes, and that they primarily instructed other women, either prospective converts or catechumens.

A second passage that mentions the teaching responsibility of women is Titus 2:3. The passage with its context is as follows:

But as for you, teach what befits sound doctrine. Bid the older men to be temperate, serious, sensible, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. Bid the older women likewise to be reverent in behavior, not to be slanderers or slaves to drink; they are to teach what is good and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be sensible, chaste, domestic, kind and submissive to their husbands, that the word of God may not be discredited. Likewise urge the younger men to control themselves. (Ti 2:1–6)

This is one of the several sections in scripture where the writer treats categories of Christians distinguished according to age and sex. The writer

first urges Titus to bid the older men to do certain things, then the older women, and finally the younger men. However, he does not instruct Titus to exhort the younger women in any fashion; rather, Titus should bid the older women to teach the younger women. In other words, the care of the younger women is entrusted to the older women. The older women are expected to teach the younger women, to help train them to be the kind of women the Lord wants them to be. It is uncertain whether this exhortation refers to all the younger women in the community or to women younger in the Christian life—that is, new converts. However, most passages that discuss duties by age and sex categories do so from a perspective of concern for the whole community, not simply for the new converts. The passage also suggests that the male leaders should avoid caring for younger women. Such direction is likely given in order to avoid sexual temptations and inappropriate personal attachments. Furthermore, there is undoubtedly an understanding in Titus 2 that women are best able to teach other women how to be mature Christian women. It is clear, then, that women taught other women how to live the Christian life. This teaching must have played an important part in the effective formation of the Christian people.

Teaching

A third reference to women teaching can be found in 2 Timothy 1:5, which mentions the role of Timothy's mother and grandmother in his early spiritual life. The passage does not explicitly use the word "teach," but it clearly indicates that Timothy's mother and grandmother had responsibility for his religious formation (see also 2 Tm 3:15). Some have suggested that Timothy's father had died. More likely Timothy's father, a Greek (Acts 16:1), was a pagan, and his mother instructed her son in the Jewish faith before anyone in the family became Christian. In any case, Timothy's mother did teach him, and this teaching and its results were commended. Background for a teaching role can be found in the discussion of the teaching role of the wife in Chapter Three. All Christian mothers, and not just the ones who had pagan husbands, must have done some teaching in their households. In fact, they probably taught more than most modern Christian mothers, since they could not send their children off to Sunday school or catechism class.

More will be said about the teaching role of women in connection with the discussion of 1 Timothy 2:8–15. However, we have clear evidence that women as well as men had a teaching role among the early Christians. When they taught adults they primarily taught other women. The passage in Titus 2:3 suggests this principle, and evidence from the early Christian church in the first few centuries confirms it. It cannot be said that women

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would never teach men (Priscilla did seem to teach Apollos), but it can be said that there is no evidence that women were allowed to teach the Christian community as a whole. Their primary teaching role was, of course, as mothers. Early evidence of women's missionary work suggests that women missionary workers taught in homes. This evidence will be discussed in the next section. There is also some likelihood that older women taught younger women in the context of the home, in "daily life training" rather than in formal classes. When someone taught in public—either to instruct the whole Christian community or in an evangelistic situation—all existing references indicate that this person was a man who was a recognized Christian teacher. In short, the activity of teaching in the early church, like that of prophecy, involved men and women alike. However, the way it was carried out differed for men and women. A role difference was expressed in the way this activity—like others—is carried out.

Charitable Service

Charitable service focuses on care for the needy—the poor, the sick, and travelers (visitors). Charitable service was a major activity among the early Christians and was perhaps the main form of Christian service. In an affluent society with an institutionalized welfare system, the significance of directly helping the needy is often overlooked as a form of Christian service. Yet descriptions of the life of the early church indicate that charitable service demanded more time and energy from the Christian people than anything else except raising families. As with prophecy and teaching, both men and women participated actively in charitable service.

Much charitable service among early Christians flowed directly from the life of the family. As noted in the previous discussion of family life, the household would serve the needy through the distribution of alms and through taking in guests and orphans. However, the Christian community as a whole also did charitable service. The people who assumed a special responsibility for charitable service were the deacons (servants) and the widows (possibly with deaconesses). It cannot be said decisively that deacons and widows were the only ones who actively performed charitable service on behalf of the community, although there is no evidence of others doing so before the rise of the ascetic movement and the Christian charitable institution in the fourth century.⁵ The evidence for charitable service in the wider Christian community of the early centuries points solely to the work of deacons and widows.

The deacons were the men in the community who bore the active responsibility of caring for the needy. The deacons were responsible for many other matters as well, but the early church orders indicate that the care of widows and orphans was the most time-consuming of their responsibilities. The New Testament passages that speak about the activity of men in charitable service are likely speaking about deacons when they are not referring to heads of households. In Acts 6, the “seven” are appointed to care for the daily distribution to the widows. The passage itself is not completely clear in its interpretation, since the seven may not have been deacons. But since the time of Irenaeus, Acts 6 has been commonly viewed as the description of the appointment of the first deacons. Regardless of title, the “seven” must have performed some kind of diaconal service. The other indication we have of men doing charitable service is Romans 12:8, again a passage that is not perfectly clear in its interpretation, but which likely refers to deacons.⁶ These sketchy indications in scripture can be filled out by later descriptions of deacons. While much charitable service in the early Christian community was conducted through the household, some needs were not easily handled by households. The deacons administered the community care for the needy. The bishop received contributions and distributed them through the deacons to the widows, orphans, and other needy. The deacons, working under the bishop, saw that people were provided for and they distributed financial and material resources to those in need.

Charitable
Service

Two passages, one in Acts and the other in the pastoral epistles, treat the women’s activity in charitable service. Acts contains the following description of Tabitha:

Now there was at Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which means Dorcas or Gazelle. She was full of good works and acts of charity. (Acts 9:36)

Her works of charity or mercy had something to do with making clothes for the poor (v. 39), and the way the other widows gathered around her (v. 39) indicates that she was probably one of the widows in the community.⁷ The second passage occurs in 1 Timothy and concerns the enrollment of widows. The text reads:

Honor widows who are real widows. If a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn their religious duty to their own family and make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of

God. She who is a real widow, and is left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day; whereas she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives. Command this, so that they may be without reproach. If any one does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his own family, he has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

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Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband; and she must be well attested for her good deeds, as one who has brought up children, shown hospitality, washed the feet of the saints, relieved the afflicted, and devoted herself to doing good in every way. But refuse to enroll younger widows; for when they grow wanton against Christ they desire to marry, and so they incur condemnation for having violated their first pledge. Besides that, they learn to be idlers, gadding about from house to house, and not only idlers but gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not. So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, rule their households, and give the enemy no occasion to revile us. For some have already strayed after Satan. If any believing woman has relatives who are widows, let her assist them; let the church not be burdened, so that it may assist those who are real widows. (1 Tm 5:3–16)

Widows were a recognized group or order in the early church. The passage reveals that widows were enrolled so that they could be supported financially, but also that all widows were not provided for in this way. The order of widows had some further functions in the life of the Christian community than just to provide for needy widows. The description of the “true widow” in verse 5 makes it clear that a central part of the widow’s activity was prayer and intercession. Post–New Testament descriptions of the order of widows in the early Christian community confirm that prayer and intercession was one of the main, if not *the* main, activity of the widow. In addition, the qualifications of a good candidate include a reputation for charitable work. Once more the later descriptions of the order of widows confirm that widows were responsible for much charitable service to the needy.⁸

The deacons and widows served the needy in different ways. In general, they served in a way consistent with the distinction—made in Chapter Four—between the provider and the one who serves the immediate need. The deacons, who were men, filled the role of “provider.” They supervised the help given to the needy in the community, making sure that money,

food, and other supplies were distributed. The widows served the needy more immediately. They made clothes for them, nursed the sick, visited homes, and notified the bishop or deacons when they discovered cases of need. Both men and women did charitable service, but their roles in this service differed. This role difference was analogous to the role difference in the family.

Prophesying,
Teaching,
Charitable
Service

Summary

Both men and women served the early Christian community through prophesying, teaching, and charitable service. The references in scripture to the activity of women in these services are few, but neither are there many references to the men serving in these ways. The New Testament simply does not describe in much detail the specific activities which strengthened the early Christian community. Scripture devotes more attention to the service of apostles and elders as Christian servants in the early community, but even in their case it says very little about the specific tasks of their service, how they spent a typical day, and what they did with the people they were responsible for. Even though the New Testament references are scanty, there is no reason to doubt that both men and women taught, prophesied, and did charitable service in the churches founded by Paul. Nor is there any reason to doubt that the same was true for all the early Christian churches, especially since much of our later evidence for the role of women in Christian service stems from Syriac and Coptic sources as well as from Greek and Roman.⁹

We cannot distinguish between the roles of men and women in the early Christian community according to the type of activities they performed. As was shown in the last chapter, the same is true of the early Christian family. In both the family and the overall community, the significant distinction is in the way the roles are structured, not in the types of activities men and women performed. It is not true, for example, that men taught and prophesied and women did charitable service. Nonetheless, there are role differences for the service of men and women in the Christian community. Women's teaching was directed more to other women or to the household (at least some of the household), and was carried on within homes rather than in public. For their part, men were responsible for the teaching of the people as a whole. There also seemed to be a role difference in charitable service: The man (deacon) served as "provider" and the woman (widow) served the immediate needs. This distinction is similar

to the one we observed in the family. In short, men and women engaged in these various activities in different ways but no activity was closed to women.

Women in Missionary and Pastoral Service

ROLE differences between men and women in the early communities lie mainly in the way services were structured. From the beginning, Christians held recognized positions within the community as they worked for the spread of the gospel and the strengthening of the Christian people. Much discussion has centered on how these positions came into existence and how they functioned. Most of this discussion is beyond the scope of this book. The concern here is primarily to consider how these positions were ordered in terms of men's and women's role differences. This section will consider the service of women as missionary workers and as deaconesses in the early church, and will particularly examine the considerable degree to which women were recognized as having an important position in community service. Then this chapter will consider the type of responsibility within the Christian community that was reserved to men. Finally, it will summarize the overall pattern of men's and women's roles in community service.

To begin with, the difference between the way Christian service was carried out in the early church and the way it is carried out in the contemporary church must be recognized. The pattern of Christian service today—where church members volunteer to serve on committees, teach Sunday school or catechism, and work on other projects in their free time—is a wholly modern invention.

First, men and women in the first centuries of the Christian church had very little "free time." They spent most of their time in household labor, much of which was economic in nature. Most of daily life was lived in the household, and much of life was absorbed by the basic tasks of staying alive. Even the wealthy spent more of their time in their household (what might be called an estate today) and they were more concerned than the affluent of today with the organization of productive tasks.

Thus, "Christian service" in the first centuries has to be understood as something that was carried out in the context of the household. The early household bore much more of the responsibility for Christian nurture, evangelization, and care of the needy than most households do today.

The help most Christians gave outside of the household consisted mainly of material and financial contributions that came from work within the household setting. Consequently, most “service” of the early Christians must be described in terms of the family, not in terms of committees, volunteer church services, and other features of modern church life. The Christian service of most women was described under the role of the wife in Chapter Three. The men assumed more of a role in the life of the community outside the household, but even they acted more as men who headed households than as persons performing a special community service. The Christian service of most men is thus also described in Chapter Three.

Women in
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A second difference in Christian service is that a smaller number of people held recognized positions within the early Christian community than is the case in the church today. Many modern Christian churches try to give most of their active members some recognized position of service in church functions. These are primarily jobs on committees, service projects, teaching programs, and so forth. As we have seen, few early Christians served in a such a way, but rather served in the context of their daily lives in their households. On the other hand, the positions in the early communities were lifelong, more varied, and more important to the life of the community. There was a larger and more varied “clergy,” in the broad sense of the word, than we are accustomed to today. There were more elders, deacons, and deaconesses and in the later centuries, more persons in “minor orders,” such as exorcists and readers. The early Christian community seems to have given special positions of community service to fewer people, but the positions were more important. Moreover, the early church seems to have established such positions only to fulfill needs that could not be met by Christians in their daily lives. The community was organized so that most of the community’s work of evangelism and of building up the Christian people would be done by all the people, normally in the context of their household life. In short, recognized positions of Christian service in the early church were not what contemporary Christians might term the Christian service of all the Christian people. Rather, they were special positions among the Christian people that provided an order and organization for the whole life of the people.

Women as Missionary Workers

The early church was very active in its missionary efforts. Existing Christian communities sent many missionary workers from their home communities

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to plant new communities in areas where there was no Christian church. While it is known that much missionary activity occurred during the New Testament period, there is only one picture of how a missionary effort operated. This is the picture of Paul and his co-workers in Acts and the Pauline corpus. Paul worked with a sizable team of men and women, many of whom are mentioned by name.¹⁰ Paul himself carried the title of apostle. This title was given occasionally to his most prominent co-workers, Barnabas (Acts 14:14), with whom he shared authority while they worked together, and Silas and Timothy (1 Th 2:6). The term “apostle” has a meaning similar to that of “missionary.” An apostle was someone sent, an emissary, in this case an emissary of Jesus Christ with his word of salvation.¹¹ The position of “apostle” will be considered later. Here the concern is with those who might be termed “apostolic workers” or “missionary workers”—those who worked in the early church to bring others to the Christian faith and to found churches.

Both men and women were missionary workers in the early church. Paul worked with many women. The last chapter of Romans, the chapter which contains the greetings from Paul, contains the names of many women who were co-workers:

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchreae, that you may receive her in the Lord as befits the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a helper of many and of myself as well.

Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I but also all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks; greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who was the first convert in Asia for Christ. Greet Mary, who has worked hard among you. 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. . . . Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord. (Rom 16:1–7, 12)

Paul refers to two more of his co-workers in Philippians:

I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. And I ask you also, true yokefellow, help these women, for they have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life. (Phil 4:2–3)¹²

Priscilla (or Prisca) is a woman who receives particular mention from Paul. She is not only greeted in the passage in Romans 16 above, but mention is also made of her in Acts 18, 1 Corinthians 16:19, and 2 Timothy 4:19. She and her husband labored together with Paul in the work of evangelism, probably the only husband and wife team mentioned in all of the New Testament.* Priscilla's name is frequently mentioned before her husband's, which is possibly an indication that she was more prominent in the missionary work than her husband.† She was likely the chief woman worker in Paul's band and perhaps possessed a prominence in the whole work that was greater than her husband's. Paul seems to have relied heavily on the two of them, and they were important in instructing Apollos, who became an important missionary worker.

Women as
Missionary
Workers

The New Testament does not provide a detailed picture of how the men and women missionary workers functioned. They seem to have worked together in teams. However, the New Testament accounts of missionary work ought not be read with pictures formed from contemporary Christian life. There is no reason to believe that the female missionary workers preached to crowds in public in the manner of some Pentecostal evangelists like Aimee Semple McPherson or Mary Woodworth-Etter. The evidence from the century immediately following the time of the apostles indicates that women functioned in a pattern consistent with the male-female role differentiation already described. Clement of Alexandria describes the work of the women in the following way:

The apostles, giving themselves without respite to the work of evangelism, as befitted their ministry, took with them women, not as wives but as sisters, to share in their ministry to women living at home: by their agency the teaching of the Lord reached the women's quarters without arousing suspicion.

By "women's quarters" (*gynaikōnitis*) Clement is referring to the women's

* 1 Corinthians 9:5 may be interpreted as referring to apostles' wives, although this is quite uncertain and speculative given the context. If taken in this way, it could be seen to indicate that the apostles and their wives worked together, but does not have to be understood as indicating that their wives were any more than companions and personal helpers (i.e., wives). In other words, this is a possible reference to such partnership, but not much more than a bare possibility. Another such possibility could be Andronicus and Junia(s) if the latter is a woman—and this is by no means clearly the case. See p. 132 for a discussion of this question.

† Many feminist writers today are inclined to see in Priscilla a model independent woman, and it is suggested she took the leadership role in the family. There is, however, no reason to believe that she had authority over her husband in any way, or that their relationship was ordered in a manner different from that which was taught by Paul (see Chapters Four and Seven).

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quarters of the various houses. He is indicating that the women workers mainly evangelized and cared for other women and primarily did so in those women's houses. Clement's testimony is confirmed by the apocryphal *Acts of Paul*, a work which cannot be used with any certainty as a source for the life of Paul but can be used here as a confirmation of Clement's statements. The *Acts of Paul* describes in the following way how Thecla evangelized Tryphaena:

So Thecla went in with her and rested in her house for eight days, instructing her in the word of God, so that the majority of the maidservants also believed; and there was great joy in the house.¹³

Thecla's work of evangelism was carried out among the women and in the women's quarters in the homes. In conclusion, the overall picture of early missionary work is of a band of co-workers—men and women together—functioning under the direction of an apostle or two. The men focused on men, the women focused on women, working primarily with other women in those women's houses.

The Deaconess and Widow

There were three recognized positions of service in the Christian community during the first four centuries of the Christian church: elder/bishop, deacon, and deaconess. The elders, or the bishop and elders, were the heads of the Christian community. It is not clear how early the term "bishop" ("overseer") was reserved for the head of the elders and of the community. Neither are we clear about the nature of the relationship between the bishop and the elders in the early Christian communities where there was a clearly expressed distinction between the positions. Nevertheless, the elders were always part of the governing body of the Christian community, even where the role of the bishop as the head of the community was strongly stressed.

The deacons were a group of men who served as extensions of the bishop (or of the elders).¹⁴ They were the servants of the community, but servants more in the sense of stewards than in the sense of menial workers. They worked under the bishop and were given significant responsibility for the ordering and organization of the life of the community. The deacons were not part of the governing body of the community, but they were a recognized and respected part of the leadership of the community. They

were the extensions of the bishop and hence widened his ability to organize the life of the community and to care for the needs in the community.

The third recognized position within the early Christian community was that of deaconess. There is clear evidence for the existence of deaconesses as an accepted part of the order of the Christian community from the middle of the third century on. The position continued in importance throughout the early centuries, and died out in the Western church in the early middle ages.¹⁵ The origin of the position of deaconess is debated. Some hold that it developed toward the end of the second century; others contend that it can be found in scripture.¹⁶ The view that the position of deaconess can be found in scripture seems to have a stronger basis, considering that the role of the deaconess is instructive for the role of women in community service in the early Christian community, even if the position did not fully develop until a later time. The deaconess held a significant position in the early Christian community, and the role of the deaconess shows how a recognized position of female leadership in the Christian community could function in the New Testament period, or at least among Christians who followed the same approach to the roles of men and women as followed by the first generation of Christians.

The New Testament passage that seems to refer most clearly to deaconesses is found in 1 Timothy. This passage is part of a section of the epistle which discusses how people should be chosen to fill various positions of caring for the household of God. The section begins with the qualifications for the position of overseer (bishop/elder), and then proceeds as follows:

Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for gain; they must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then if they prove themselves blameless let them serve as deacons. The women likewise must be serious, no slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husband of one wife, and let them manage their children and their households well; for those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus. (1 Tm 3:8–13)

This passage uses the Greek word *diakonoi*. This word can be translated as either “deacons” (literally: “servants”) or as “deacons and deaconesses.” (The literal translation of deaconesses is “handmaids” or “maidservants.”) The verse beginning “the women likewise” is of special concern here. There

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are two main interpretations of this verse. One view understands the verse as a reference to the wives of deacons (since the word for “women” could also be translated “wives”). The second view understands the verse as a reference to deaconesses, women who were chosen for a particular position of service in the community. The main support for the first view comes from the paucity of references to deaconesses before the third century. The only support for such a view in the passage itself is the rather odd placement of the verse on deaconesses in a section that seems to envision primarily male deacons. However, the passage itself points toward interpreting the verse as a reference to deaconesses. If the verse referred to the wives of the deacons, the writer would have probably used the wording “their women (wives)” rather than “the women.” Moreover, if this verse is a reference to deacons’ wives, one would expect to find a parallel mention of the wives of elders earlier in the discussion of the choosing of elders. There is no such mention. Finally, the somewhat odd placing of the verse in a passage primarily about another subject is not stylistically inconsistent with 1 Timothy as a whole. In short, the weight of evidence suggests that 1 Timothy 3:11 refers to deaconesses.¹⁷

The second passage that seems to refer to the position of deaconess is in Romans 16, the passage about Phoebe. In the RSV translation the verses read as follows:

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deaconess of the Church at Cenchreae, that you may receive her in the Lord as befits the saints, and help her in whatever she may require of you, for she has been a helper of many and of myself as well. (Rom 16:1-2)

There is no doubt that Phoebe was a person of some importance in the early Christian community. There is some dispute as to whether she was a deaconess.¹⁸ The key phrase above could also be translated “I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae.” Also, the passage could be interpreted as simply a commendation for her faithful service in the Christian community rather than as a statement that she held a recognized position of deaconess. The term “servant” could even refer to Phoebe’s responsibilities as Paul’s missionary co-worker, perhaps someone he assigned to Cenchreae, rather than to her service as deaconess.¹⁹ However, the distinction between missionary worker and deaconess is rather tenuous; since an apostle could be considered an elder (1 Pt 5:1), his main female co-workers could likely be considered deaconesses (ser-

vants)—if such a position existed in New Testament times. Paul also describes Phoebe as a “helper,” but this term adds little to our understanding. The Greek word (*prostatis*) is only used once in the New Testament. Many commentators have suggested that *prostatis* meant something like “patroness,” and that Phoebe was thus a wealthy woman who was distinguished for acts of charity and for financial contribution.²⁰ Even so, the term does little to decide whether Phoebe was a deaconess, since a patroness might or might not occupy such a position of service. The strongest indication within the text that Phoebe actually was a deaconess is the official-sounding nature of the phrase by which Paul identifies her: “a servant/deaconess of the church at Cenchreae.”

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In summary, Romans 16:1–2, together with 1 Timothy 3:11, provides significant support for the view that the position of deaconess existed among Christians in New Testament times. If there is no reference in scripture to deaconesses other than Romans 16:1, then it would be difficult to maintain that Phoebe was a deaconess. However, with the 1 Timothy 3:11 verse, there is some possibility that Phoebe was a deaconess.

The New Testament does not provide a clear picture of what deaconesses may have done. Even if Phoebe was a “patroness,” there is no certainty that this was part of her service as deaconess. To understand the role of deaconess, one must look to the later periods, which provide clearer descriptions of deaconesses and their functions in the Christian community. The first of these descriptions comes from the early third century, and a number of other descriptions come from the two or three centuries following. These descriptions of deaconesses vary in some interesting ways, but a discussion of these variations is beyond the scope of this chapter.²¹ Its purpose only demands a general description of the kind of activities that deaconesses performed during the beginnings of the Christian church.

First, deaconesses cared primarily for the women. The *Didascalia Apostolorum*, the earliest full source for the role of deaconess, states this very plainly:

Therefore, O Bishop, appoint for yourself workers of righteousness and helpers to help you bring life to your people, choosing those who please you from all the people. The man who is chosen will be to do the numerous things which are necessary. The woman for the service of women.*

* *Didascalia Apostolorum* 3.12.1–13.1 (Funk, 1:208.8–214.3). There are various reasons given for the need to have deaconesses: (1) because of the baptismal rite in which deacons/deaconesses baptized and anointed the new Christians naked; (2) because of the need for church workers

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In their care of the women, the deaconesses performed a great variety of services.²² They assisted in the burial and baptism of the women. They instructed the women, especially the women catechumens. They cared for sick women at home, visited the poor, and informed the bishop and elders about the condition of the people. Deaconesses were intermediaries between the women and the heads of the community, often presenting the needs of the women to the bishop. Finally, in some communities they presided over the women's section of the assembly.

The order of widows and the position of deaconess were both recognized positions for women in the early Christian community. The relationship between the two positions remains uncertain.²³ Some early sources draw a clear distinction between deaconesses and widows. In other sources the distinction all but disappears, with some (or all) widows performing the kinds of services that other sources assign to the deaconesses. This observation is important because it shows the extent of a recognized position of Christian service for women in the early Christian community. The order of widows had an "ecclesiastical rank." Even in communities where no clear evidence exists for an order of deaconesses, there appeared to be an order of women—the widows—who served the community and who were honored along with the elders and the deacons as part of the "leadership" of the congregation. Though there is some doubt about whether the position of deaconess existed everywhere in the early church, there appears to be no doubt that some women—deaconesses or widows—had a recognized position within the "leadership" of the community. Honoring them in that position seems to have been universal in the first centuries of the Christian people.

In order to understand the full significance of the position of deaconess in the early Christian community, one must understand how it relates to the positions of deacon and elder. First, the deaconess was a female deacon.* As the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, cited above, states, the deaconess, like the deacon, is chosen to work under the bishop as a helper. They are both servants of the community and serve as extensions of the bishop, acting under his direction. The *Apostolic Tradition* states that deacons are chosen

who could enter the women's quarters; (3) because it would be unseemly for men to contact women directly. These are practical expressions of the need for women to care for women. The greater the separation of men and women in daily life, undoubtedly the greater need there is for women ministers.

* To say that deacons and deaconesses had parallel ministries is not necessarily to say that the women were ordained in the same way as the men. The ordination of deaconesses is a further question that lies beyond the scope of the present discussion.

“for the service of the bishop.” They were chosen to serve the community not as heads in themselves but as men and women available to the bishop for whatever service was needed.* Like the deacon, the deaconess held a recognized position within the Christian community. Like the deacon, she was not one of the heads of the community but served as an extension of the bishop and elders. A “servant” can exercise considerable authority, but it is authority delegated by the “master” and derived from him.

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While deacons and deaconesses held parallel positions, they did not function in identical ways. The title of “deacon” or “deaconess” refers primarily to a person’s relationship to the bishop and elders, not to his or her function. Deacons and deaconesses were servants of the bishop for the community. The deacons and deaconesses served in a variety of ways, like the servants in a large household who performed functions ranging from steward in charge of the whole household to errand boy. The term “servant” designates the person’s relationship to the master and household, not the person’s responsibilities. In some respects the functions performed by the deaconess corresponded to those performed by the deacon, but in other ways they corresponded to the functions of the elders. In some ways the deaconess was a female elder responsible for the other women. She did not have the same kind of authority as an elder, but she cared for and instructed the other women in ways that more resembled the elder’s care for the community than it resembled the function of deacon. Moreover, there are some indications that the early church explicitly associated the service of the deaconess with the service of the elder. Epiphanius of Salamis states that in matters affecting women, the ecclesiastical order is extended to the deaconess.²⁴ With the segregation of communal life by sex in monastic communities, the “governor” of the men’s monasteries (what is today called the “abbot”) was usually an ordained presbyter (elder) and could be referred to as “the presbyter” of the community. Likewise, the “governor” of the women’s community (an “abbess”) was usually a deaconess.²⁵ Hence the position of deaconess was seen in the ascetic movement as being analogous to that of elder. In short, the deaconess can properly be seen as the female position corresponding to both that of elder and deacon. She

* *The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus* 9.1–5, trans. B. S. Easton (Cambridge, 1924), 38:

But the deacon, when he is ordained, is chosen according to those things that were said above, the bishop alone in like manner laying his hands upon him as we have prescribed. When the deacon is ordained, this is the reason why the bishop alone shall lay hands upon him: he is not ordained to the priesthood but to serve the bishop and to carry out the bishop’s commands. He does not take part in the council of the clergy; he is to attend to his own duties and to make known to the bishop such things as are needful. He does not receive the Spirit that is possessed by the presbytery, in which the presbyters share; he receives only what is confided in him under the bishop’s authority.

performed services that both elders and deacons performed. Although the deaconess never bore the authority or independent responsibility of an elder unless caring for an all-female group, she was in certain respects the female elder of the community.²⁶

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The history and development of the position of deaconess (and widow) in the early Christian community is complex and uncertain. However, a few key facts stand out clearly. There was a recognized position of leadership for women in the early Christian community, stemming probably from New Testament times, but certainly from within a century afterwards. The deaconess may have performed somewhat different functions at different times and places, but with the widow she performed an important role of leadership in the community, especially among the women, and held an honored place. The early church did not have an all-male leadership, as has been common in much of the Western church in more recent times.

In some ways, the role of the deaconess in the community is analogous to the role of the mother in the family. The analogy, however, is limited. The term "mother" implies a relationship to the "father" (bishop or elder) that the deaconess did not have unless she was married to a bishop or elder. The evidence indicates that deaconesses were not often the wives of the elders. A second limitation to the analogy is that the deaconess did not hold any authority over the men in the community, whereas the mother is the second head of the family and should be honored and obeyed by her sons. Nonetheless, the analogy between deaconess and mother is illuminating. The deaconess cares for the women the way the mother cares for the daughters. At the same time, the order of widows (and perhaps the deaconesses) perform a role in charitable service analogous to that of the mother in the family. Moreover, the deaconess possesses an honored position in the community like the mother in the family and receives respect from men as well as women. There was, in other words, a recognized position for women in the leadership of the early Christian community that was in some important respects similar to the position of the mother in the family.

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WHILE both men and women in the early Christian community taught, prophesied, performed charitable service, and held recognized positions, there were clear differences in roles. The most helpful way to define the

difference in roles between men and women in community service is not by listing activities forbidden to women or by stating that women did not hold positions of leadership in the community. A key feature of that role difference lay in the fact that the positions of governmental authority were held by men, and when women exercised authority they did so subordinate to a man and normally over other women or in the home.

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In studying questions of leadership among the early Christians, it must be understood that the Christian community was a particular kind of human grouping and that the early Christians formed relationships with each other that are very different from the relationships among modern Christians. Leadership positions differ considerably depending on the type of interaction in the group and the type of function the leader performs. Some of these characteristics of the early community have already been noted and will be studied further in Chapter Eight. The early Christians considered themselves a nation or people, a community, with patterns of committed relationships. Their cultural norms were different from those around them, and they had their own courts and governmental authorities.

By contrast, the contemporary church, sociologically speaking, is more of a religious institution than a people or community. The life of contemporary Christians primarily expresses itself in various projects and activities centered around a church building. Much of this activity consists of teaching. Most churches offer a system of classes that is modeled on modern educational practice. Even the congregational gathering with the sermon is often evaluated in terms of its educational function. Sacramental actions are often viewed as services offered by an institution rather than as expressions of community life which also build and strengthen the community life. Normally, few personal relationships form simply because Christians are members of the church and primarily share a commitment to the church. When modern Christians form personal relationships, these are mainly motivated by personal attraction, common interests, compatibility, and other factors essentially unrelated to their common church membership. Church membership at most provides the occasion for their contact. Of course, these statements are not equally true for all churches. Some churches, especially ethnic minority churches and smaller Evangelical and Pentecostal churches, preserve many elements of community life. However, in most churches in the Western world, the institutional

elements predominate over communal elements. The reverse was true among the early Christians. Like all communities, the early churches had their institutional structures, but the type of institution that contemporary people take for granted was rare, existing only in certain governmental and military situations, and was not characteristic of early Christian life together.²⁷

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In a communal grouping like that of the early Christians, the overall leadership of the community governed the people. The heads of the Christian communities functioned in a way similar to fathers in a family; they did not treat the community members like children, but they did lead and direct them personally. They governed (cared for) the people. They taught them and watched over their lives. When members of the community were in need, the elders saw that the need was met. When the lives of the community members did not conform to the Lord's way of life, the heads would personally discuss the issue with those members. If a major transgression occurred, the elders would discipline the person. They governed and led the people, not the institution.

By contrast, the leaders of most modern churches concern themselves more directly with the institution than with the people, and their leadership consists primarily of administration, decision-making, and opinion-forming. The people's lives are a private matter. The leader will counsel someone upon request. The leader will run a program for those who want something enough to sign up and participate. The leader thus provides services for some individuals when they express a personal interest. The authority of church leaders extends over the institution—the common activities—but not the lives of the church members. The leaders can influence the direction of their members' lives through educational activities, but their primary authoritative functions are either administrative or policy-making for the institution (decision-making about budgets, hiring personnel, types of programs to use, etc.). This is not a criticism of modern church structures, since good reasons sometimes underlie their current forms, but these comments are simply a description of the differences between modern church institutions and the early Christian community. Noting these differences makes it possible to read the New Testament documents with greater clarity.

The role of the leaders of the early church as governors of the people is brought out in the names given their positions. The most common titles for these men were elders (presbyters) and overseers (bishops). Other titles included governors, presidents, and shepherds—words largely drawn from

secular government in the New Testament world and applied to people with governmental authority. “Elders” was a common term for the governing body of a village or a nation. “Governors,” a title similar to that used for Pontius Pilate and other Roman procurators in the New Testament, was also applied to the Christian elders.* “Shepherds” (“pastors”) was not a sentimental term of affection, but rather a term applied to rulers of Israel in the Old Testament; it connoted a ruling function when it was applied to the Christian elders. The Christian leaders expected to govern people in a way of life, and they expected their authority to be respected and embraced.

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The word used in the New Testament for the relationship of the people to their governors in the Christian community is the same word that we have considered in the relationship of the family—“subordination.” The early Christians were exhorted to subordinate themselves to those who were over them in the Lord.† An order existed in the Christian community in which children subordinated themselves to their parents, wives to their husbands, the head of the family to the elders, in some views the elders to the presiding elder or bishop, and the whole body to Christ, its head.²⁸ Christians were not simply subordinated to Christ as individuals, but also as an ordered whole, unified and able to function together as an organism.‡ The ideal behind the order in the community is the same ideal discussed in the first chapter: These distinct individuals were called to become one new person, a community united with the Lord and with one another and able to function as followers of the Lord in such a close and unified way that they could be considered his body. Clement of Rome, writing about 90 AD, provides a picture of the Christian community subordinate to its elders that sums up the point in the words of someone trained by the apostles:

So now my friends, let us get on resolutely with our warfare under His unerring directions. Think of the men who serve our own governors in the

* The terms for Roman procurators and their governors which commonly appear in the New Testament include *hēgemōn* (Mt 27:2) and *hēgemoneuō* (Lk 2:2; 3:1). The term used for leaders of the church in Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24, *hēgoumenos*, is derived from *hēgemoneuō*. Clement of Rome uses a very similar word in an analogy between military and spiritual leadership (1 Clem 37–38).

† See 1 Cor 16:16; 1 Pt 5:5. Among related phrasings are: *peithō* (Heb 13:17); *hyperechō* (Phil 2:3; 1 Pt 2:13; 1 Tm 2:2); *proistēmi* (1 Th 5:12; 1 Tm 5:17; Rom 12:8). Subordination is a term used in scripture for the relationships to secular authority (Rom 13:1, 5; Ti 3:1; 1 Pt 2:13–14), once again an indication of the way Christians perceived their leaders as exercising governmental authority.

‡ There was an order of subordination within the Christian community, as taught in the New Testament, but there was no teaching that the individual Christian was only subordinate to Christ through others.

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field, and the prompt and orderly obedience with which they go about their duties. Not all of them are marshals, generals, colonels, captains or the like; nevertheless, each at his own level executes the orders of the emperor and the military chiefs. For the great cannot exist without the small, nor the small without the great. Every organism is composed of various different elements; and this ensures its own good. Take the body as an instance; the head is nothing without the feet, nor are the feet anything without the head. Even the smallest of our physical members are necessary and valuable to the whole body; yet all of them work together and observe a common subordination so that the body itself is maintained intact. In Christ Jesus then, let this corporate body of ours be likewise maintained intact, with each of us subordinating ourselves to our neighbor in proportion to our spiritual gifts.²⁹

Government in the early Christian community, like government among the Jews and in the Greco-Roman world (although to a lesser degree), was a matter of governing people and involved a personal relationship and personal subordination. Even when there was no personal acquaintance, an element of personal loyalty (or disloyalty and rebellion) to the governor existed that is often missing in contemporary societies. The role of the elders in the Christian community resembled the role of the father in the family. In a functionally oriented society, leadership more commonly operates in an administrative fashion, and focuses on job descriptions, lists of functions, and available and qualified personnel rather than on roles and personal qualities. For example, a modern discussion about the need for more teaching in the Christian church is likely to revolve around the question of who is qualified to teach. Modern Christians would separate the functions of teaching from the function of community leadership. By contrast, in the scripture, teaching occurs in the context of a relationship. The elders taught as fathers of families, not as modern classroom teachers. They instructed the members of the community with authority about how they should live, and they expected an eager receptivity.

Similarly, early Christians were much less concerned than we about questions of representation and policy-making in their government of the Christian community. Today, Christian churches—along with most secular institutions—are careful to represent all major interest groups on governing bodies so that everyone has a chance to be heard. In fact, individuals are often elected to governing bodies chiefly because they can represent a particular point of view, even if they have no particular ability

to lead others. In the early church, however, decision-making was not the kind of major activity it is now with new policy constantly being discussed and passed. Significant policy decision-making was rare. The elders were chosen because they could govern an entire people, not because they represented an opinion or an interest group.

The difference between early and modern Christian government is perhaps best illustrated by two different notions of the word “represent.” In contemporary liberal, democratic society, a representative is someone who can represent (i.e., define, articulate, and advance) the interests of a particular person or group of people. Behind this idea lies a concern for policy or opinion and a conviction that pluralism of opinion, even about basic principles, values, and often doctrine, is to be expected. The representative, then, must faithfully represent the opinions and ideas of the group he represents. In the last century the church has moved strongly to make church decision-making bodies more “representative.” There is a concern that each assembly or synod represent youth, women, minorities, and all other important interest groups so that they can influence the decision-making process.

However, the early church understood “representation” differently. The leader of a Christian body “represented” it in the sense that he in a way embodied it because he was its head. For example, the early provincial or ecumenical councils were assemblies of bishops, who were present because they represented their church as its chief governor.* They did not represent their church in the sense of speaking for an interest group. They represented it as the governor of a unified body of people. The bishop could speak for the body because it was a united whole and not an assemblage of interest groups with different stands on policy matters—at least when the community functioned the way all knew it ideally should. A bishop represented a body of people who loved one another, and who had subordinated their lives and interests to the common good, and who were governed by men who understood government to mean caring and providing for all the members of the community. All agreed that there was an objective standard for judging whether the government and life of the body was proceeding rightly. This standard was the teaching of the Lord.

Of course, the early Christian church was not an idyllic community free from controversies and conflicts. The early Christian communities did

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* While, in the conciliar age, the church was, perhaps, not as tightly knit a community as it was in the first centuries, the basic contrast being drawn here with the functional approach of the modern world still holds.

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not always function according to their ideal. However, the early church possessed a conception of how a body of people should function that is very different from modern notions. To some considerable degree, the early church realized this ideal in the first centuries. This communal conception of the Christian community allowed the head of the community to represent the entire body. It was not necessary to find representatives who could speak for different interests and opinions.

Apostles and Elders

Elders and apostles were the two primary governmental positions in the early Christian community. The elders (presbyters, bishops/overseers), or the elders with the bishop when the two words were clearly distinguished in meaning, were the governors of the local Christian community.³⁰ The apostles were the founding authorities of the church after the death of Jesus. While much is unclear about the precise functions and authority of the apostles, there is a consensus that the term “apostle” normally referred to someone who held some kind of governmental position among the early Christians.³¹ Moreover, in the missionary bands discussed earlier, the apostle (Paul, in this case) was the head or governor of the band and the others either shared his authority as co-apostles or served under him as co-workers. “Apostle” and “elder” were positions always held by men. All who held positions of government or headship over the community as a whole were men.*

Until recent years there was no dispute whatsoever among commenta-

* There were other positions as well, primarily those of prophet and of teacher. It is unclear whether prophets exercised a governmental role, nor is it clear that women actually held the position of prophet (as distinguished from the function of prophesying). Teachers probably did have some governmental position, and women did not hold this position. See Barth, 438–439; Rengstorf, *TDNT*, 2:157–159. I have worked primarily with the ministry structure of bishop, presbyter, and deacon because there is a clear view available from New Testament and early church sources of how such positions functioned. The evidence is clearer for such a structure in the pastorals than earlier, and there are a number of theories which posit different approaches to leadership structures for different New Testament churches. The scope of this chapter does not allow a consideration of such views. Since the suggested differences bear, for the most part, on the way leadership was structured and do not bear upon the nature of positions of government in the early church, focusing on the role of elders, a position that we can see in a rough outline from early sources, is a sounder course for the kind of considerations in this chapter. The view of Käsemann et al. of a purely charismatic church order in the Pauline churches would necessitate a somewhat more qualified approach to this area, but the substantiation for such a theory is more speculative than evidential. Myles Bourke’s critique of such an approach is helpful. (See “Reflections on Church Order in the New Testament,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 30, no. 4 [October 1968]: 493–511.) Such a discussion, however, goes beyond the scope of this book.

tors and scholars that apostles and elders in the early church were always men. Recently, however, some have advanced the view that some women served as apostles or elders. The case for this view is weak, but the evidence must nevertheless be reviewed.

First, there is evidence to indicate that being a man was an important part of the qualifications for an apostle. Jesus chose only men to be his apostles and we have their names. When Peter wanted a replacement chosen for Judas as apostle, he said,

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For it is written in the book of Psalms, . . . “His office let another take.” So one of the men (*andrōn*) who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection. (Acts 1:20–22)

The word Peter uses in this passage is *anēr*, a word that designates only males. If he wished to leave the question open, Peter could have used the word *anthrōpos*, “man” or “person,” a word which could possibly apply to a woman as well as a man. A similar deliberate choice of words seems to exist in the way Paul describes the workers on his missionary teams. He uses the phrase “my co-workers” to refer to all those who work with him, men and women alike. However, he reserves the term “God’s fellow workers” for those with the title “apostle”—himself, Apollos, and Timothy—all males.³² It also appears that maleness was one of the qualifications for being an elder. Two separate New Testament discussions of the qualifications for elders state that the elder should be “the husband of one wife” (1 Tm 3:2; Ti 1:6). Finally, in at least one place, the New Testament explicitly prohibits women from taking a position of authority over the community. This passage—1 Timothy 2:8–15—and the questions connected with it will be discussed in Chapter Eight.

In view of these passages, the fact that there exists no undisputed recorded instance of a woman being named elder, bishop, or apostle in the early church is highly significant. Moreover, early Christian writings include the names of many elders and apostles and references to their lives, and the names are all male names and the references apparently all refer to men. No reference in early Christian writings can confidently be interpreted as an example of a female elder or apostle. The only exceptions to this statement occurred among the later Montanists and Collyridians, two small heretical sects. In fact, for more than a millennium and a half after

the ministry of Jesus, among orthodox Christians no woman has been entrusted with governmental authority for the whole Christian people. In the absence of one surely documented case of a female apostle or elder, the probability is very high that no woman held the positions of elder and apostle in the early church.

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The arguments to the contrary rely not on evidence that passages using the title “apostle” as a governmental position refer to women, but on mere grammatical possibility that some passages *could be* taken that way. The opinions for a New Testament reference to women as apostles and elders focus on two references: the name Junia(s) in Romans 16:7 and the term “older women” in 1 Timothy 5:2.*

Paul’s mention of Junia(s) as an apostle in Romans 16:7 is translated in the Revised Standard Version as follows: “Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners; they were men of note among the apostles and they were in Christ before me.” Andronicus and Junias were probably Jewish Christians whom Paul knew well. The RSV translation, given here, seems to clearly rule out the possibility that one of them could have been a woman. However, the translator supplied the word “men” for stylistic reasons. Moreover, the name *Jounian* in the Greek text is in the accusative case and grammatically could be the name of either a man or a woman. In other words, it is grammatically possible that Junia(s) could be a woman who is here termed an apostle.³³ On the other hand, it is possible that Junia(s) is a man. In addition, it is even possible that the passage does not identify Andronicus and Junia(s) as apostles at all. The phrase could be translated “they are people well known to the apostles.” This translation would mean that the two were among the first Christian converts and known to the Twelve.³⁴ Hence, it is not clear either that Junia(s) is a woman, or that this person was an apostle. Grammatical considerations leave open the possibility that this passage might refer to a female apostle. However, this possibility has much less weight in view of the evidence that only men were chosen to be apostles and the complete lack of evidence elsewhere for the existence of any female apostle. It is unlikely that this is a reference to a female apostle.

The passage which some maintain contains a possible reference to a female elder is 1 Timothy 5:2: “Do not rebuke an older man (*presbyterō*) but exhort him as you would a father; treat younger men (*neōterous*) like brothers, older women (*presbyteras*) like mothers, younger women (*neōteras*) like

* The only instance of which I am aware that seems to have even a possibility of such a reference from grammatical considerations alone would be the case of Junia(s).

sisters in all purity.” The word *presbyteros* is used in the New Testament for both an elder who is one of the governors of the community and for “older men”—older in age.³⁵ Some maintain that the term *presbytera* can refer to “eldresses” of the community as well as to “older women” and conclude that this passage refers not to “older men” and “older women” but to “elders” and “eldresses.” However, this interpretation is unlikely. 1 Timothy 5:2 is most naturally understood as an exhortation to a head or governor of a Christian community (Timothy) about how to relate to different types of people, especially older people who deserve a certain deference because of their age even though they are under his authority. This passage distinguishes people according to age and sex. Thus, the writer urges Timothy to treat older men differently from younger men, and older women differently from younger women. The roles in a family are offered as a model for these relationships in community. The passage takes on an odd meaning if “older men” and “older women” are to mean “elders” and “eldresses.” In such a case, Timothy would be exhorted to treat elders and eldresses (even those younger than he) like fathers and mothers, and to treat all the other members of the community (even those of advanced age) like brothers and sisters. The more likely meaning of the passage, then, is the one that guided the RSV translation. The weight of the evidence suggests that the passage refers to older women, not eldresses.

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One final line of argument that suggests the possibility that women held governing positions in the early church concerns the New Testament references to “the church [*or*: assembly] in so-and-so’s house.” This phrase probably means that the Christians often met in homes. They did not own church buildings until the third century, probably because of a prohibition by Roman officials. When they gathered within a city, the early Christians would assemble in a house that was large enough to hold a large number of believers. The phrase “the church at so-and-so’s house” could refer to the subgrouping of the Christian community that met at a particular home, or it could refer to the assembly or meeting that was held at a particular home.³⁶ Some of the people who had “churches” or “assemblies” meeting at their homes were women: Priscilla with Aquila (Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:9), and perhaps Nympha (Col 4:15). Some have held that this term indicates that the women mentioned, Nympha at least, were heads of sub-groupings of Christians that included both men and women.³⁷

However, the phrase the “church at so-and-so’s house” does not necessarily imply such a conclusion. More likely, the term simply means that the person named had the appropriate house and “hosted” the gathering. Paul

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apparently led meetings that he held at Lydia's house (Acts 16:15, 40) and Gaius's house (Rom 16:23). Acts 12:12 refers to a similar situation where the designation "the church at so-and-so's house" is not used, but where we can see mention of a gathering of Christians meeting at Mary's house with no indication that Mary was responsible for the grouping. In short, the meaning of the term "the church at so-and-so's house" is not absolutely clear, but it more likely refers to the person who made the house available, and not to the leader of the meeting (although the two could sometimes be the same, as it likely was in the case of Philemon).

In conclusion, a clear and consistent picture of men's and women's roles in the leadership of the early Christian community emerges in the New Testament period. Men acted as the governors or heads of the Christian people. They were the apostles and elders. On the other hand, women were not apostles and elders but they were deaconesses and co-workers with the apostles. Women were active in the missionary work of the early Christian community, and they shared in caring for the people of the early Christian community. They worked in subordination to men (the apostles and elders), and were mainly responsible for the women.

Roles and Community Structure

THE pattern of service in the early Christian communities in regard to the roles of men and women can now be summarized. First, the roles of men and women in community service in the early church cannot be distinguished according to activities which are allowed for one and forbidden to the other. Both men and women performed the main activities of building up the Christian community. Men and women alike taught, prophesied, rendered charitable service, evangelized, and raised Christians in the Lord. The differences between men and women can be distinguished less in terms of activities or jobs and more in terms of the structure or order in their relationship. In this respect, role differences in the community paralleled role differences in the family.

Secondly, among the early Christians, wherever a position for a man existed there also existed some complementary position for a woman. The early Christian community was not one of those social groupings that excluded women from all communal responsibility. In fact, the opposite seems to be true. The early Christians followed the principle that men ought to have female co-workers. Daniélou summarizes the approach in

this way: “It would seem . . . that each male ministry had a sort of female counterpart, of a subordinate character and connected with the extension of this ministry to women.”³⁸ The women served under the men who were the overall heads of the groupings, and the women were primarily concerned with caring for women.

The pattern of roles for men and women in community service among the early Christians can be summarized in the following way:³⁹

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1. The governors or heads of the Christian people were men. Men held the positions which ordered the life of the Christian people, had the overall responsibility for their care, exercised the authority of the Christian community and represented the community.
2. Wherever there are male heads or governors in the Christian people, there are normally women working with them in a subordinate way.
3. In the care of individuals, men care for the men and women care for the women. Men normally raise other men in the Lord and women raise women.⁴⁰
4. When men and women perform the same activity together, as in the case of charitable service, the men commonly function as providers and are responsible for the overall care, while the women directly serve the immediate needs.

How this pattern of roles worked out in practice undoubtedly differed, for example, among Christians living in a rural area in Cappadocia, among Christian Arab nomadic tribes, and among Christians living in the city of Rome. However, the pattern applies to very different situations. It simply describes the broad patterns of roles which can be lived out in a great variety of ways.

Finally, this chapter has said little about “sacramental actions” such as presiding over the eucharist and administering the penitential discipline. Neither “priesthood” nor other related issues which are currently topics of great concern among Christians have been discussed. These questions will be treated more fully in Chapter Twenty-Four. In view of what has been said to this point, however, one could assert that insofar as these actions were seen as governing functions, they would be performed by men.

The pattern in the family corresponds to the pattern in community service. This correspondence exists for two major reasons. The first reason has been implicit throughout our study: The family formed the basic cell of the community. It was the place where most Christian life was lived

and where young people learned to be mature Christian men and women. Many New Testament passages see the family as the model for the rest of the community. It is not accidental that 1 Timothy 3 views the role of father in the family as a model and preparation for the role of elder in the community. Nor is it accidental that 1 Timothy 5 uses family relationships as the model for various relationships in the community:

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Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as you would a father; treat younger men like brothers, older women like mothers, younger women like sisters in all purity. (1 Tm 5:1–2)

As Chrysostom put it, “a household is a little church,” and correspondingly “a church is a large household.” Or, as 1 Timothy 3:15 puts it, “the church is the household of God.”⁴¹

The correspondence between the family and community goes to the heart of how the early Christians understood their life together. If the life of the Christian people is lived as a family rather than as a social institution, the same roles are needed in both family and community. The type of government and care a father provides for his family must be present in the community. The type of service to the immediate needs a mother provides in her family must be present in the community as well. Those members who are younger in age and experience need to be taught and reared in a similar way. The shift away from what could be called “the family approach to the Christian church” will be discussed more fully in the later chapters of this book. However, it is precisely the “family” elements of Christian life that have disappeared from many Christian churches today. These include ongoing personal government and care of people; personal training and “raising” of those younger in the Lord; natural daily service to the poor, needy, guests, travelers, and newcomers; and the natural sharing of help from household to household. These are approaches and attitudes that Christians once learned in the household and then extended into the life of the community. Today, they have been largely lost—with great cost to the communal life of the Christian people.

The second reason why the pattern of family roles corresponds to the pattern of community roles is that early Christians wanted family and community to support and reinforce one another. To approach roles differently in the community would undermine the role structure of the family. At one time people understood this principle instinctively, but today it is no longer understood so easily. Some people today see that a clear pattern of husband-wife roles is taught in scripture, and they try to live this way

in the family. However, these same people cannot see why the life of the Christian community has to be patterned in the same way. They presume that family and community can easily be separated from one another and operate differently. In fact, family and community cannot be separated. If someone learns how to be a man, he must be a man in every situation in his life, and he needs his male role to be taught everywhere. Otherwise, when he finally has a family, he will not assume the role of a man in the family. If the family structure requires the woman to rule her household and consequently be more present in the household, the community structure must orient her toward that role and not remove her or train her from it. There is traditional wisdom in the early Christian approach of supporting the family role pattern by developing a similar role pattern in the community.

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Such considerations about family structure were probably the main reasons why deaconesses were not governors or heads in the early Christian community. If each male role in a community had a corresponding female role, one might think that the deaconesses should govern the women while the elders govern the men. But this would have undermined the husband's role as head of the family. His wife, daughters, and the female members of his household would have been under the direction of a deaconess and not under him. Consequently, the pattern of community government was arranged to support the unity of the family. The man was the head of his family and he was subordinate to the elders. Older, experienced women taught the younger wives and helped them when help was needed. However, these women did not assume governmental authority over the wives. The only recorded instances of a woman being described with a governmental title in the early church concerns women who headed a community or a subgrouping of the Christian community composed entirely of women.

In a similar fashion we can fairly easily understand something that is apparent in even a casual reading of the New Testament and other early Christian literature: The men assume a more prominent place in the public life of the early Christian community than the women. This fact is understandable in terms of what we have observed about family life and the overall structure of the Christian community. The women had more responsibility within the household. The men had more responsibility outside the household. This does not mean that women had no responsibility in the community, nor that men had no responsibility in the household. Men, however, had greater responsibility in community life outside of the household than did the women.

This consideration of family and community role structure helps clarify

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the meaning of “the subordination of woman” in the New Testament. It could be held either that the New Testament does teach the subordination of women or does not teach the subordination of women, depending on the meaning assigned to the phrase “the subordination of women.” The New Testament does not teach subordination of all women to all men. In fact, many of the relevant scriptural prescriptions might be designed to prevent this. Women were subordinate to one man, not to all men. It is much more accurate to say that the New Testament teaches not the subordination of women, but an order to the relationships of men and women. The scriptural order builds upon an order in the basic unit, the family household, in which the woman is subordinate to her husband or her father. By extension, and in a parallel way, the women are then also subordinate to the elders of the community who are men. But the men in the community are also subordinate to the elders—as much as the women are. In fact, in a certain sense, the women in the community are less directly subordinate to the elders than the men. This is so because the women are normally subordinate as members of the one person that is the family, and are thus subordinate to the elders through their husbands (or fathers). In short, rather than saying that the New Testament teaches the subordination of women, we should more accurately say this: The New Testament teaches the subordination in marriage and family of women to a man, the head of the family, and a pattern of roles in the community which entrusts the government of the community to men and which thereby supports the pattern in the family.

Something similar can be said about the honor paid to women in the Christian community. People sometimes say that the early Christians honored women less than men. While little direct data exists on the way honor was paid according to sex in the early Christian community, social historical evidence from societies structured on similar principles would indicate that such a view is mistaken. Honor was probably paid to men and women in the early church according to an order in which many women would be paid more honor than many men. For instance, in a country which has a king and queen, the second most highly honored person in the country is often the queen—a woman. The honor given to her would normally be greater than that given to any man in the country other than her husband (this might be stated by saying that she would be second in protocol). The queen mother also would be given a great deal of honor (see 2 Kgs 2:19). The widows and deaconesses in the early church likewise received special honor in ways that most men in the community did not.

In short, the honor a woman received would be relative to her family position or her position in the community, and the statement that women were honored less than men would be seriously misleading.

The pattern of the roles of men and women in community service discussed in this chapter reveals a social structure in the early Christian community that builds upon the structure of the family as its basic unit. There is a consistency to the early Christian approach to men's and women's roles that indicates that the early Christians had a definite social structure not based on haphazard circumstance or on prejudice against women. Instead it was based on a social system that was both stable and effective, judging from the success of the Christian community in the first few centuries of its existence. Many questions remain, especially those concerned with how the early Christians viewed their social pattern and how they taught about it. The next three chapters will consider the remaining key texts in the New Testament about the roles of men and women.

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► 6

SOCIAL ROLES AND GALATIANS 3:28

THIS CHAPTER will once again discuss the key texts of the New Testament on the roles of men and women, those texts which address the subject explicitly and authoritatively. Chapter Four discussed the key teaching texts in the New Testament on marriage and family. This chapter and the next two will discuss texts that either concern both marriage and community or concern only the roles of men and women in the community.

As has been pointed out already, the New Testament pattern of men's and women's roles does not stand by itself, and cannot be understood in isolation. The pattern of men's and women's roles must be grasped in order to understand the concrete meaning of the explicit teaching on the subject. Likewise, understanding the teaching is essential for correctly understanding how to approach the pattern. The teaching illumines the foundations of the patterns, or at least allows one to see how the New Testament teachers (in this case primarily Paul) viewed these foundations. Are the patterns of men's and women's roles accidental, or are they rooted in God's purposes for the human race? The teaching also allows one to perceive which parts of the New Testament patterns were explicitly enjoined upon the Christian people. Are these patterns something that rest upon commands of an apostle or the Lord, or are they simply the customs of the early Christians, customs they would have considered alterable in different circumstances? Finally, the teaching helps identify the reasons given for the pattern of men's and women's roles seen in the New Testament. Did these patterns develop out of unexamined tradition, as a way of adapting to local customs, in unconscious response to outside influences, or out of commitment to something central in Christian teaching?

The first text to be considered is Galatians 3:28, the passage which contains the now-famous phrase, “neither male nor female.” Nowadays many assume that Galatians 3:28 is the place in which we find the heart of the scriptural teaching about the roles of men and women. Moreover, many interpret Galatians 3:28 to mean that ideally in Christ there are no role differences between men and women, an interpretation which opposes Galatians 3:28 to all the other texts that assert such a difference. According to this line of interpretation, this tension should be resolved by giving a preference to Galatians 3:28. This view sees Galatians 3:28 as “the great breakthrough” and regards the other passages as “conservative” or “traditional” passages that express something of limited value.¹ In order to make this point more strongly, it is sometimes even said that Galatians 3:28 is the *locus classicus* in Paul’s teaching about men’s and women’s roles. The following expresses this view vividly:

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The biblical theologian does not build on isolated proof texts but first seeks the *locus classicus*, the major biblical statement, on a given matter. (The doctrine of creation and fall, for example, is to be found most clearly spelled out in Gn 1–3 and Rom 5:12–21, not in 1 Cor 11:2–16 or 1 Tim 2:13–14.) Passages which deal with an issue systematically are used to help understand incidental references elsewhere. Passages which are theological and doctrinal in content are used to interpret those where the writer is dealing with practical local cultural problems. (Except for Gal 3:28, all of the references to women in the New Testament are contained in passages with practical concerns about personal relationships or behavior in worship services.)²

While Galatians 3:28 does provide a helpful perspective on men’s and women’s roles in the New Testament, it is hardly the *locus classicus* on men’s and women’s roles. It does not even properly qualify as a key text, since it does not explicitly address the subject of the roles of men and women. Rather, Galatians 3:28 contains an incidental reference to men and women as part of a treatment of a subject other than men’s and women’s roles, and the single phrase is not explained at all. Moreover, to look for the overarching teaching about a matter of personal relationships and social order in a “doctrinal” teaching that only contains an incidental reference to the subject of concern is surely a distortion of principles of interpretation. For a key statement on men’s and women’s roles, one should look at the passages on personal relationships and social order that are directly concerned with the matter. The candidates for being *loci classici* on the roles of men and women would more likely be 1 Corinthians 11:2–16, Ephesians 5:22–31,

1 Timothy 2:8–15, and 1 Peter 3:1–7. However, Galatians 3:28 must be treated in some detail because of its prominent place in contemporary discussions of the roles of men and women. Moreover, the passage does provide an important background to the other key texts. It relates the basic teaching of Genesis 1–3 and Ephesians 5 to the overall New Testament statement on the roles of men and women. It also gives an opportunity to consider the New Testament (especially Pauline) approach to social roles.

The Thrust of Galatians 3:28

GALATIANS 3:28 occurs in a section of Galatians in which Paul discusses the purpose of the law in God's plan. He explains that the law is not against the promises of God (Gal 3:21). His approach is similar to Jesus' interpretation of the divorce law in the Pentateuch as being given "for your hardness of heart" (Mt 19:8). Paul acknowledges that the Mosaic law was from God and had an important role to play, but he asserts that the law must be seen and interpreted in terms of its place in God's plan and in terms of God's reason for giving it. To explain his view of the law more clearly, he says,

Now before faith came, we were confined under the law kept under restraint until faith should be revealed. So that the law was our custodian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a custodian; for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 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. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Gal 3:23–29)

The specific issue provoking Paul's explanation of the place of the law was circumcision. Representatives of "the circumcision party" (Gal 2:12) had come to the community Paul founded in Galatia and had begun to teach that the Gentile converts should be circumcised. Paul viewed this as an attack on the gospel he preached. "Justification" comes through faith in Christ, not through circumcision or the observance of the Mosaic law.

Beginning with verse 23, Paul compares the law to a "custodian," a pedagogue or tutor.³ A wealthy father in Greco-Roman society would often entrust his young son to a pedagogue during his time of education.

The child would be under the authority of the pedagogue (commonly a slave) who would guard him and keep him out of trouble. When the child reached the age of maturity, he was no longer under the pedagogue, but would simply be under his father's authority, ready to act as a mature son. As was discussed in Chapter Three, in contemporary Western society, the relationship of father-son is primarily understood in terms of the relationship of a father with a young boy. When the boy grows up, he is still technically the son of his father, but he has in large part left the family and the father-son relationship. By contrast, for the Jew and Greek in the ancient world, the son par excellence was not the young boy, but the mature son, the one who could act on behalf of his father and shoulder his father's responsibility. Becoming a full son, then, meant entering into a position of maturity. Therefore, Paul is saying that the law had been our pedagogue in our spiritual childhood, but now that faith in Christ Jesus has come, the human race (Christians) has reached maturity in its relationship with God. To return to the provisions of the law for the sake of improving one's relationship with God (justification) is like returning to immaturity.

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A New Testament writer like Paul could use the term "law" in several different ways. At different times, the term could refer simply to the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament; the Mosaic law, the provisions given through Moses on Sinai and embodied primarily in the Pentateuch; or the Mosaic law embodied not only in the Pentateuch but also in the oral tradition; or the teaching that comes from God—a standard to be observed by men. The various meanings of "law" are often important for sorting out questions of interpretation. While Paul can speak of the law being superseded, as in this passage, he can also speak of the law being fulfilled (Gal 5:14) and he can speak of Christian teaching as "the law of Christ" (Gal 6:2). Sorting out the various aspects of Paul's view of law goes beyond the scope of this book. For the purpose of understanding Galatians 3, however, it helps to keep in mind that the central issue was circumcision and with circumcision the necessity of obeying all the provisions of the Mosaic law (Gal 5:3). The Mosaic law, especially in its ritual requirements, provides the primary issue at this point.

For Paul, being "in Christ" provides all that the observance of the Mosaic law provides in regard to a relationship with God and more. Paul's concern is with justification, the basic relationship with God, when he says in Galatians 3:26–28:

In Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith. For as many of you

as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ.

Faith in Christ puts people into the best possible relationship with God—the relationship of sonship.

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The specific point of contention that Paul is dealing with in the letter is baptism and its relationship to circumcision. A person enters into Christ through baptism. A person became an Israelite through circumcision. The “circumcision party” in Galatia wanted the Gentile Christians to complete the process and become full proselytes (as full Israelites as a Gentile could become) by being circumcised. Paul opposes this. He asserts that baptism provides all that circumcision provides as far as relationship with God. In fact, he goes on to say that baptized Gentiles, as long as they are in Christ, are Abraham’s offspring and heirs—that is, they receive all that a circumcised Israelite does in regard to their status with God.

In this context, the phrase “neither male nor female” takes on a special significance, because women could not be circumcised. Circumcision was a sign of being in the covenant of Israel and was only open to the male. Women’s participation in the covenant of Israel came through the men—circumcised male Israelites.⁴ According to Paul, Christians obtain the status of mature sonship through their baptism and initiation into Christ, and are sons and daughters of God (a good translation of “sons” into modern English) through faith in Christ.⁵ The woman, then, comes into the covenant relation of God’s people through her own faith and baptism, and is fully part of the covenant relationship with God.

Thus, Galatians 3:23–29 centers on being “in Christ” and the status obtained through being in Christ. Paul’s key statement about the matter—comparing the condition under the law and the condition reached through faith in Christ—is contained in the sentence “in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith” or, as it may also be translated, “you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.” He then proceeds to speak of how this status is given: Through baptism you are one with Christ, you have entered into a union with Christ, you have entered into Christ. What Christ is (the mature son of God), you have now become in virtue

* The masculine plural is used in Greek when the reference is all males and when it is both males and females. Hence, *huiioi* could be translated “sons” or “sons and daughters,” and the translation must be determined from the context. The metaphor (the primary metaphor is to the first-born son) would point to “sons,” but “neither male nor female” would point to “sons and daughters.” The Greek allows Paul to attribute a traditionally masculine status to a group (the Christians) and thereby to women as well, without calling attention to the gender differences.

of belonging to his body. You (all Christians, regardless of other considerations) are one person (NEB) in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:23–29 brings us back to the teaching about the new Adam that was discussed in Chapters One and Four. Indeed, some of the phrases in Galatians probably refer to passages in Genesis concerning the first Adam. The notion of becoming one (one person) in Christ is likely a reference to Genesis 2:24 (“therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh”) and is used in a way similar to the way that verse is used in Ephesians 5:31–32. Moreover, the phrase “male and female” is the exact phrase used by the Septuagint to translate Genesis 1:27 (“male and female he created them”). It is probably a reference to the creation of the original human (Adam).⁵ The phrase “putting on Christ” then would be equivalent to putting on (or entering into) the new Adam. This interpretation is supported by Colossians 3:9–11 which contains a close parallel to verse 28 and which discusses the restoration of the image of God.

The Thrust of
Galatians 3:28

Therefore, Galatians 3:26–29 is a passage whose theme is the making of the new humanity, the new man, in Christ. On the basis of the way God dealt with Abraham (promise and faith, Gal 3:18), faith in Christ brings us back beyond the Mosaic law to Adam, the first human. What matters is a new creation (Gal 6:15), a new beginning of the human race in the new Adam. Faith in Christ, then, makes possible the restoration of the original relationship with God intended in the creation of the human race—the relationship between God and his son Humanity (Human, Adam).

New Testament Parallels

The concern here is specifically with the phrase “neither male nor female” which occurs in the series “neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female.” This series is paralleled in two other passages in Paul’s letters, and both passages can aid us in understanding the meaning of Galatians 3:26–29. The first of these parallel passages is Colossians 3:9–11. After exhorting the Colossians to put away unrighteous practices like fornication and covetousness, Paul says:

Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old man with its practices and have put on the new man, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all. (Col 3:9–11)

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Here Paul describes what Jesus accomplishes in Christians as renewal after the image of the creator, restoration of the image of God in man. He explicitly refers to the change as putting off the old person (man, nature) and putting on the new person (man, nature). A Christian is a new person/man in the one new person/man who is Christ. The new creation in Christ restores the image of God in man. This restored image enables Christians to act in a new way, a way that reflects the God whose son or daughter they were created to be. All Christians share in this restoration of the image of God; there is no difference between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free. “Barbarian, Scythian” is an unusual formula, adding some Hellenistic concerns to the normal set of terms Paul uses; still, the meaning remains the same. For all Christians—Greek and Jew, Greek and non-Greek, slave and free (or, as in Gal 3:28, male or female)—the image of God and the sonship of God is restored. The human race is returned to the relationship it had with God when it was first created. The point of Colossians 3:11 and of Galatians 3:28 is the same.

The combination of Galatians 3:23–29 and Colossians 3:9–11 forms one of the strongest arguments for the view that woman as well as man is created in the image of God. The teaching of the passage is parallel. As discussed in Chapter One, being in the image of God is an aspect of being a son of God. Galatians 3:26–28 states that both men and women are sons of God (or better: sons and daughters). Colossians 3:9–11 confirms that all Christians are supposed to live in Christian righteousness and are being renewed in knowledge according to the image of their creator. Although “neither male nor female” is not used in Colossians 3:11, the relationship between the two passages as well as the application of Colossians 3:9–11 to men and women alike indicates strongly that both men and women were originally created in the image of God, and are restored in the image of God as they enter into Christ.

The second parallel to Galatians 3:28 occurs in 1 Corinthians 12. The context is a teaching on spiritual gifts. Paul explains that although different Christians are gifted in different ways, they can still function together as one community because the same Spirit bestows these gifts. Just as the human body is united though it has many members, so a Christian community can be united, even though the individual Christians function in different ways. In the course of this comparison, Paul says,

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit

we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all made to drink of one Spirit. (1 Cor 12:12–13)

The same phrasing occurs here as in Colossians 3:11 and Galatians 3:28, in this case again without “male and female.” However, the point is the same: All Christians enjoy the same status by virtue of being joined to Christ. This passage is likewise a passage about being one in Christ, the new Man/Human. The theme makes the passage even more directly parallel to Ephesians 5:22–33 (and Eph 2:13–16), a key text on the roles of men and women, where the concern is also with belonging to the body of Christ and with being the one new person in Christ. This union with Christ and with other Christians is accomplished through the gift of the Spirit, the one Spirit who dwells in all Christians. Here Paul makes a similar point to that which he made in Galatians 3:23–29:

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But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba, Father!” So through God you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then an heir. (Gal 4:4–7)

Through the one Spirit, Christians are united in the one body of Christ so that they can become one new person—the new human race. This is the Spirit that was poured out upon man and woman alike on the day of Pentecost, the Spirit that the prophet Joel foretold would be given to sons and daughters, menservants and maidservants alike. This applies to all Christians, Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female—to all who are baptized. Hence all can become sons and all can become heirs. In this context, one can see that the meaning of “joint-heirs in Christ” in 1 Peter 3:7 (see the discussion in Chapter Four) parallels Galatians 3:28 and 1 Corinthians 12:13. The point of all four passages (Gal 3:28, 1 Cor 12:13, Col 3:11, and 1 Pt 3:7) is the same: The results of the redemption in Christ are conferred upon all Christians, men and women alike, through their faith and baptism.

The coming of Christ and faith in him produced a new relationship with God, the one intended by God in his original creation of the human race. In consequence, provisions of the Mosaic law no longer applied, in particular those provisions which pertained to the status of human beings and their relationship with God.

The pairs Jew-Greek, slave-free, male-female are especially significant in

light of this change—God’s restoration of his original plan for creation in his son Jesus Christ. Paul singles them out to explain the significance of the change made by the coming of Jesus Christ. The three pairs are associated in other texts of the period. An important text is 1 Corinthians 7:12–24, where Paul discusses the conditions under which a believing woman can separate from her husband and urges that she remain married if at all possible.* He continues with a discussion of others who might want to leave “the state in which they were called” (v. 24), Jew and Gentile, slave and free. Since these two categories are out of context in this section of 1 Corinthians, a section on sex and marriage, the fact that Paul mentions them along with man and woman suggests that the three pairs are strongly linked in Paul’s mind.

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Perhaps Paul linked these three pairs because they were associated in Jewish tradition. Another place where they are linked is the contemporary Jewish morning prayer, a prayer which goes back to the first century and perhaps to Paul’s time:

Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe,
who hast not made me a Gentile [heathen].
Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe,
who hast not made me a slave.

* 1 Corinthians 7:12–24 contains a number of difficulties for interpretation. For our purposes it is enough to note the use of the three categories. Moreover, the concern here seems to be questions about status with God in relationship to the law. There is nothing stated about difficulties in relationships or social disadvantages. Paul does not discuss the divorce question as if the issue were the husband and wife not getting along well, nor the slavery question as if his concern were with slaves being mistreated or restricted socially. The concern in the marriage section is whether the union and the offspring of the union will be holy. This concern would well have been raised by Jewish questions of mixed marriage, legal purity, and belonging to the “holy seed” of Israel, as some commentators like Strack and Billerbeck have suggested. Even if they were raised by those holding a negative view on marriage, as other commentators have suggested, the point would hold true. Holiness of the marriage and of offspring is the issue. The concern in the slavery section seems to be with religious status and whether slavery is an impediment to being free in Christ. Paul’s reply asserts that our status in Christ could equally well be described as being a freedman of Christ or a slave of Christ, so that the status of slave is not an intrinsic impediment, although (depending on the interpretation) there is a preference for not being a slave. Finally, the question of circumcision and uncircumcision is clearly one of status according to the law. The implication that Jews might be wanting to leave their circumcised state could simply be a rhetorical point or it could mean that ideas of Christian freedom or Paul’s views of the relative value of circumcision had led some Jews to want to change status. In short, the concern in 1 Corinthians 7:12–24 seems to be similar to that in Gal 3:23–29, that is, with questions of status with God.

Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe,
 who hast not made me a woman.⁶

The contemporary tendency is to interpret this prayer as an instance of misogyny. However, such an interpretation misses the point of the prayer. The meaning of the prayer as it was understood in the first century, especially insofar as it bears upon spiritual status according to the law of Moses (the context provided by Gal 3:23–29), will give us a clearer understanding of “neither male nor female” as intended by Paul.

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A comment in the Tosefta from a rabbi who lived in the second century AD sheds light on the above prayer:

Rabbi Jehuda said, One must speak three praises every day:
 Blessed be God that he has not made me a Gentile!
 Blessed be God that he has not made me a woman!
 Blessed be God that he has not made me a boor!
 Blessed be God that he had not made me a Gentile: “because all
 Gentiles are nothing before him” (Jer 40:17).
 Blessed be God that he has not made me a woman: because woman
 is not obligated to fulfill the commandments.
 Blessed be God that he has not made me a boor: because a boor is
 not ashamed to sin.*

* The blessings in the Jewish prayer book show a different focus than Rabbi Jehuda’s three praises. Both are concerned with religious status according to the law, but Rabbi Jehuda’s concerns are more Rabbinic/Pharisaic. Some view the current modification as due to Rabbi Akiba, who came from a family of the *am ha-aretz* (literally “countrymen,” but used by the Pharisees to refer to Jews unlearned in the torah, i.e., in the law as interpreted by the Pharisees). Since a “countryman” can gain knowledge through the study of the torah, he is not in a different position by status but only by ignorance. If 1 Corinthians 7:12–24 and Gal 3:28 are truly parallels to the contemporary Jewish morning prayer, then we may have evidence that the contemporary prayer is earlier than both Akiba and Jehuda, and Akiba would have been merely returning to an earlier form or an alternate form of a prayer current in Judaism in the time of Jesus and Paul. Since the second century seems to have been a period of particular hostility between rabbis and the *am ha-aretz* (see Oppenheimer, *The Am Ha-Aretz* [Leiden: Brill, 1977]), the version of the Tosefta is likely either a second-century preference or even possibly a second-century version, despite the tradition about Akiba’s role in the history of the prayer.

This consideration allows us to ask the question about why only Jew-Greek and slave-free appear in 1 Corinthians 12:13 and Colossians 3:11. There are some different possibilities. (1) The simplest view holds that the problems in the Galatian church were different than those in the Corinthian church. The latter church needed to know more about order, especially men-women order, not about freedom, whereas it was precisely the possibility of returning to a Judaic approach to status that was the issue in Galatians. Stendahl, for instance, would give this reason (*The Bible and the Role of Women*, 35). (2) Two formulas were actually current, the formula in the Jewish prayer and a Christian formula, possibly a baptismal formula. The Christian formula would only have contained the two pairs Jew-Greek, slave-free, because these would have been the normal places where the application of Christian teaching would cause a major change. The

The prayer in this comment is a variant of the contemporary morning prayer. Instead of the “slave” it mentions “the boor,” one of the *am ha-aretz*, or someone who did not follow the Rabbinic or Pharisaic rules for following the law. This comment provides an early understanding of the prayer, especially its mention of woman. The comment indicates that the blessing was not concerned so much with a dislike or disrespect for women, but with the fact that women were not required to keep the commandments. The issue for all three pairs, in fact, was a question of religious status in the law of Moses. As Strack and Billerbeck put it, “This thought (Gal 3:28) simply could not be realized in the synagogue, because it was precisely those natural differences which significantly determined the relationship of the individual to the law: the born Jew had a different relationship to the law than the proselyte, the man a different relationship than the woman, the free man a different relationship than the slave.”⁷ The law, especially as interpreted by the rabbis, made distinctions in all three categories. Only the free male Israelite was a “first-class citizen,” a fully responsible member of the worshipping community.⁸

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The categories of Jew-Gentile and slave-free have a similar meaning in view of the provisions of the law. The Gentiles were outside the provisions of the law and had no status as part of God’s people. In the words of Rabbi Jehuda, they were “as nothing before him.” However, in Galatians 3:28 the category “Gentiles” does not concern all Gentiles, most of whom did not believe in the one true God and did not observe the basic commandments. Rather it refers to converted Gentiles. When Gentiles converted to Judaism, they became proselytes, either full proselytes (righteous proselytes) or partial proselytes (“sojourner-proselytes,” the “God-fearers” that we read about in the New Testament). Even the full proselytes, although they had become Israelites, did not have the status of a born Israelite. The issue in Galatians 3:28, however, more concerned the God-fearers, the proselytes who were not circumcised and did not obligate themselves

three-category formula would only have been used when the issue was status in reference to the teaching of the law and was employed as a conscious counter to the Jewish prayer. This would be borne out by the fact that in both 1 Corinthians 7 and Gal 3:23, Jew-Gentile (circumcised-uncircumcised) and slave-free are in closer relationship to one another. (3) “Neither male nor female” is not actually part of the series in the same sense as the first two pairs (see the comments on pp. 162–163). It does not refer to men and women differences at all as something overcome in Christ, but rather refers simply or primarily to the original creation in Adam.

The second reason is the one most in harmony with the exegesis of Gal 3:28 given in this chapter. The first reason is supportive to the second and not necessarily contradictory. The third has some plausibility and ought to be more seriously considered by those who see Gal 3:28 as the great breakthrough.

to fulfill all the normal commandments.⁹ In the eyes of most Jews, Paul's Gentile converts would have been God-fearers and hence not fully part of the people of Israel and not fully under the covenant. Yet Paul was saying that Gentile converts to Christianity were not only fully God's people and part of the New Covenant, but in some way they were better off than the full Israelites who did not have faith in Christ, because Christians were part of the new Adam, the new creation. The main point of Galatians 3:28, and probably of all the passages that begin "neither Jew nor Greek," is that distinctions made between Jews and Gentiles by the law no longer hold once the Gentiles become Christians. Hence Paul insisted that those distinctions cannot be upheld among Christians, nor should the Gentile Christians be instructed to be circumcised so that they can become full proselytes and therefore fully part of the people of God and fully righteous.

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The law made a similar distinction between slaves and freemen, a distinction which the gospel similarly erased. Slaves were not obligated to fulfill all provisions of the law; they might not have been allowed to by the limitations imposed by their service. In the time of Paul, Jews were not allowed to keep slaves who did not become proselytes, but even the full-blooded Israelite slaves were not obligated to keep all the law. They were not fully responsible Israelites. Their slavery brought them into a religious category of lesser participation in God's people.

Women had a status similar to proselytes and slaves in the Judaism of Paul's day. The rabbis taught that the woman was obligated to observe most of the prohibitions in the law, and she had the same rights as the man in all criminal cases. On the other hand, she was not obligated to keep all the "religious" commandments, that is, the ones that had to do with the worship of God. The main principle used by the rabbis was that the woman was not obligated to keep those commandments that had to be performed at a specific time. In effect, this ruling meant that she was not obligated to keep the commandments concerning public ritual. The free adult man, however, was obligated to keep all the commandments. The woman was not forbidden to keep them, but she did not have the full obligation laid upon her.^{*} Rabbi Jehuda's comment was, "Blessed be God that he has not made me a woman because woman is not obligated to fulfill the commandments." The prayer of the man was a prayer of thanksgiving

* There is always a question of whether these legal interpretations go back to the time of Paul. (See discussion in Chapter Ten, footnote on pp. 254–255.) Legal (halachic) interpretations would, on the whole, be more conservative than customs, especially when they were interpretations of the application of Old Testament legislation.

for being entitled and enjoined to shoulder the full set of responsibilities before the Lord. (One can readily see that men might have needed some encouragement to do this with a willing spirit, cf. Mt 23:4.) In Jewish law, the woman was not a fully responsible member of God's people.

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Moreover, at the time of Jesus, women did not have the same access to the presence of God that men did. Not only were they unable to perform priestly or Levitical functions in the ritual and were kept from the holiest parts of the temple, but they were also forbidden access to the Court of the Israelites. They were only allowed as far as the Court of Women. They were therefore unable to see the sacrificial worship and could take part in the major events of worship only distantly. They were closer to God's throne than the Gentiles, but they were further away than the male Israelites. It would not be inaccurate to describe them as of lesser holiness than the men.

The Mosaic law and the teaching of the rabbis portray the Israelite nation as a people with, in religious terms, first-class and second-class members. The free adult male Israelites were the first-class members. Women, proselytes, slaves, and others participated less fully and were religiously dependent on the free male Israelites. The free adult males were obligated to worship the Lord and represent the people before the Lord. In today's society, where religious devotion is a matter of personal preference and in which women are often more devout than men, it can be difficult to understand the practices of a people where the worship of God was a social obligation, enjoined by law, and carried out primarily by the most responsible members of the community. In this sense, the free circumcised male was the only full Israelite. It is against this background that we have to understand "neither male nor female." Paul is saying that the distinctions which the law made no longer apply among Christians because the law no longer holds in the same way. Those provisions of the law were for the age of spiritual immaturity, for the time under the pedagogue. Through faith in Christ, Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female are all one people in Christ, all fully part of the worship of God, all alike in their relationship with him.

Galatians 3:28 and Social Differences

THE question remains as to how the message of Galatians 3:28 relates to differences of social role within the Christian community. Does Galatians 3:28 abolish all differences and push the Christian people inexorably to-

ward eliminating any role differences between men and women? Does it only affect men's and women's relationship to God, not their relationship to one another and their daily lives? Or does it indicate a change in their relationship with one another, but not one that abolishes all role differences? Each of these three approaches will be considered.

The first approach is the view that Galatians 3:28 abolishes all differences among the Christian people. As mentioned earlier, many contemporary interpreters approach Galatians 3:28 as the great breakthrough that should abolish all role differences between men and women. According to this view, Galatians 3:28 is incompatible with all other New Testament passages which enjoin role differences between men and women.¹⁰ This contradiction is explained in various ways. One explanation states that Paul contradicted himself, probably because his rabbinic training did not allow him to draw the full implications of his new insight in Christ. Another explanation suggests that Paul enjoined different roles for men and women as a temporary measure to deal with a cultural situation, a measure that has no lasting Christian significance. The question of whether Paul enjoined role differences from exclusively cultural considerations will be treated later. The more fundamental issue is whether Paul's two sets of statements are simply incompatible with one another.

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This incompatibility has been commonly asserted only in recent years. It was extremely rare before the nineteenth century, and until about twenty years ago, was still a view held only by a small minority. The view that Paul's teaching is contradictory has been pressed into service by many who wish to argue for a change in the traditional Christian views of the roles of men and women in the church. However, unless we assume that Paul is normally incoherent, it would make more sense to begin with the view that Paul had some way of putting together passages like Galatians 3:28 and 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, which were probably written within a year or two of one another.¹¹ Likewise he undoubtedly had a way of putting together the comment "there cannot be slave, freeman" in Colossians 3:11 with his teaching on the proper relationship between masters and slaves in Colossians 3:22-4:1. An intelligent man like Paul would notice a contradiction or significant incompatibility in so short an interval as eleven verses in the same letter. Paul's teaching is not always easy to understand, but a simple contradiction in his thinking here is very unlikely.

The real answer to the view which asserts a significant incompatibility between Galatians 3:28 and other Pauline passages on men and women lies in the interpretation given above of the real thrust of Galatians 3:28. The

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passage is not directed against those differences of social role for men and women which other scripture passages indicate are based upon the way God created the human race. It is not, in other words, directed against what some commentators would call “the order of creation.”¹² Rather, Galatians 3:28 erases distinctions in religious status related to the keeping of the law, distinctions introduced after the creation during the period of immaturity or hardness of heart. Nor does Galatians 3:28 deal with categories that concern “*any* privileged class over against an unprivileged class,” especially not if “privileged” here means social privilege.¹³ Galatians 3:28 does not deal with questions of rich and poor, of upper class and lower class. Other scripture passages address these issues, but Galatians 3:28 concerns *religiously* privileged/obligated groups. Therefore, we are not confronting a scripture verse which concerns the equality of all people in Christ, except in the sense that all people in Christ are free from the differentiations of status introduced into the worship of God by the Mosaic law, especially as interpreted by the teachers of the law in Paul’s time. Galatians 3:28 asserts that the status of being sons of God, being fully part of the new creation, is available to all who are in Christ. No difference is introduced by being Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female. There is no need to even raise the question of a serious incompatibility in Paul’s thought when there is an acceptable, coherent, likely interpretation of the passage which frees us from the necessity of having to posit such a contradiction. Reading Galatians 3:28 the way Paul intended it to be understood will not lead one to find any contradiction with the rest of his writings. The evidence does not support the view that Galatians 3:28 abolishes all role differences among the Christian people.

The second approach to the question of the relationship of Galatians 3:28 to social differences is more traditional. According to this view, Galatians 3:28 applies only to people’s relationship with God (their standing *coram Deo*), and does not affect daily life or their relationship with other Christians.¹⁴ What applies in the “religious” sphere does not apply in the social sphere. In some ways this view is correct. It is similar to the interpretation of Galatians 3:28 advanced here. It rightly puts the emphasis on the relationship with God restored in Christ and correctly sees the novelty of Galatians 3:28 as primarily lying in the creation of spiritual partnership between man and woman, Jew and Greek, slave and free.

However, the view that Galatians 3:28 only applied to people’s standing before God neglects the communal or social consequences of religious distinctions. In Paul’s time, religious differences were the basis of social

structure. The differences in status in the Mosaic law were expressed in differences in behavior and social practice. Likewise the absence of these religious differences in status in the Christian community found behavioral expressions. Women had as full a responsibility for the worship of God as men and likewise became the worship partners of their husbands in family prayer. Moreover, women were baptized like men, becoming direct members of the covenant people, and they were acknowledged to have equally received the Spirit and his charismata. The teaching of Galatians 3:28 had even more evident effects on the relationships between Jewish Christians who desired to keep the law and Gentile Christians who were uncircumcised. Difficulties arose in many practices of daily life. For example, could Jewish and Gentile Christians eat together at community meals during the eucharistic celebrations? Such difficulties had to be resolved according to the principle of oneness in Christ.

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One can also take a somewhat wider perspective on the change that the coming of Christ brought into the spiritual-social situation of the people of God, a perspective that is not explicitly referred to in Galatians 3:28 but that follows from the teaching of Galatians 3:28. The Jewish people in the time of Jesus and Paul were structured along the lines of kinship and racial purity. Someone became an Israelite primarily by birth. One was born into God's people. Proselytes were received into the people, but even the full proselyte could not achieve the status of the full Israelite. The Jewish people kept genealogies of their ancestors so that they could show their racial purity, and they observed strict marriage rules to maintain purity of blood. Those whose ancestry was not purely Jewish were disadvantaged civilly and religiously. Moreover, kinship was a basis for religious differentiation. Not only did a Jew inherit his religious status from the kinship line he was born into (priest, Levite, full Israelite, etc.), but a common belief also existed that an individual inherited the merits of his ancestors. The family (clan) was very important in the social and religious structure of the Jewish people.

However, the coming of Christ replaced the principle of natural birth with the principle of spiritual birth. Ancestry and racial purity played no role in either spiritual or social status among Christians. Undoubtedly, blood relatives tended to care for each other among the Christians as among the Jews, but the ancestral tribe, clan, and extended family network did not play a prominent part in the social structure of early Christian community. The first Christians entered into relationships of brotherhood with people from far different racial backgrounds. Many early Christians

had to sever ties with their own families in order to follow Christ. One of the major differences between Christianity and Judaism, then, lies in the change in the role of the ancestral family.¹⁵

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There is another difficulty with the view that Galatians 3:28 only applies to one's standing with God. This view ignores that aspect of New Testament teaching which links love of God to love of neighbor and which tests love of God by love of neighbor. Paul stresses this connection when he summarizes the fulfillment of the law in terms of love of neighbor (Rom 13:8–10; Gal 5:14) and when he tests people's spirituality by their success in loving one another (1 Cor 3:1–3; Gal 5:16–26). Colossians 3:11 provides a helpful restatement of Galatians 3:28 at this point. While discussing how Christians should put away unloving behavior and put on loving behavior, Paul says, "Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all." Paul insists that there are no differences among Christians at the exact point in the passage where he urges brotherly love. In short, Galatians 3:28 has an important social consequence: Natural relationships (Jew and Greek, slave and free, man and woman) are transformed through the presence of genuine brotherly love.

Slavery provides a good example of how Paul envisions the basic Christian truth of oneness in Christ transforming a relationship. 1 Corinthians 7:12–24 is a particularly relevant passage because it lays down a basic principle concerning social roles and conditions and deals with the same three categories as Galatians 3:28. After urging Christian wives to remain with their pagan husbands if at all possible, Paul enunciates the basic principle and then applies it to the other categories:

Only, let every one lead the life which the Lord has assigned to him, and in which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches. Was any one at the time of his call circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of his circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God. Every one should remain in the state in which he was called. Were you a slave when called? Never mind. But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity. For he who was called in the Lord as a slave is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a slave of Christ. You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men. So, brethren, in whatever state each was called there let him remain with God. (1 Cor 7:17–24)

Paul does not say that all the states he mentions are equally good (slave or free, Jew or Gentile). In fact, he seems to advise slaves to gain their freedom if possible. However, his basic advice goes against changing the state Christians find themselves in at the point of conversion. Christians can live out their call and follow God's commandments in whatever state they find themselves. Social roles—conditions and categories such as male and female, slave and free, Jew and Gentile are not incompatible with living the basic Christian truths (and thereby with Gal 3:28). Paul goes even further. In 1 Corinthians 7 he sees as mistaken any understanding of the Christian message that sees a change in social condition as essential. Christian freedom (being freedmen of Christ) puts one in a position to live as a son of God regardless of these conditions.¹⁶

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A second passage concerning slavery, the third section of the household code in Ephesians, teaches slaves how to approach their state in life. This passage does not deal directly with slaves whose masters are non-Christians (as does 1 Pt 2:18–25) but with those whose masters are Christians. These slaves receive the following instructions:

Slaves, be obedient to those who are your earthly masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as to Christ; not in the way of eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that whatever good any one does, he will receive the same again from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. Masters, do the same to them, and forbear threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him. (Eph 6:5–9)

A similar passage in 1 Timothy provides a helpful development of some of these ideas:

Let all who are under the yoke of slavery regard their masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be defamed. Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brethren; rather they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their service are believers and beloved. (1 Tm 6:1–2)

The same idea is possibly behind Paul's advice to Philemon to receive back his runaway slave now converted to Christianity "no longer as a slave but more than a slave, as a beloved brother" (Phlm 1:16).¹⁷

These passages illustrate the transformation of a basic social relationship

which is a consequence of the new life in Christ. The new life in Christ has as a consequence a relationship of brotherly love between master and slave. Each should do good to the other. The essential Christian transformation consists in master and slave relating together as brothers who love one another.

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Brotherly love (*philadelphia*) and service love (*agapē*) should not necessarily be seen as great Christian innovations. Some have claimed that *agapē* is a distinctively Christian teaching, that the New Testament teaching about *agapē* in relationships is a revolutionary new Christian element. Others have recently objected to this view, correctly pointing out that *agapē* is a term the Septuagint uses for love when it translates a significant Hebrew word.¹⁸ There are important new elements in the New Testament teaching about love (*agapē*), especially its interpretation of love as service and its seeing the perfect model of love in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. However, the New Testament teaching on both service love (*agapē*) and brotherly love (*philadelphia*) does not differ radically from the Old Testament teaching on these subjects. The New Testament does not teach a different religion than that found in the Old Testament, but rather fulfills and completes the Old Testament religion.

The New Testament teaching on community life can well be seen as a return to the ideal of brotherly love taught by the code in Deuteronomy. The Christian teaching on love among the brethren is a restoration of the relationship that was supposed to be present all along among God's people and which was distorted by both lukewarmness and Pharisaic teaching. The New Testament teaching is "not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one we have had from the beginning, that we love one another" (2 Jn 1:5). "Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment which you had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard. Yet I am writing you a new commandment, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is shining" (1 Jn 2:7–8). The old commandment becomes a new one, not because it is different in content, but because it has become real in him, the new Adam, who calls Jews and Gentiles alike into his body and who makes them one in him, a people who truly love one another (Jn 13:34–35).

Therefore, the correct approach to interpreting Galatians 3:28 is the third approach—the view that Galatians 3:28 changes Christian relationships, but does not abolish all role differences.¹⁹ Galatians 3:28 points toward a spiritual partnership in mutual love. It does not point to a leveling of all differences of social condition and social role. This interpretation

leaves open the question whether any social role differences should exist among Christians. That question must be answered in other New Testament passages. The third interpretation simply holds that Galatians 3:28 presents no obstacles to the view that there should be some social role differences among Christians.

The true Christian freedom, then, is the freedom to be sons and daughters of God, to live the life of the Spirit in mutual love and service regardless of earthly circumstances. It is a freedom which is the same for all Christians—Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female. Galatians 3:28 and related passages teach that men and women are one in Christ, joint-heirs to the grace of eternal life, both fully part of the body of Christ, both sons and daughters of God, both with full access to the Father and fully responsible before him. Both are therefore called to build up one another and the body of Christ in love and to worship the Father in Spirit and in truth.

Galatians 3:28
and Social
Differences

Abolitionism

THE core of the question that Galatians 3:28 poses for modern people can now be considered. For sociological reasons that will be considered more fully in Chapters Eighteen and Nineteen, many contemporary Christians would like to hold on to the New Testament teaching about a spiritual partnership in mutual love in Christian relationships while eliminating all role differences and personal subordination. Some argue on the basis of Galatians 3:28 as follows: If we have eliminated the difference between Jew and Gentile and between slave and free in the Christian community, should we not also eliminate the difference between man and woman? If our elimination of Jew-Gentile and free-slave differences was based on the truth expressed in Galatians 3:28, should we not also eliminate man-woman differences because of the same truth?

This argument should be examined from two perspectives. The first way is to discuss the larger issue of how Christians today should approach questions of social structure; this is more than an exegetical question, and therefore cannot be treated in this chapter. It will be treated in Chapter Twenty-One. The second perspective involves simply asking what Paul is teaching in Galatians 3:28. When he says “neither male nor female” does he intend the eventual dissolution of role differences? Would he at least greet such a dissolution with approval if he found a social situation in which it were possible? The answer to both questions is probably “no,” according to Paul’s teachings on the roles of men and women which we have considered

so far (especially those in Chapter Four), and the teaching contained in the passages which will be considered in the next chapters. The issue, then, remains the one asked earlier in this chapter. Is Paul's teaching in Galatians 3:28 consistent with his other teaching on men-women relationships? Or does Galatians 3:28 introduce a new principle at odds with the other teaching, a principle which sooner or later must have significant effects? The exegesis of this passage given in the last section shows that it is consistent with other Pauline teaching. The question needs, however, to be raised again but on a different level. Does the abolition of slavery and other social changes provide precedent for an approach to the roles of men and women? Would Paul himself welcome the abolition of role differences between men and women based on his statement in Galatians 3:28?

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Although the precedent of the abolition of slavery is the chief concern here, Paul's attitude toward Jew-Gentile differences is also relevant. Some hold that Paul's teaching on the abolition of the law in Christ led him to do away completely with the distinction between Jews and Gentiles in the Christian community.²⁰ In some obvious ways, this is true. In Paul's teaching, being a Jew and following the Mosaic law did not make one more fully a part of God's people, nor did it lead to justification. Moreover, he insists that Jews and Gentiles live together in spiritual communion in daily life (Rom 14:1-15; Gal 2:11-14). Yet in the light of modern biblical scholarship it seems clearer that the early Jewish Christians continued to follow the Mosaic law because they were Jews (Acts 21:17-26).²¹ Moreover, it seems likely that Paul did not discourage this. In fact, Paul probably upheld the principle that if someone was circumcised, he should obey the Pentateuchal law (Gal 5:3; 1 Cor 7:18).^{*} Paul did not abolish *all* differences between Jews and Gentiles; he upheld some differences based on his understanding of circumcision, of the place of Israel, and of how the Pentateuchal laws should be interpreted (which was not always according to the interpretation of the Mishnaic rabbis).

A further question arises. Would Paul have been in favor of continuing the difference between Jews and Gentiles, that is, would he have been in favor of continuing Jewish Christianity? The answer is not clear, but a plausible case can be made on the basis of Acts 21 (see v. 21) for the view that Paul would have favored the survival of Jewish Christianity. At least

* Some of the difficulties in this position can be handled more easily if we remember that there was not a comprehensive approach to the interpretation of the law that was normative for all Jews before 70 AD. The early Christians, like the Qumran sectaries, had their own interpretation of what it was to follow the law that was based on Jesus' teaching and often differed from Pharisaic or rabbinic tradition. This area is, to be sure, one of the more debated areas in modern scripture scholarship, but the diversity in first-century Judaism is being increasingly established.

it can be said that Paul would probably have taught that those who were definitely Jews should be faithful (as he understood it) to the Pentateuchal laws. For Paul, Galatians 3:28 would not have meant immediate abolition of all differences between Jews and Gentiles; possibly it would not have meant long-range abolition of Jewish Christianity. Galatians 3:28 would primarily mean that, in Christ, there is a spiritual partnership in brotherly love between circumcised Jews and uncircumcised Gentiles.

Abolitionism

The exegetical question about slavery is even clearer. Paul did not draw the conclusion from Galatians 3:28 that slavery should be abolished.²² Few if any scholars today would hold that Paul intended Galatians 3:28 as an abolitionist text or that Paul was an abolitionist. The comparison with slavery, then, is an even weaker argument than the comparison with Jew-Gentile differences for the view that Galatians 3:28 as intended by Paul leads to an abolition of men-women differences.

However, most Christians today would hold that the kind of Christian truth expressed in Galatians 3:28 is an argument for the abolition of slavery. Some hold that a relationship of spiritual partnership and brotherhood is simply incompatible with one person owning another. Such a view conflicts with Paul's opinion. However, another view deserves careful scrutiny. This is the view that a relationship of Christian brotherhood (as taught in Gal 3:28 and elsewhere) would lead Christians to want to avoid the relationship of slavery among themselves and to work for its abolition in society whenever social conditions permitted. This position is a strong one, and it raises another analogy. If abolition of slavery is the ideal, might Paul have similarly greeted the abolition of role differences between men and women as an ideal way to respond to his statement in Galatians 3:28?

However, the initial plausibility of this view cannot be sustained. First, the comparison among the Jew-Greek, slave-free, and male-female relationships does not apply in all respects. In Galatians 3:28 Paul compares these relationships according to one common quality: All three involve status distinctions in one's relationship with God according to the Mosaic law. In other respects, the three relationships are very different, and Paul's approach to them differs. Specifically, there is an important difference between the way Paul approaches the man-woman relationship and the slave-freeman relationship.* For Paul, the man-woman relationship and the subordination it involves is based on the order of creation; it therefore

* The passages from Paul which ground men-women teaching in Genesis are: Gal 3:28; Eph 5:22-33; 1 Tm 2:8-15; 1 Cor 11:2-16 and possibly 1 Cor 14:33-36. The New Testament passages that give teaching on slavery are: 1 Pt 2:18-15; Eph 6:5-9; Col 3:22-4:1; 1 Tm 6:1-2; Ti 2:9-10; 1 Cor 7:21-24. (See also Phlm 1:15-16.)

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expresses God's purpose in creating the human race. It also expresses God's purpose for life after the redemption in Jesus which is a restoration of the human race according to God's original intention. Paul makes his views clear when he bases his teaching on men and women on the Genesis account of God's purpose in creating man. However, Paul views slavery in a different way. He instructs slaves to be obedient to their masters, but he never bases his teaching by appealing to the divine institution of slavery.²³ Rather, slaves should obey their masters, not because the institution of slavery is part of God's purpose, but because slaves are now above the human institution of slavery; they are freed men in Jesus and slaves of Jesus (1 Cor 7:22; cf. 1 Pt 2:16). Slaves should be submissive because of who they are in Christ, not because of anything about the master-slave relationship that is of God or is inherently Christian. 1 Peter teaches something similar. It grounds teaching about how slaves are to relate to oppressive non-Christian masters in Jesus' conduct when he was put to death unjustly (1 Pt 2:18–25). Moreover, Paul probably recommends that slaves obtain their freedom if possible (1 Cor 7:21).^{*} In short, there is nothing of Christian significance in being a slave.

Finally, the questionable view that Galatians 3:28 advocates the abolition of slavery does not logically lead to the view that it advocates the abolition of men's and women's role differences. If one insists on the comparison, the logical inference is that it argues for abolishing all male-female differences and with them all sexual relations. Paul says in Galatians 3:28 that in Christ "there is no Jew nor Greek, there is no slave nor free, there is no 'male and female.'" This retranslation of the passage brings out the lack of parallelism among the three pairs in the original Greek. In addition, "male and female" are not the normal words for "man and woman." Rather, the phrase seems to be a direct quote from the Septuagint translation of Genesis 1:27 recalling the original unity of Man/Mankind/Humanity and that the initial unity is being restored in Christ. Moreover, "male" and "female" refer to human beings precisely in their sexual differentiation, not to their social roles as the equivalent words "man" and "woman" more

* This passage has given rise to lively debate among Christian exegetes for centuries. Among the many who have read "remain a slave" in v. 21 are John Chrysostom, Theodoret of Cyrus, Ambrosiaster (among the Fathers), and Crouch, Stendahl, Conzelmann, and Kugelman (*JBC*), as well as the *New American Bible* and *La Bible de Jérusalem*. Among those reading "take your freedom" have been Luther, Calvin, Erasmus, J. B. Lightfoot, Moffatt, W. D. Davies, C. H. Dodd, G. B. Caird, as well as the RSV and the English *Jerusalem Bible*. Both viewpoints on the passage have their strong points, and leave significant questions unresolved. The view that Paul recommends that slaves take their freedom seems to be slightly more likely. However, the position here taken does not depend on this passage alone, but on a broader perspective of Paul's life and teaching.

readily would in Greek and Hebrew. Thus, if the consequence of Galatians 3:28 is the abolition of slavery as an institution, and the abolition of slavery as an institution is the model for how to follow Galatians 3:28, then the abolition of male-female (sexual) differences is the likely conclusion to the comparison.²⁴

There are, in fact, two ways to approach the abolition of male-female differences so that it parallels the abolition of slavery. The most straight-forward approach is the one we have already mentioned: Male-female differences should be abolished totally. However, it is impossible to approach the two identically, since slavery is a human institution and male-female differences are biological features of the human race. Here Paul's basic teaching in the household codes is applicable. As long as a certain relationship exists, it needs an order. New Testament teaching provides no argument for preserving the institution of slavery. However, it does teach a certain way of behaving in the master-slave relationship, given that this relationship exists. The New Testament likewise teaches a way of behaving in the man-woman relationship, given that there are men and women. Again, slavery cannot serve as a model for men's and women's roles if simple abolition is the point, since the parallel to the abolition of slavery would be abolition of males and females as different types of people, and such abolition is impossible—currently.

Abolitionism

The second way to parallel male-female relationships with the abolition of slavery would be to argue that celibacy is a way of returning to the original state of the human race before male and female. According to this approach, Galatians 3:28 points to the value of celibacy as the highest form of the Christian life. The parallel to the abolition of slavery would be the abolition of marriage, sexual relationships, and as much other relating based on the male-female difference as is possible in this present age. This view seems to have been held by some early Fathers and this approach was followed in the early ascetic movement, which eliminated both slavery and marriage in an attempt to restore Christian community.*

* Among the many Fathers who write on this theme are Origen, commentary on 1 Corinthians, fragment in *JTS* 10, no. 37 (October 1908): 41–42; Gregory of Nyssa (*Sources Chrétiennes* 119:502); Basil of Ancyra (*PG* 30:676); Jerome (*PL* 26:531ff.); and Gregory of Nazianzus (*PG* 35:805). It is much easier to argue for the subordination of woman to man before the Fall than it is to argue for a sexual relationship between man and woman before the Fall. All the arguments against the existence of subordination in Genesis 2 are even more convincing for making the case that sexual relationship was absent in Genesis 2. This did not fail to impress some of the Fathers, who did not draw from that fact the view that marriage was evil, but the view that marriage and sex could ideally be transcended in Christ. Their case is much stronger than the attempt of some recent exegetes like Tavard and Jewett to exalt the sexual relationship

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Such an argument could appeal both to the fact that sexual relationship is not mentioned before the Fall in Genesis and to the texts in the New Testament that teach that there will be neither marriage nor giving in marriage in the resurrection (Lk 20:34–36). The actual social-role consequences of celibacy will be considered in Chapter Twenty-Three. Since this approach does not figure very prominently in the current discussion of the roles of men and women, it is enough here to indicate that as long as men and women marry and live together in social groupings, Galatians 3:28 does not point toward an abolition of role differences.

The Value of Role Differences ▸ The New Testament View

THE last two sections of this chapter have dealt with a family of current opinions which hold that Galatians 3:28 should lead ideally to the abolition of role differences for men and women. Most such arguments proceed on the presumption that role differences are clearly either harmful or archaic. These opinions have been dealt with on their own terms, and consequently it may seem that role differences were of questionable value and in need of justification. However, this is not the perspective of the New Testament. The New Testament sorts out which types of relationships should exist and how they should be approached, but New Testament teaching shows no traces of an overall hostility toward stable committed relationships and social roles in structuring these relationships. The discussion in Chapter Four on Ephesians 5 and the household codes and the discussion in Chapter Five of subordination in the Christian community illustrate this point. The New Testament contains substantial teaching on relationships and order and roles in those relationships. It approaches social roles with a positive spirit.

The question in the last two sections is whether a “contradiction” or “tension” exists between the statement “there is no male and female” and the idea that there should be some kind of subordination of woman to man. As should be clear by now, Paul sees no contradiction or tension. As one example, 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 and Galatians 3:28 are not at odds with one another as Paul intends them to be understood. However, the

and eliminate role differences as something that came after the Fall and that can be transcended in Christ. No one can arrive at the combination of exalting the sexual relationship and eliminating role differences on the basis of scripture. The whole position can only be explained as an attempt to find a basis in scripture for some favorite opinions of our contemporary society.

contemporary mind can only put them together with difficulty. This difficulty becomes evident in the following passage:

The equal dignity and rights of all human beings as persons is of the essence of the Christian message. In the writings of Paul himself there are anticipations of a development toward realization of the full implications of this equality. We have seen that after the harshly androcentric text in 1 Corinthians he attempts to compensate somewhat:

Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. (1 Cor 11:11–12)

Moreover, the dichotomy of fixed classes as dominant-subservient is transcended:

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 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. (Gal 3:27–28)

As one theologian has pointed out:

This does not mean that the kingdom of heaven has to do with non-sexed beings. Paul is enumerating the relationships of domination: these are radically denounced by the Gospel, in the sense that man no more has the right to impose his will to power upon woman than does a class or a race upon another class or another race.

It is not surprising that Paul did not see the full implications of this transcendence. There is an unresolved tension between the personalist Christian message and the restrictions and compromises imposed by the historical situation. It would be naive to think that Paul foresaw social evolution. For him, transcendence would come soon enough—in the next life. The inconsistency and ambivalence of his words concerning women could only be recognized at a later time, as a result of historical processes. Those who have benefitted from the insights of a later age have the task of distinguishing elements which are sociological in origin from the life-fostering, personalist elements which pertain essentially to the Christian message.²⁵

Madeleine Boucher provides an excellent comment on this kind of difficulty:

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Then, the ideas of equality before God and inferiority in the social order are in harmony in the NT. To be precise, the tension did not exist in first-century thought, and it is not present in the texts themselves. The tension arises from *modern man's* inability to hold these two ideas together.²⁶

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A major difference in outlook exists between Paul's contemporaries and modern Christians. For the Jews and the Christians of the first century, the central point of interest was what we would call the spiritual or religious question. Their great concern was with their status before God, and for men and women to have the same status before God was indeed a point of great significance. In fact, social life of this time was structured precisely according to differences of status and relationship with God. For modern people, including many modern Christians, the central point of issue is what is often termed "the social issue," that is, the issue of how contemporary society as a whole is going to be structured. The religious question is often of little interest except insofar as it affects an approach to the social question. Moreover, it is increasingly a postulate of many social movements in the modern world that true equality of worth can only be accomplished through instituting an identity of roles. This view is put clearly enough in the following quote:

A new look at male-female roles, division of labor, and spheres of activity distresses many. They prefer to think in terms of "complementarity"—the old "separate but equal" idea. Many Christians thus speak of a wife's being equal to her husband in personhood, but subordinate in function. However, this is just playing word games and is a contradiction in terms. Equality and subordination are contradictions. But evidently some writers and speakers are motivated by good intentions, hoping to soften a bit of the harshness and injustice of traditional teachings on wifely subjection. Therefore, "equality" is elevated to the spiritual realm, and on the practical functional level of running the home, subordination becomes the rule "for the sake of order." But regardless of terminology used, this pattern cannot indicate an egalitarian marriage. True egalitarianism must be characterized by what sociologists call "role-interchangeability." Both spouses can fulfill the roles of breadwinner, housekeeper, encourager, career-achiever, child-trainer, and so on. Specialization according to sex disappears.²⁷

The origin of the modern approach to social change, equality, and social roles will be considered more fully in Chapters Eighteen and Nineteen.

Here we need only observe the difference in mentality between Paul and the early Christians, and many contemporary interpreters of Galatians 3:28. The difficulty which many contemporary writers experience so acutely, and which causes them to understand Galatians 3:28 as a great breakthrough leading to an abolition of role differences between men and women, is not a difficulty with which Paul would have quickly sympathized. It is not a difficulty deriving in any way from scripture or Christian tradition. It is rather a difficulty that comes from the modern world.

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Differences >
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The exegetical question is clear. Galatians 3:28 and the New Testament writings in general in no way point toward an elimination of role differences or a sameness in social function as the proper consequence of the Christian message. In fact, as the discussion of Ephesians 5 indicates, the New Testament points in the opposite direction—toward the idea that oneness in Christ calls for subordination to bring about real and practical unity. Paul contradicts neither himself nor Jesus. Rather, he upholds a distinctly different view of social and communal life than that advocated by the dominant social movements of our time. Paul's view allows him to see men and women as equals in dignity, as spiritual partners committed to loving one another and caring for one another's welfare as their own, as equally part of the body of Christ and its mission and at the same time as entrusted by God with different roles to play in the Christian family and Christian people.

▶ 7

THE COMMUNITY ▷ KEY TEXTS

(1 CORINTHIANS 11:2–16; 14:33–36)

SIX MAJOR TEXTS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT directly address the question of the roles of men and women: 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 and 14:33–38, 1 Timothy 2:8–15, Ephesians 5:22–33, Colossians 3:18–19, and 1 Peter 3:1–7. In addition, two minor texts provide instructional material for the roles of men and women: 1 Timothy 5:1–2 and Titus 2:1–6. These minor texts consist of exhortations addressed to Christians according to categories formed on the basis of age and sex differences. They are of lesser importance as texts about the roles of men and women because they consist simply of exhortations to groups of Christians and provide little foundational teaching and justification for these exhortations. Therefore, the passages in 1 Timothy and Titus cannot be used profitably as key texts, although they stand as important background to the key texts. The passages in Ephesians 5, Colossians 3, and 1 Peter 3 have already been discussed as key texts on the roles of men and women in the family. Three key texts remain which treat the roles of men and women in contexts other than the family: the passages in 1 Corinthians 11 and 14, and in 1 Timothy 2. This chapter will discuss the first two of these passages.

Two of the key texts occur in the same epistle of Paul, 1 Corinthians. Both deal with what seem like insignificant matters: the wearing of head-coverings by women and the speech of women in community assemblies. These seem to be expressions of role differences rather than basic questions of social structure or the nature of the roles of men and women.* Yet these matters are important to Paul. The Corinthian church seems to have

* The distinction between social structural elements and cultural expressions is treated more fully in Chapter Eleven.

posed some questions about the proper activities for men and women that demanded a response from Paul. Moreover, Paul treats these concerns in a letter dealing with many other questions of freedom, order, and disorder, so these concerns are not isolated or untypical. The passages illustrate how a small expression of a role difference can be important. However, they are even more important in the way they repeat and expand Paul's teaching on the roles of men and women.

1 Corinthians 11:2–16 ▸ Dishonoring Their Heads

1 CORINTHIANS 11:2–16 includes more than an incidental reference to men and women. Here, Paul deals with a practical problem in relations between men and women. In doing so, he includes a large amount of “doctrinal” material relevant to the roles of men and women. The passage is difficult to interpret clearly. Paul's line of thought is not always lucid. Numerous articles have been written in scholarly journals about small points in the passage, and heated disagreements have arisen concerning the passage's overall meaning and significance. Many of these difficulties are irrelevant to our purposes, but many will have to be considered.* The passage reads as follows:

I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I have delivered them to you. But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. Any man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, but any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled dishonors her head—it is the same as if her head were shaven. For if a woman will not veil herself, then she should cut off her hair; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to be shorn or shaven,

* In the exegesis of this chapter, I have used a principle that seems to me crucial for dealing with difficult passages, viz., not resting an interpretation of a passage upon conjectures in regard to particular points in the passage. Some of the sections of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 are beyond our ability to interpret confidently. We can offer plausible interpretations, but we cannot justify them so clearly that alternative plausible interpretations are ruled out. Both halves of verse 10 seem to me to be in that category, as the footnotes will discuss. The choice between the two leading candidates for the meaning of “woman is the glory of man” is likewise in that category. To choose one interpretation of any of these sections and make that a key piece in erecting a view of all of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 is unsound exegesis. For some passages in scripture, there may be no alternative, but for 1 Corinthians 11:2–16, there is the alternative of developing an interpretation based upon the overall flow of the discussion in the passage, and only dealing with the special problems within that context.

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let her wear a veil. For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. (For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.) That is why a woman ought to have a veil on her head, because of the angels. (Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God.) Judge for yourselves; is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not nature itself teach you that for a man to wear long hair is degrading to him, but if a woman has long hair, it is her pride? For her hair is given to her for a covering. (1 Cor 11:2–16)

The passage begins with Paul's commendation of the Corinthian church for following the custom in which he is about to instruct them. The following section, beginning with verse 17, concerns a matter in which Paul cannot commend the Corinthian Christians. The likeliest meaning of Paul's commendation is that the Corinthians were following the custom under consideration. Therefore, Paul was not dealing with active opposition over this issue, nor with a widespread refusal to follow an imported custom, as some have held. On the other hand, he must have had a reason for giving the instruction contained in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16. The reason might well have been that reports had come to him about some Corinthians who were questioning the practice of wearing headcoverings.¹

The Question of Headcoverings

The focal point of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 is the issue of headcovering for men and women. While the specific issue of headcoverings is less important than the various considerations Paul introduces in the course of discussing it, the passage as a whole cannot be properly interpreted without an understanding of the focal issue. Judging from the passage as a whole, Paul is giving a concrete rule of order: In worship services, men should leave their heads uncovered, while women should wear something which covers their heads. The rule deals with both men and women. Since more of the passage discusses headcoverings for women (vv. 13–15), the complaint Paul was addressing may have centered upon the part of the ruling that applied to women. But the rule itself applies to both men and women. Paul does not simply offer direction for women and not men. Both men and women must respect a proper order.

The rule probably applies specifically to worship services since the discussion centers on matters of communal worship.* This is evident from the reference to praying and prophesying, as well as to the fact that the chapter proceeds to discuss additional questions about the Christian assembly at worship. There is no reason to believe that Paul laid down the same rule for daily life, so that women would be obliged to wear headcoverings when they went outdoors during the week and men would be required to always keep their heads uncovered. Rather, the rule seems to apply to solemn worship occasions, when the whole community assembled and when full reverence and honor to God should be shown differently than in daily life (which for a Christian is always lived in the presence of God). Therefore, the rule would be analogous to prohibitions on casual attire such as bare feet or shorts in church (in Western cultures). The enigmatic term “because of the angels” (v. 10) should probably be understood in this context. First-century Jews and Christians understood that angels were present in the assemblies of God’s people to be guardians of order.² Thus, Paul is saying that when God’s people appear before the Lord in a solemn assembly in the presence of the angels to worship, men should leave their heads uncovered and women should wear headcoverings.

There is no exact parallel to Paul’s instructions here in either the Jewish or the Greco-Roman sources of the time.³ Jewish women in the Palestine of Paul’s day always covered their heads and faces when in public. Some even considered it meritorious to wear a headcovering all day in their houses. They would have definitely covered their heads in the temple and synagogue. Some rabbis declared it unlawful to recite the Shema in the presence of a woman whose hair was uncovered. There is less clear evidence for unmarried girls. At the marriage ceremony of virgins, the bride’s head would have initially been uncovered; she would be given a headcovering in the course of the ceremony as a sign of coming under the authority of her husband. Widows would be covered during the whole ceremony. On the other hand, in upper-class Jerusalem society before the destruction of the Temple, there were only two days of the year on which unmarried girls could go out in such a way that they could be seen by men. Unmarried girls normally stayed at home, but they would have covered their heads

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* Some of the discussion which follows is structured on the view that Paul was not enjoining headcoverings for Christian women all the time. This seems to be the most likely understanding from the context of the situation, but could possibly be wrong. If Paul were enjoining the headcovering for daily life, the Jewish parallels discussed further on would be much stronger in significance.

and faces when they did go out. We do not know of any universal practice for Jewish men in the time of Paul. They probably did not wear the yarmulke in worship or in public nor cover their heads in worship with a prayer shawl, as many Jews do today. While the evidence is scanty, the common practice of Jewish men covering the head in worship probably did not originate earlier than the fourth century.⁴

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Neither do the Greco-Roman sources offer exact parallels to the rule in 1 Corinthians 11. Greek and Roman women were not obligated to wear a headcovering in public. Some did cover their heads and this practice was even common among some groups, but it was not an obligation as it was for Jewish women. There are indications that women at some worship services had their heads uncovered, while men sometimes had theirs covered at worship. Some older scholarly works and some popular works hold that an unveiled woman in Corinth would be mistaken for a prostitute. However, this opinion cannot be substantiated. No Greco-Roman custom corresponds to what Paul enjoins. There is no evidence for the view that he was urging the Christians at Corinth to conform to the norms of society around them for missionary reasons.

Although Paul's instructions do not correspond to Greco-Roman customs, either for worship or for daily life situations, they may possibly correspond to Jewish worship customs as observed in the synagogue. They differ from Jewish custom in that Jewish custom required the covering (and veiling) of women's heads for daily life and not simply for worship situations. However, Jewish customs do offer a close parallel. The Jews seem to have considered the covering of women's heads a serious matter of propriety; hence the women would have probably had their heads covered in synagogue worship. Moreover, there is a strong likelihood that men left their heads uncovered at worship. Jewish customs of worship are therefore the likely source of Paul's rule.

Paul's approach could possibly be simply the maintenance of the normal Jewish custom at worship. Another possibility is that the early Christians maintained the Jewish custom for certain daily life situations (situations of solemnity) only in their own worship services. Such a development would follow a law of ritual: The more holy or solemn the occasion, the more likely are cultures and societies to retain the various customs associated with it.⁵ Human beings are careful in the presence of the holy, and instinctively observe strict propriety in worship services, even when a particular custom is no longer observed in daily life. The maintenance among Christians of headcoverings for women in worship situations might be analogous to the development of the tallis or prayer shawl among Jews. In

Jesus' time, Jewish men in Palestine always wore a long garment with tassels as a way of obeying the prescriptions of Numbers 15:37–41.⁶ Jews in the diaspora no longer wore the garment in daily life, but they preserved the custom by wearing a tallis or shawl during worship. Diaspora Jews were not free to observe the customs as regularly as Jews in “the land” (the *eretz*, that is, the land of Israel), in a Jewish society. However, to be robed in a garment with tassels was still the most proper way to appear before God, and so they developed the tallis as a solution. For similar reasons, Christians may have developed the custom of headcoverings for women and uncovered heads for men during worship. For all we know, the Christian custom may even have been the custom among diaspora Jews in the first century.⁷

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Even if it is impossible to completely determine the full cultural context of Paul's ruling, the context of the passage clearly indicates that Paul linked the practice of headcoverings with the order in men's and women's relationships. The woman should have her head covered because of her relationship to the man—her head. The headcovering is an appropriate expression that she is under the man's authority. Similarly, the man should keep his head uncovered as an expression that he is under Christ. This much is clear from Paul's grounding of the rule in the order of headship (v. 3), in Genesis 2, and in the precedence of man in creation (vv. 7–9), as will be more fully discussed shortly. However, it is less clear why the presence and absence of headcovering should be appropriate symbols for the man's and woman's relationship to their different heads. The appropriateness of these symbols may have been intuitively obvious to Paul, as vv. 13–15 might indicate, or they may have been part of the customs of the Christian community with enough authority that he could presume their appropriateness (as v. 16 might indicate).^{*} Nevertheless, it can be asserted confidently that, for Paul and the Corinthian Christians, the rule about headcovering expressed the roles of men and women.[†]

* No explanation from contemporary scholarly writers is clearly helpful as to why the man's head is uncovered and the woman's head is covered. Morna D. Hooker, in “Authority on Her Head: An Examination of 1 Corinthians 11:10,” *New Testament Studies* 10, no. 4 (July 1964): 410–416, presents an ingenious theory, namely, that since woman is man's glory, she has to cover over man's glory in the presence of God. The only glory appropriate to manifest is God's glory. The assumption that man's glory, the glory that God gave him, should be covered over in worship is gratuitous, but the primary difficulty with Hooker's view is that the woman's wearing of the veil is explained in 1 Corinthians 11 by her subordination to man as her head. If the idea of woman as man's glory does not refer to her subordination to him as her head, it is not an explanation of the use of the headcovering, as given in the passage.

† There is a question about the meaning of the word *exousia* in verse 10. The normal interpretation would understand the word as meaning “a veil as a symbol of authority” (RSV). The word then would be a metonymy, referring to the headcovering. Most commonly commentators would understand the authority on her head as being the authority the woman is under, namely her

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Many modern people view the woman's headcovering as degrading, but for Paul it was clearly something honorable. It was a sign of the woman's belonging to her husband. This sign brought her honor and respect, because her position as wife and as a woman was honorable. In fact, for her not to have the appropriate expressions of her position as wife and woman would be degrading. A woman without a veil and a woman without long hair would be disgraced.⁸ Contemporary Western society is losing its awareness of how symbols of status and subordination can be honorable. To be sure, not all such symbols are honorable. Whether they are honorable or not depends on the nature of the position involved. Many symbols of subordination degrade people and many symbols of status are used to dominate and humiliate others. Nonetheless, such symbols can often serve to express honor and 1 Corinthians 11 should be interpreted in that perspective. Surely Paul saw headcoverings as honorable, and he laid down his rule to safeguard the honor of both the women and the men.*

The use of headcoverings in worship services was a cultural expression, an expression that has meaning to people within the context of their cul-

husband's. Some modern lines of interpretation, however, do not accept this approach, primarily on the basis of W. Ramsey's observation, in *The Cities of Paul, Their Influence on His Life and Thought* (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1907), 203, that *exousia* is never used in the sense of authority a person is under but in the sense of authority a person has. On the other hand, "authority on her head" is a unique usage of the word. Once there is a usage that is singular, the normal usage might not hold in other respects as well. But a more fundamental problem is that this objection presumes that the authority on the woman's head is her authority, whereas it could easily be her husband's authority that is on her head. Hence *exousia* could still be the authority the woman is under and not violate Ramsey's observation.

The context indicates clearly that the headcovering is a symbol of the woman having her husband as her head and therefore as being under his authority. The uses of headcovering among the Jews would point in the same direction. The explanation of the headcovering as a symbol of the woman's authority would not be a very likely interpretation of the passage if it were not also a symbol of her husband's authority. This latter point feminists ignore. The possibility is nonetheless a plausible one if developed further. Being in authority and being under authority are related, because authority often depends on the order of the relationship (Mt 8:9). See, for instance, C. Spicq, "Encore la 'puissance sur la tête' (1 Cor XI, 10)," *Revue Biblique* 48 (1939), 557–562. A woman under her husband's authority would have authority and honor, precisely because of her relationship to her husband. This is, in fact, precisely Ramsey's point (see endnote 8).

For a good summary of approaches to this line, see J. A. Fitzmyer, "A Feature of Qumrân Angelology and the Angels of 1 Cor XI, 10," 48–58. See also, H. J. Cadbury, "A Qumran Parallel to Paul," *Harvard Theological Review* 51, no. 1 (January 1958): 1–2.

* The later history of the veiling of women in the early church is discussed in the *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, vol. 15, pt. 2, 3188–3190. Judging primarily from information in the writings of Tertullian and Cyprian, it would appear that, up to their time (ca. 200–250 AD), all Christian women were veiled in many parts of the East, while in the West it was maintained for wives, but not clearly for all (although many held that it should be done by all). Later, it became normal for virgins to be veiled, which was interpreted as a symbol of marriage to Christ.

ture. In this case, the meaning of headcoverings lies in its ability to express a particular social structure in the roles of men and women. The first five chapters of this book examined how the early Christian community and Israelite society structured these roles. But societies express their social structure in customs which are not intrinsically necessary to the social structure. A woman could wear a sari as a symbol of her position as well as a headcovering.* On the other hand, every society recognizes that some clear expressions of social structure are important. Most peoples place such a high value on such social symbols (dress, “manners,” rituals of respect, etc.) that they do not distinguish between the cultural expression and the underlying social structure. For example, among many peoples, children would never address their parents or any older person by the parents’ first names. Such informality would be viewed as highly disrespectful and possibly as serious an offense as overt disobedience.

Western society is increasingly losing an appreciative sensitivity to cultural expressions such as these. To be sure, not all cultural expressions are automatically good. In fact, the New Testament views some as expressions of sin. For instance, the New Testament looks unfavorably on such expressions when they express distinctions among Christians based on social class or wealth (see Jas 2:1–7). On the other hand, the early Christians encouraged such expressions when they expressed differences of age and sex. Younger people honored older people and the community paid honor to men because they were men and women because they were women. Something is undoubtedly lost when people lose the capacity to value and understand such cultural expressions.⁹ When Paul linked headcoverings to the basic order of the Christian community, he was manifesting a concern that many human societies will instinctively share, but one which modern Western society does not find readily comprehensible.

One further question of “cultural expression” raised by 1 Corinthians 11 is the question of length of hair. Paul refers twice to the appropriateness of different hair lengths for men and women. In verses 5–6 he indicates that it would be disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off. In verses 13–15 he indicates that long hair is dishonorable for a man but honorable for a woman. By “long,” Paul probably means long by comparison. Men in his day wore their hair longer than most men do today in Western society. He is saying that women should wear their hair still longer than men. Paul presumes that the Corinthians will accept what he says about hair

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* This is not to assert that all expressions are simply arbitrary. Some are not, and Paul views headcoverings for women as one which is not.

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length without question. He understands longer hair for women as either a natural or cross-cultural practice (depending on how one understands the word “nature” or *physis* in verse 14).¹⁰ In this he could rely upon the practice of the many cultures he was acquainted with and, in fact, longer hair for women is the practice of a majority of human cultures. While it may be difficult to determine what is “natural” to the human race, Paul’s opinion has some claim to respect under most of the criteria commonly used currently to make such a distinction. His view cannot be scorned as an “outdated viewpoint” simply because there are known exceptions.¹¹

However, Paul is not teaching about hair length in 1 Corinthians 11. He is teaching about headcoverings and making a comparison with hair length.* In verses 5–6, he simply states that for a woman not to wear a head-covering degrades her as much as having her hair cut off. He does not assume that the Corinthians automatically know this. He is instructing them that such is actually the case. He uses the example of a woman with her hair cut off to illustrate how degrading lack of a headcovering is for a woman. In verses 13–15, he does something similar. He presumes that the Corinthians understand the meaning of hair length practices, and argues on that basis that there is something fitting about headcoverings for women and lack of them for men, since both long hair and headcoverings are similar in the way they surround the woman’s head. Those who hold that long hair would do as well as headcoverings completely miss the point of what Paul is saying, as do those who hold that he is asserting that headcovering for women is the natural or culturally universal custom. Paul does not instruct the Corinthians to wear their hair in a particular way, nor does he say that “nature” bears him out on headcoverings for women. Paul only says that “nature” provides an analogy for headcoverings, an analogy that should help the Corinthians to see that headcoverings for women are actually the appropriate way to express their social role during times of worship.

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While the meaning of headcoverings must be understood in order to interpret 1 Corinthians 11 correctly, the more important issue is the way Paul argues for his view and what that argument shows about his understanding of the roles of men and women. An outline of the passage reveals the structure of his argumentation:

* This is confirmed by the fact that the hair is described as a *peribolaion* for the women, not a *kalumma*, which is what is needed. Many translations obscure the difference in terms.

1.	v. 2	Preliminary commendation	
2.	v. 3	Foundational statement: the order of “heads”	
3.	vv. 4–6	Rule: Men should worship with their heads uncovered and women with their heads covered. While stating the rule, he uses a comparison with women’s hair being shaven.	1 Corinthians 11:2–16 > The Reasons Paul Uses
4.	vv. 7–9	Justification of the rule: the way in which man and woman were created in relation to one another	
	a. v. 10	Conclusion of justification; restatement of the rule*	
	b. v. 11–12	Qualification; a remark added so that no one will misunderstand	
5.	vv. 13–15	Comparison: He justifies his rule again by making an analogy with hair length.	
6.	v. 16	Final conclusion: He reinforces his position with an authoritative ruling and an appeal to the universal practice of the churches.	

The structure of Paul’s statements in 1 Corinthians 11 reveals three grounds for his ruling on headcoverings:

1. The way God intends the human race to be structured, as revealed by the way he created the human race (vv. 3, 7–10; with a qualification in 11–12)

* The view that 1 Corinthians 11:10 is a gloss, suggested by A. Jirku, “Die ‘Macht’ auf dem Haupte (1. Kor. 11,10),” *Neue kirchliche Zeitschrift* 32 (1921): 711; and C. Holsten, *Das Evangelium des Paulus* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1880) 472–474, has a great deal to recommend it. The line is probably impossible for us to ever interpret clearly. The verse is written in an almost shorthand form, and seems to introduce two considerations that might be clarifications for someone familiar with the “code.” Once 1 Corinthians 11:10 is read as a gloss, the flow of the argument is much smoother. Verse 11 follows readily on verse 9. Understanding it as a gloss is not essential to the coherence of the passage, but it would make the passage easier to understand. Authorship of the verse could still be Pauline even under the gloss view (the note could be his as well as someone else’s).

Moreover, if it were a gloss, the suggestion of Kittel, “Die ‘Macht’ auf dem Haupt (1 Cor. xi. 10),” *Rabbinica* (Leipzig: J. Hinrichs, 1920), that *exousia* is a Greek translation of an Aramaic word meaning both “veil” and “authority” would have greater cogency since the primary objection as it now stands is the unlikelihood of the view that a meaning based on an Aramaic derivation would ever be understandable to the Corinthians. Both elements of 1 Corinthians 11:10 are more readily understood as material to an Aramaic audience than to a Hellenistic one.

2. His comparison with hair length
3. His appeal to tradition or the universal practice of the churches, i.e., his appeal to authoritative Christian order (vv. 2, 16)

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Each of these grounds operate on somewhat different levels. Most of Paul's instruction in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 centers on his understanding of the way God has created and ordered the human race, that is, around Genesis 1–2, and the consequences that can be drawn from it. The second ground is his discussion of hair length in verses 13–15, a discussion which is sometimes taken as an argument from custom or culture. However, as has already been noted Paul does not rest his case on hair length, but simply uses this practice to make a comparison to help the Corinthians see the sense of his ruling about headcoverings. Finally, Paul makes a direct appeal to authority, to his own and that of all the churches. Since the discussion of hair length is more of an illustration of his argument than a full basis for it, there are two significant grounds to consider: the argument from the order of creation and the appeal to authority.

1 Corinthians 11:2–16 begins with Paul commending the Corinthians for remembering him and maintaining the traditions he delivered to them. It concludes with Paul invoking his own authority and the authority of “the churches of God” to silence anyone who might be contentious. These two verses raise questions about the meaning of tradition and about the authority of Paul and the “churches of God” to determine order in the Christian community.

The significance of the traditions that Paul delivered to his churches is commonly misunderstood today because the word “tradition” in contemporary Western society connotes something that one does not take very seriously. It is often assumed that a “tradition” is something unexamined and therefore done simply out of habit, that is, for no good rational reason. However, in the Pauline writings, words like “tradition” (*paradosis*), “delivered” (*paradidomai*), and “maintain” (*katechein*), and possibly in this context “remember” (*mimnēskomai*), refer to a very serious approach to tradition. Along with “receive” (*paralambanein*) and “uphold” (*kratein*), these words indicate a careful process of preserving truths from one generation to another. These terms were used to describe the way a master teaches disciples whom he is forming in a tradition.¹² The master delivers traditions which his disciples receive and then maintain and uphold. Paul uses these terms to describe his solemn impartation of the basic Christian proclamation which should be the foundation of the lives of the Chris-

tians, truths which he expects them to remember and uphold (Gal 1:9, 12; 1 Cor 15:1–5; 2 Th 2:15; see also Col 2:6–8; 1 Th 2:13). He also uses these terms in reference to his teaching of the Christian way of life (Rom 6:17; 2 Th 3:6; Phil 4:9). This instruction included teaching about customs and order that should be part of the life together of the Christian people (Acts 16:4; 1 Cor 11:2, 22). Behind these words lies Paul's view of teaching as not simply a transfer of information but a transfer of a way of life within the community, a way of life that is incarnated in the teacher who then forms the pupil in the same manner. Paul therefore often adds that his converts should remember him, do what they have seen him do, and imitate him (see Phil 3:17; 4:9; 1 Cor 4:16–17; 2 Th 3:7–9; 2 Tm 3:10; Gal 4:12; and 1 Cor 11:2). Thus, when Paul speaks about “traditions,” he is not speaking about “mere tradition,” that is, some kind of social conformity, but he is speaking about a serious process of passing on a way of life.

In 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 and likewise in 1 Corinthians 14:33–36 Paul exercises his authority as a teacher and appeals to the authority of “the churches of God” and “all the churches of the saints.” Again, some have understood these passages as places where Paul merely offers his own opinion and advocates a conformity for the sake of “getting along with the relatives.”¹³ To be sure, Paul is not appealing to the authority of the Lord, as he sometimes does. But he is appealing to apostolic authority, his own and that of the Twelve. Like a Jewish teacher of his day, Paul understands himself to be an authoritative teacher. He primarily passes on that which he has been taught, teaching which he knows comes from the Lord himself, but teaching which he also knows to be representative of the church as a whole (and therefore teaching of the apostles). But Paul also understands himself as authorized to give decisions (halachic decisions) in cases that are not explicitly covered by received teaching. Such decisions are not personal opinions, but are authoritative developments of teaching made with apostolic authority.

The apostles received from Christ the responsibility to establish the Christian people and the Christian way of life. Christ's teaching is the foundation for their work, but the gospel proclamation itself rests upon the authority of the apostles. They were responsible for handling many situations about which they had no explicit teaching from Christ. The life of the first church at Jerusalem was an authoritative model, probably because it had been established by the Twelve, and the decisions of the apostles were binding upon all the other churches as well (Acts 16:4). The Christian church afterwards saw the decisions of the apostles as authoritative for

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the life of the Christian people, especially for the order of their life. The scriptures were formed on the principle that it was “apostolic” teaching that was decisive for the formation of the life of the Christian people. The scriptures were not just the teachings of Jesus and teachings about Jesus, but apostolic teachings. The apostles are the foundation stones of the city of God (Rv 21:14).

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When Paul met new situations in the mission to the uncircumcised (Gal 2:9), he made decisions as an apostle which were thereafter viewed as authoritative. In fact, a main concern of the entire first letter to the Corinthians is Paul’s insistence that the Corinthians follow the rule he gives to all his churches, including the rule he received from the Jerusalem church (1 Cor 4:17; 7:17; 14:33; as well as 11:16). To dismiss Paul’s teaching in 1 Corinthians 11 as simply his and not Christ’s, or to see his appeal to the practice of the churches of God as simple conformity, is to miss the significance of his appeal to authority, his and that of the apostolic church. Such a view misses the seriousness with which Paul offers his instructions.

One of the three grounds for Paul’s teaching on headcoverings in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 is an appeal to authority, an important and weighty authority. Another ground is primarily a comparison. The third ground for his position is the role difference between men and women, a difference which is rooted in Genesis and in God’s purpose for creating man. This third ground is the only one which contains a reason for the headcovering rule. Here we distinguish reasoning from both a comparison intended to help people accept the point and an appeal to authority intended to get them to follow it. When Paul provides reasons for why the Corinthians should accept the rule, he primarily appeals to Genesis and to the order of God’s creative work. Therefore, this third ground is the most helpful for our purposes, because it contains more of Paul’s teaching on the roles of men and women.

Paul’s reference to Genesis 2 then is central to the discussion of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16. Paul says that a woman should wear a headcovering because the man is her head and because she is the glory of man. The man should not cover his head because Christ is his head, and because the man is the image and glory of God. The term “head” was discussed in connection with Ephesians 5:22–33. In Ephesians 5, the man’s position as head of the woman is given as the reason for her subordination to him. The relationship of head and subordinate includes some kind of authority and involves subordination, but the purpose of the subordination of the woman to the man is to unite two lives into one person (head and body). In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul states an order of “headship”: God–Christ–the man–the woman.

This order of headship is founded upon the order of creation. Man was created by God as his image and glory, and woman was created from man as his glory. Christ now has a place in the order, since the redeemed human race is now related to God in him, the new Adam, the first-born of the new creation. The man's uncovered head is an expression of his place in that order just as the woman's covered head is an expression of her place in that order.

The idea of woman being the glory of man is not easy to interpret. In one way, the idea is straightforward. Paul explains it by saying that woman is the glory of man because she was made from man and for man, an explanation which refers to the creation of woman in Genesis 2. To put it another way, woman is man's glory as a consequence of her relationship to him, a relationship which originated in her creation out of man and for him.

On the other hand, the exact meaning of the phrase "woman is the glory of man" is unclear. Two explanations of the meaning of "glory" here are commonly given.¹⁴ The most common explanation is that "woman is the glory of man" means that woman reflects man's glory. This explanation is embodied in many translations, such as the Jerusalem Bible: "A man should not cover his head, since he is the image of God and reflects God's glory; but woman is the reflection of man's glory." Thus, woman is a reflection of man, like him, from him, but not identical to him. Hebrews 1:3 might contain some parallel to this idea, at least as far as the statement about man, when it describes Christ as the "reflection" (RSV) / "effulgence" (NEB) / "radiant light" (JB) of God's glory and the "stamp" (RSV, NEB) / "perfect copy" (JB) of God's nature or being. According to this interpretation, to say that woman is the glory of man means that woman had her origin in man and drew her being from him.

A second explanation understands "glory" as meaning that which brings honor to or glorifies man. "Glory" is used this way further on in the passage, where long hair is described as woman's "glory." This second interpretation could be based on the Septuagint version of Proverbs 11:16 which says, "A gracious wife brings glory to her husband, but a woman hating righteousness is a throne of dishonor." There are some later rabbinic parallels in which a virtuous wife is described as her husband's crown and in which a man is said to be adorned by his wife, but a woman is not adorned by her husband. If this interpretation of "glory" is accepted, then woman would be man's honor because her relationship to him means that he is honored because of her (or possibly dishonored because of her, if she is not a good woman). Paul may have intended both meanings of "glory,"

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since verses 8–9 explain the idea that woman is man’s glory both because woman is made from man and that she is created for him. Whatever the exact meaning of the phrase, Paul’s overall point seems clear: Man and woman differ in the way they originated. Man was created directly by God in his image, woman was created from and for man.

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This passage also raises the question of whether Paul might be denying that woman is created in the image of God. Some Christians have based such denials on this passage. The discussion in Chapter Six about Galatians 3:28 and Colossians 3:9–11, as well as the earlier discussion of Genesis 1, indicate the opposite—that Paul teaches that woman is made in the image of God. In fact, in 1 Corinthians 11, Paul neither asserts nor denies that woman is created in the image of God. He focuses rather on the order of heads. He says that man is created in the image of God because he is defining man’s relationship to God in order to explain why man does not wear the headcovering. He discusses woman—saying that she was created from and for man—to describe her relationship with man as it was expressed by the order of creation. Paul is not discussing woman’s relationship with God here, and hence does not exclude her being in God’s image as part of the human race. Rather, 1 Corinthians 11 is concerned with woman’s place in the order of creation and of heads.¹⁵

1 Corinthians 11 also includes another phrase that has provoked much commentary: “Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God.” The phrase “not independent of” is sometimes translated “cannot do without” (JB) or does not have “separate existence from” (PHILLIPS). Some have interpreted this passage as having the same meaning as Galatians 3:28, that there is fundamentally no difference between men and women in the Lord.¹⁶ However, the meaning of this verse should be understood in terms of Paul’s teaching on the order of heads. In these verses, Paul says that man needs woman and in some respects is subordinate to her (see Gn 4:1). Although man is the head of the family and woman was originally created from man, now all men are born of women—their mothers. Thus, men are dependent on women. Paul seems to introduce this idea to make sure that no one takes his teaching on woman in the earlier verses as a one-way dependence—a teaching that makes woman fundamentally unnecessary for Christianity. This passage contains the same teaching as Genesis 2: Men and women are in a complementary partnership with one partner in subordination to the other.

The teaching in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 is grounded primarily on the

idea of the order of heads, not on the idea of subordination. The two ideas do not conflict and subordination follows from headship, but the two ideas are different. The order of heads is probably the key idea in 1 Corinthians 11, because Paul links the presence and absence of the headcovering to the relationship being a head expresses.

In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul uses the term “head” differently than the term is used in English. In English, the term “head” is commonly used for any governing position (the head of a house, the head of a family, the head of a state) and is often used in the plural (the heads of the group). The Septuagint and other Greek sources in Paul’s time employed the term in a similar way, and Paul could have adopted that usage if he chose. However, Paul reserves the term “head” for four relationships: between husband and wife, between Christ and the church, between God and Christ, and between Christ and the universe (Eph 1:22). Behind this use of the term “head” lies the head-body metaphor. When Paul speaks of “a head,” he is thinking of one body with one head. A person who is a head does more than govern. He is actually the source or origin of the kind of unity which makes many into one. There then is a difference in Paul’s thought between being a “head” and being in a governing position. The elders of the community govern the community and the men in the community are subordinate to them, but they do not make the community one person. Christ, the source of unity, is the “head” of the community. The man acts as “head” for the family and is the source of its unity, but no man other than Christ can be head for the Christian community. Moreover, Paul sees Adam and Eve in their union as the model for the family and the body of Christ—the two ways to be one person (Eph 5:31).

Some would say that 1 Corinthians 11 states that Christ is the real head of the family with the man as his delegate. If the above interpretation is accurate, then when Paul says that Christ is the head of the man (1 Cor 11:3), he says that in reference to Christ being the head of the church, not the head of the family. Christ is not the head of the family; the man is. Moreover Christ is the head of the man insofar as the man is in the body of Christ—the Christian community. The man does not receive a special headship from Christ different from the kind a woman receives because he is a man. In this interpretation, Paul views the church as a unity of families.* The men of the community act as something like vertebrae tying the families of the community together under Christ the head (and in subordination to

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Paul Uses

* According to this view of the headship of the man, the man’s position as the head of the family differs substantially from the elder’s position as governor of the community: The family is the man’s “body,” but the community is not the elder’s “body.”

the elders). This does not mean that women do not have Christ as their head. Rather, they are part of the body of Christ equally with their husbands, and Christ is head of the body. The point is that the body of Christ has a structure, and the woman is part of the structure as one person with her husband, and under his headship of their relationship.

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Application of the Ruling

A final question remains: Does the ruling in 1 Corinthians 11 apply to husbands and wives only or to unmarried men and women in the Christian community as well? Are all women supposed to wear headcoverings in worship, or only the married women? This question is especially difficult to answer because the words for “man” and “woman” are the same in Greek as those for “husband” and “wife.” The phrase translated by the RSV as “the head of a woman is her husband” reads more literally in Greek “the head of woman is the man” or “the head of a woman is the man” (Greek also has no indefinite article).

One answer is that Paul is only concerned here with husbands and wives. His reference to the creation account points to the marriage relationship as Paul’s main concern, as does the other passage in which Paul talks about the man being the head of the woman, Ephesians 5:22–33. Moreover, veiling in Jewish marriage customs symbolized the virgin’s going under her husband’s authority. However, there are difficulties with this view because the passage operates on a broader level. All men are pointed to Christ as their head, all women pointed to “the man.” Moreover, the hair length illustration indicates that Paul thought the ruling about headcoverings should apply to all men and all women; otherwise the illustration loses its force, since hair length customs were observed by all men and women. The passage would be easier to interpret if we could presume that Paul did not count unmarried boys and girls because they were too young, and was simply speaking to the adult congregation which was all husbands and wives. However, this presumption is unlikely. Some unmarried women must have participated in the congregation, and 1 Corinthians 7 indicates that celibates were present as well.

A second answer is that the passage concerns all men and women, and that the references to “the man” refer to whichever man was responsible for the woman. This answer is based upon the social structure of the time, in which there seem to have been no unattached women. All women were under a man’s authority: their husbands’, or their fathers’, or that of the

next responsible male family member. Celibate women and widows were either still part of their families (and hence under their fathers or the next responsible male family members) or possibly under the bishop or other representative of the community. The early church, according to patristic evidence, had an order of widows and an order of virgins but no corresponding order of widowers or of male celibates. This unique approach to female celibates occurred in part because the family's authority over the woman had to be replaced by a formal transfer to the community's authority. In addition, unmarried women and widows wore veils among the Jews, even though the veil had some marital significance. Thus, according to this answer, the head of the woman in 1 Corinthians 11 would be whichever man was responsible for her. However, this answer fails to account for the considerations behind the first answer, namely, the importance Paul ascribed to the marriage relationship in his teaching on men's and women's roles.

A third answer to this question combines the first two. The third answer holds that the very uncertainty in interpretation is important because it points to how much the roles of men and women in the community are connected to the husband-wife relationship. As was discussed in Chapter Five, the family was the cell of the community and provided at its core a basic pattern that is followed in all men-women relationships in the community. 1 Corinthians 11 illustrates this pattern once more. The husband-wife relationship in marriage is the paradigm for the man-woman relationship. Hence the central focus of the passage is husbands and wives. Yet other women and other men follow the same patterns because their identity as women and men is more fundamental than their unmarried state. A man is the image and glory of God and has Christ as his head even if he is unmarried. Since God created him as a male, he must assume a role that expresses this fact. This role finds its fullest expression in marriage, but is also expressed if he is unmarried through his responsibility in the community. The same is true of a woman. She assumes a role as a woman that finds its fullest expression in marriage, but it is also expressed if she is unmarried through her relationships and responsibilities in the community. This third answer accounts for all the aspects of the passage more adequately than the first two answers. It combines a sensitivity to both the marriage concern and the broader perspectives in the passage. Hence, Paul probably directs his instructions to all men and women, married or unmarried, although he has the husband-wife relationship in mind as the model for the relationship his ruling is intended to express.¹⁷

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Some phrases and sentences in 1 Corinthians 11 are difficult to understand. In some cases the correct interpretation will probably never be understood, at least not through historical study. However, this difficulty is not a reason to conclude that the passage makes no sense, as some have said. Nor do the difficulties mean that 1 Corinthians 11 should be interpreted as a succession of poor arguments with Paul, gradually losing his self-control and realizing the weakness of his argumentation, finally closing the discussion with an appeal to arbitrary authority.¹⁸ His argumentation in its broad outlines is tolerably coherent if we accept the fact that some sections of the passage exceed our grasp.

Furthermore, very little of Paul's argumentation concerns conformity to social customs or adaptation to the cultural situation. Only his comparison with hair length can be seen as an appeal to a cultural consideration, and this comparison is meant primarily as an illustration. It carries little of the weight of his argumentation. In fact, Paul seems to be enjoining a practice about headcoverings which would not be culturally adaptive in Gentile Corinth. He enjoins a practice that the first Christian communities seem to have arrived at for reasons not completely within our grasp, but which seem to have something to do with their evaluation of or interpretation of the customs of Judaism.

Paul is upholding the importance of an expression of men-women differences in a situation where men and women are praying and prophesying. He is asserting an order precisely when the spiritual gifts or charismata are being exercised. Some cannot comprehend how Paul could consider such an approach, but Paul consistently holds that such expressions are most important precisely in such situations. His whole teaching about spiritual gifts stresses decency and order (1 Cor 14:40). He does not leave the exercise of those gifts solely to spontaneous response to a moving of the Spirit. Men and women possess the same spiritual gifts and they are to express role differences in exercising these gifts. There is no fallacy, no incompatibility, in this teaching.

For all the difficulties in its interpretation, 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 is one of the clearer statements in the New Testament of the fundamental significance of overall role differences among men and women, especially their significance as expressions of God's purpose for the human race. The passage states a rule that expresses differences between men and women in worship situations. It bases this rule on two fundamental grounds: the order of the man-woman relationship as intended by God when he created the first man and woman, and the authority of the apostles to estab-

lish a universal practice for all the Christian churches. While the passage primarily concerns a rule for worship situations, it includes important teaching that grounds the basic patterns of a role difference between men and women in the purpose of God when he created the human race. All the features of the pattern discussed in Chapters Three and Five cannot be derived from the treatment in 1 Corinthians 11. But 1 Corinthians 11 is consistent with this pattern and, in an important way, amplifies and enlarges it.

1 Corinthians 14:33–36 ▷ She Should Be Subordinate

1 CORINTHIANS 14:33–36 is not as important as 1 Corinthians 11 in a discussion of the social roles of men and women. Like 1 Corinthians 11, the passage deals with a question of order in assemblies of the Christian community, but it only alludes to broader role considerations and hence contains little teaching. The passage is relatively brief, and will be considered more as a supplement to the considerations in 1 Corinthians 11 than as an important addition. The passage reads as follows:

As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. What! Did the word of God originate with you, or are you the only ones it has reached?

If anyone thinks that he is a prophet or spiritual, he should acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord. If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized. So, my brethren, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues; but all things should be done decently and in order. (1 Cor 14:33b–40)

Chapter 14 of 1 Corinthians occurs in a section of that letter that deals with spiritual gifts. Most of chapter 14 concerns speaking in tongues and prophesying. Beginning with verse 26, the chapter contains a set of rules on how speaking in tongues and prophesying should be done so that there is no disorder in the assemblies. Following this section (or, included in the section) Paul raises the question of women speaking in the assemblies. Like the verses that precede it, verses 33–40 issue a rule for order in the

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assemblies, but unlike the previous verses they take up a specific issue of order—the permissibility of women speaking in the assembly. This difference in focus, along with the existence of some manuscript variation, has stimulated speculation that the section on women is an interpolation. However, the evidence makes the view the less likely one.¹⁹ Paul is simply taking up another item related to order in the assemblies. This issue may have arisen because charismatic activities (prophesying) on the part of women led to their speaking in the assemblies in an unacceptable fashion. The topic of the passage parallels 1 Corinthians 11 in subject and thrust. (It concerns good order in the assemblies, with special reference to the expression of men-women differences in the assemblies.) In general, it fits in well with Paul's overall concerns in 1 Corinthians.

Paul lays down the rule in 1 Corinthians 14:34 that women should not speak in the assemblies (or: the churches). This raises the question as to the kind of speech prohibited, especially since according to 1 Corinthians 11:5, Paul expects women to pray and prophesy in the assembly of the community.²⁰ Some see a discrepancy between the two passages and use it as evidence that 1 Corinthians 14:33b–36 is an interpolation. Such a view would only be valid if there were strong reason to believe that the difference is clearly a discrepancy. However, there is much evidence that no discrepancy exists.

Some have held that Paul refers to all speech in 1 Corinthians 14:34, and that he used prophesying and praying merely as an example in 1 Corinthians 11:5. Thus, in 1 Corinthians 14:34 he definitely rules out prophesying and praying aloud for women. However, this view does not do justice to 1 Corinthians 11:5. This passage takes the praying and prophesying of women very seriously and draws a direct parallel between the women and men. Another view is that 1 Corinthians 11 and 1 Corinthians 14 refer to different situations: 1 Corinthians 11 refers to home gatherings while 1 Corinthians 14 refers to public gatherings. However, there is no evidence within the text that would point to two different types of gatherings. More importantly, there is positive evidence that both chapter 11 and chapter 14 concern assemblies of the whole community (cf. 11:18; 14:26).

The more common view holds that the two passages refer to two different types of speaking for women. One type is acceptable; the other is not. This view draws upon strong evidence within the text. 1 Corinthians 11 mentions praying and prophesying and 1 Corinthians 14 refers to asking questions. The likely conclusion is that Paul is not ruling out all speech on the part of women in the assemblies of the community, but only certain kinds of speech.

There are also a number of different opinions as to what kind of speech was forbidden by Paul and what kind was acceptable.²¹ Some hold that Paul forbids disorderly speech. He is urging the women to be orderly, and when he says “they should be subordinate,” he is exhorting them to be subordinate to the order of the assembly. Some who hold such a view suggest that since men and women were seated on different sides of the place of assembly, following the custom of the synagogue, the women would have had to shout their questions across to their husbands and thus would have caused considerable confusion. This view allows us to imagine comical scenes in the early Christian worship, but does not appear extremely plausible. Others suggest that the women’s section was particularly noisy, and therefore the women were being urged to good order. All these views miss an important point: Paul instructs the women to be silent because they are women, not because they are disorderly. First, the passage offers no hint that the women are causing any disorder other than the disorder that occurs simply from the fact that they are “speaking” and they are women. Secondly, Paul says that the rule he is applying is the same rule followed by all the churches of the saints and is not a directive given to straighten out a particular difficulty found among the Corinthians. Third, Paul says clearly that it is shameful for a woman to “speak.” He does not say that it is shameful for a woman to speak in a disorderly way. Her “speaking” is the shameful action. Finally, if disorder were the issue, men as well as women should have been instructed to keep silent and to be subordinate to the order of the assembly.

Paul probably forbids the kind of speech which would be appropriate to instructional situations or situations in which something of importance to the community is being discussed in the assembly. In explanation of such a view, some suggest that the passage simply forbids women to teach and is parallel to 1 Timothy 2:12. Others suggest that Paul forbids women to engage in discussion in the assembly about teaching or prophecies or to ask questions about the teaching or prophecies. This latter view has in its favor the fact that the text tells women to ask their questions at home. Moreover, some evidence indicates that instructional situations in the early Christian assemblies might have included discussion and not just a sermon with no group response. Matters of importance to the community were also possibly discussed in the gatherings. Thus the concern of the passage is probably something related to teaching or community leadership, and not something related to prophecy or worship.

Perhaps the part of the passage which most helps in understanding it is the sentence “They are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate.”

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This phrase is sometimes overlooked in developing interpretations of the passage. Women are being forbidden a certain type of speech because they should be subordinate, not because to speak would scandalize outsiders, or violate the culture of the Corinthians or cause a disturbance. Paul is not concerned with subordination to the order of the assembly. Men should also be subordinate in this way, and Paul does not mention men. Also, the normal usage of “subordination” in the New Testament involves subordination to a person, not an order or procedure. Instead, Paul is concerned with the subordination that is specifically a part of being women. The speech denied them is a speech that is inappropriate because of their position as women or wives. A likely explanation of Paul’s meaning draws on what we have already said about the responsibility the men of the community had for the life of the community as a whole. The heads of the households or the mature men would be the ones who would participate in community discussions affecting the direction of the overall community. These men would understand the discussion, explain it to the other members of their households, and represent the concerns of the whole household during the discussion.²²

The context of this passage draws on the various customs and rules that governed expressions of respect. Most cultures, including Jewish culture of this period, observe rules of propriety in speech. People are usually expected to speak in a manner appropriate to their position and relationships, even if they are highly educated. For example, a trained disciple in first-century Palestine would be very reluctant to voice an opinion in the presence of his rabbi or any other rabbi; he would even be reluctant to intervene in a discussion when his rabbi was present. Wives would usually speak in a way that expressed their subordination to their husbands, as would sons (including adult sons) to their fathers. Disciples, wives, and sons all held their speech as an expression of respect for those who were over them. Thus the issue in 1 Corinthians 14:33–36 is probably due respect and good order, not cultural accommodation or doubts about the intellectual abilities of the women. Indeed, the only reason Paul offers for the limitation on women’s speech is their subordination.

Here again we must ask whether the passage institutes a rule for all women or only for wives. Verse 35 could be translated, “if there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home,” or it could read, “if there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their own men at home” (i.e., and not query the teacher or elders). The most likely understanding of the phrase “their own men” would be “their husbands,” but

the question still remains whether the passage was intended for all women as well as wives. The considerations offered in the earlier discussion of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 apply here as well, and the conclusion is the same: The rule is intended for all women, although the passage sees wives as the model. To use an analogy, if Paul had forbidden children to speak in public as an expression of their subordination to their parents, no one would hesitate to apply the rule to orphans as well as to children with parents. The parent-child relationship would be the normal case, but the rule would also apply to children with surrogate parents. Similarly unmarried women would be expected to adhere to a rule for married women.

The phrase “as even the law says” does not help us understand the type of speech that Paul forbids. The phrase does not necessarily refer to women’s silence. Nothing can be found in the Old Testament about the silence of women, nor do we find rules for the silence of women in assemblies in early rabbinical material nor in other Jewish explanations of teaching written around New Testament times.²³ Instead, the phrase “as even the law says” most likely refers to the subordination of women. Critics have made many suggestions about which section in the law Paul might be referring to.²⁴ Genesis 3:16 is a favorite suggestion, but if this were true, 1 Corinthians 14 would be the only place in the New Testament where the “curses” of the Fall were appealed to as a basis for Christian conduct, direction, or teaching. Others suggest Genesis 2 as the passage Paul had in mind or the example of the wives of the patriarchs, as in 1 Peter 3:6. On the other hand, the term “the law” could also refer to oral tradition or to the legal traditions of the Jewish people. In short, the reference is uncertain. However, one aspect of this reference is significant. Paul asserts that his ruling and its basis—woman’s subordination to man (or the wife’s subordination to the husband)—is a Christian teaching and rests on Christian authority. According to Paul, the law agrees with this point of Christian teaching, but the teaching itself is Christian. This remark makes it highly unlikely that Paul was unconsciously drawing his teaching on subordination from first-century Judaism, a position that some modern critics hold. In fact, the term “as even the law says” suggests that Christians saw themselves as stronger than the Jews in this point of teaching.

The verses following verse 36 raise a further important consideration: Paul is passing on “a command of the Lord.” His instructions are not his own opinion or decision, as they sometimes are, but they stem directly from something that the Lord has said. Therefore, we must ask which instructions in the passage should be considered a command of the Lord.

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Here again there are various opinions. Some hold that verses 34–35 are an interpolation and hence the “command of the Lord” does not apply to the rule concerning the speech of women. Some hold that the phrase “command of the Lord” refers specifically to the speech of women and hence the key text ought to extend to verse 38. Verses 39 and 40, then, would be the conclusion to the whole section composed of chapters 12 through 14 of 1 Corinthians. Some hold that the phrase refers to all the instructions given from verse 26 on, or even earlier—namely, the instructions on order in the assemblies. As we have already indicated, the interpolation theory is not likely. Neither is it likely that the “command of the Lord” simply refers to order in the assemblies and not to the instructions about the order for women. Hence, the “command of the Lord” refers either to the instructions about women alone or to the overall instructions about order in the assembly. Both are possible. The sense and flow of verses 37–40 suggests that the verses refer to the overall instruction in the chapter. However, it seems unlikely that the Lord would instruct his disciples about order in assemblies containing prophecy and tongues-speaking. Hence, the “command of the Lord” might well only apply to the instructions on women.

In either case, there is some indication that the instruction on the speech of women in 1 Corinthians 14 is based upon a command of the Lord. Therefore, we have some evidence that Jesus did deliver teaching about the role of women that was not preserved in the gospels, but was remembered by the early Christians and preserved in a canonical epistle written about twenty years after his death. This evidence cannot be considered compelling, but it is significant enough as a possibility that it should not be ignored when evaluating Jesus’ teaching on women and the relationship between the teaching of Jesus and Paul.

This passage on the speech of women in assemblies of the Christian community again deals with a matter of cultural expression. The fundamental concern is with the social structure of the Christian community, in this case “subordination” rather than the order of “heads.” Yet this social structure must be expressed in daily human experience through appropriate customs. Just as dress can be an important expression of a relationship, so can speech, as indeed it has been and is for most human cultures. To speak or dress appropriately gives respect; to speak or dress inappropriately insults and degrades. Even though we cannot be certain of Paul’s exact rule for speech, we can at least see the reasons underlying the importance he placed upon the rule.

This passage and the one in 1 Corinthians 11 also illustrate the great

emphasis Paul puts upon order in the Christian community, particularly the order which expresses the social structure of man-woman relationships. Paul is no legalist, but he is very concerned about relationships and the patterns that preserve those relationships. In both 1 Corinthians 11:16 and 1 Corinthians 14:36 he is emphatic on this point:

If anyone is disposed to be contentious, we recognize no other practice, nor do the churches of God.

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What! Did the word of God originate with you, or are you the only ones it has reached?

These are not incidental statements that Paul is making lightly. Instead they are a deliberate exercise of his authority as an apostle. This indicates that Paul's teaching on men and women is an integral part of his teaching on Christian relationships.

▶ 8

THE COMMUNITY ▷ KEY TEXTS

(1 TIMOTHY 2:8–15)

THE FINAL KEY TEXT is 1 Timothy 2:8–15. This passage often does not receive the attention it deserves, possibly because many people have questions about its authorship. However, 1 Timothy 2:8–15 is one of the passages in the scripture which is clearly concerned with the roles of men and women and which deliberately addresses that topic. Moreover, the passage contains teaching about men and women that is intended to ground the concrete directions which it gives. This teaching is similar to that found in Ephesians 5 and 1 Corinthians 11; it bases the relationship between men and women in God’s creation of the human race. In addition, 1 Timothy 2:8–15 does not just set forth a particular rule about the way the order between men and women should be expressed. Rather it is concerned with a question that is central to the structure of the roles of men and women—the question of authority and teaching in the community. Finally, 1 Timothy 2:8–15 is the one passage which clearly addresses the subject of men and women in community leadership and is not also primarily concerned with directions for marriage and family. In short, 1 Timothy 2:8–15 is one of the most important texts to consider in any examination of the New Testament on the roles of men and women.

The subject of 1 Timothy is primarily “church order” or “community order.”¹ It explains how the communal life of the Christian people should be ordered or patterned so that it can function effectively. The central focus is “how one ought to behave in the household of God” (3:15). Along with 2 Timothy and Titus, 1 Timothy could be considered the first of the “church orders,” a genre of writing that includes the *Didache*, the *Didascalía Apostolorum*, the *Apostolic Church Order*, the *Apostolic Constitutions* and

many others.² The whole letter could be read as instructions to a bishop about how to order and direct the life of a Christian congregation.

1 Timothy begins with a section about false teachers who propound erroneous doctrine about the law and the Christian's relationship to the law. In this section, Timothy is exhorted to be vigilant about the teaching that is allowed in the community and he is warned about the presence of false teachers among the Christian people. The next section, beginning with chapter 2, turns to questions of order within the Christian community. This section begins with an exhortation to pray for governing officials. It then moves to instruction about the roles of men and women in the community—the passage to be examined below. The letter continues with instructions about how bishops, deacons, and deaconesses are to be chosen. These instructions for choosing bishops and deacons include a statement about their wives, indicating that only men were envisaged for these positions. However, the instructions also indicate that women held an important position of leadership in the community. The letter then proceeds to such topics as the protection of the people from false teachers, the “order” of widows, and the discipline of elders.

1 Timothy 2:8–15 is a passage about men and women in community leadership, contained in a letter which deliberately treats concerns of community order at some length. The letter intentionally raises the question of the roles of men and women. Therefore, it is a conscious directive in the New Testament about how to structure leadership positions among the Christian people in regard to the roles of men and women. At the same time, this passage deals with only a particular aspect of the roles of men and women: the exercise of authority by men and women in leadership of the Christian people. Moreover, the passage seems to have been written to counter some other possible approaches. Thus, one should not read it as a fully balanced, comprehensive picture of the roles of men and women in community service. The passage should be allowed its full weight in the area it addresses, but it should not be treated as a statement of everything one needs to know about men and women in community service. The passage reads as follows:

I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; also that women should adorn themselves modestly and sensibly in seemly apparel, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly attire but by good deeds, as befits women who profess religion. Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no

woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet woman will be saved through bearing children, if she continues in faith and love and holiness, with modesty. (1 Tm 2:8–15)

The Thrust of the Passage

1 TIMOTHY 2 contains a parallel to 1 Peter 3 that brings us to a consideration of the central concern of the whole passage. The parallel in 1 Peter 3 is this:

Let not yours be the outward adorning with braiding of the hair, decoration of gold, and wearing of robes, but let it be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. So once the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves and were submissive to their husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. (1 Pt 3:3–6)

The similarities between this part of 1 Peter 3 and the section of 1 Timothy 2 that begins with “Also, that women should adorn themselves . . .” are so close that they are undoubtedly more than accidental. The two sections do not parallel one another exactly, but they contain a similar thought in similar words. This points to the fact that we are dealing with a standard teaching of the early church for women.³ The instruction could be summarized as follows: Women should not adorn themselves in expensive or luxurious ways, but should adorn themselves in quietness and subordination. This teaching is developed and applied differently in the two passages, but the essential similarity is unmistakable.⁴ The connection between luxurious adornment and subordination is more direct in 1 Peter 3:4 than in 1 Timothy 2:9–10, but both passages make the connection clearly. The warning against luxurious adornment was probably made to counter a difficulty which was common to women in the early church. The exhortation to quietness and subordination was probably a basic instruction routinely given to women, though possibly it too was an attempt to counter a problem (as 1 Tm 2:8–15 likely was).

The instruction to women in 1 Timothy 2 is preceded by a corresponding instruction to men. The men are told to avoid conflict and quarreling

and are urged to prayer. The problem corresponding to the women's tendency to over-adornment was the men's tendency to quarrel. Perhaps the men needed encouragement to lead spiritually in prayer.* Their problem area would have been a failure to provide spiritual leadership, possibly coupled with a readiness to provide other kinds of leadership. The encouragement to the men to provide spiritual leadership, then, would correspond to the encouragement to the women to be subordinate.

The Thrust
of the Passage

We should not place too much emphasis on the exhortation to women to adorn themselves modestly and sensibly. This exhortation is not the heart of the passage. The parallel with 1 Peter 3 suggests that this exhortation is simply intended to call to mind a standard line of teaching which leads to an exhortation to subordination. Indeed, the following verses in both 1 Peter 3 and in 1 Timothy 2 treat subordination by itself, with no further reference to dressing modestly. The writer urges the woman to clothe herself primarily in subordination or in the character traits that support subordination. (See the exposition of 1 Peter 3 in Chapter Four.) The passage focuses on the question of order, not on women's tendency to over-adornment or men's tendency to quarreling.

However, the warning against over-adornment should not be dismissed, as some modern writers have tended to do. In the epistles, the warning is introduced with seriousness, and probably reiterates a standard teaching among the early Christians. The passage prohibits expensive and luxurious adornment. The prohibition against braiding of hair does not concern hair braiding as we understand the term today, but instead prohibits an elaborate type of coiffure. This exhortation is repeated by the Fathers and many of the spiritual writers in later Christian tradition.⁵ The admonition is meant seriously, but it nonetheless still serves primarily as an introduction to the main point of the passage—the subordination of woman.

The core instruction of 1 Timothy 2:8–15 lies in verses 11–12: “Let women learn in quietness in all subordination.[†] I do not permit woman to teach or to exercise/usurp authority over man. She is to remain in

* An alternate understanding sometimes propounded is that both men and women are being exhorted to prayer. In that case, the accent for the men's exhortation would be on avoiding anger and quarreling, not on prayer. This is a minority view and seems less likely. The passage perhaps has as its background the Jewish view that the men had the primary obligation for the community's worship and intercession.

† The Greek does not contain an indefinite article. The passage can therefore be translated without it, and for some purposes that helps the sense. “Woman” in the sense of “womankind” is the concern. Woman fell in Eve, but woman (women) will be saved through childbearing if they/she continue(s) . . .

quietness.” Verses 9–10 introduce these verses and verses 13–15 justify them. Verses 11–12 contain the rule that is being enjoined. This is the material we must understand in order to grasp the specific intent of this passage.

Each of the key words of verses 11–12 (“subordination,” “quietness,” “teach,” and “exercise authority”) needs elaboration. The term “subordination” has already been commented upon (see pp. 81–83). Here the term could be translated “submissiveness” (see p. 93) as well as “subordination.” “Quietness,” the second word which needs elaboration, is sometimes translated as “silence.” However, the Greek word in 1 Timothy is not the same word as the word for “silence” in 1 Corinthians 14:33. The word for silence in 1 Corinthians 14 (*sigāō*) is the common word for making no sound. *Hēsychia*, the word in 1 Timothy 2:11–12 (the same word found in 1 Pt 3:4) is often translated “calmness,” “peacefulness,” or “quietness.” In some passages in the New Testament (e.g., Acts 22:2), *hēsychia* refers to a process of ceasing to make objections or ceasing to be contentious. The word “quietness” in these passages, then, refers to a condition that would be characteristic of those who are taught and who receive what is being said. In 1 Thessalonians 4:11, the word is used to denote the quality of being concerned with one’s own affairs and of not trying to handle something that is outside the scope of one’s responsibility. “Quietness” in 1 Timothy, then, probably refers to a disposition that is ready for learning and is receptive to direction. *Hēsychia* is closely related to subordination and could well be a word for the state or personal bearing that corresponds to genuine subordination or submissiveness—that is, a state of peace, trust, and receptivity. Refusal or a disinclination to accept teaching or direction is the opposite of *hēsychia*. The term does not necessarily mean refraining from all speech in public situations or in assemblies of the community, but it would mean refraining from speech which would be directive or involve teaching.

The third word needing comment is “teach.”† “Teach” is a common

* On *hēsychia*, see Chapter Four, pp. 92–93. This term and its related forms occurs eleven times in the New Testament. Apart from those occasions mentioned in the text, it occurs in Lk 14:4; 23:56; 1 Th 4:11; 2 Th 3:12; 1 Tm 2:2, 11, 12; 1 Pt 3:4. The term used in 1 Corinthians 14 for “silence” occurs elsewhere in Lk 9:36; 18:39; 20:26; Acts 12:17; 15:12–13; 21:40; Rom 16:25; Rv 8:1.

† On various words for “teach,” including *didaskō* used in 1 Tm 2, see Rengstorf, *TDNT*, 2:135–165, 4:390–461; and Lohse, 6:961–965.

The distinction made here is behind the discussion in the Catholic Church concerning the naming of Catherine of Siena and Teresa of Avila as “Doctors of the Church.” As a result of this, some questioned whether the Catholic Church changed its position that women may not hold positions of authoritative teaching in the church. However, Paul VI asserted that no such change of position was involved in the conferring of this title. At the ceremony for Teresa of Avila, he quoted 1 Corinthians 14:34, and stated: “This still signifies today that woman is

word in the New Testament and designates an activity of great importance to the early church. Contemporary notions of education can be very misleading in attempting to understand the meaning of “teaching” in the New Testament. We most commonly understand teaching as a transfer of information (facts) or skills. Sometimes we also include values within the realm of education, but when we think of teaching values in modern education, we are inclined to conceive the process as helping students to see that some values were important or attractive. Modern “teaching” does not involve the exercise of authority over people, except insofar as the teacher needs to maintain enough discipline to continue teaching. Modern “teaching” is usually a process whereby an expert is hired to transmit a skill or information to students who are free to ignore what is taught.

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By contrast, the early Christian understanding of teaching, built upon the Jewish understanding, saw teaching as an activity involving personal direction and an exercise of authority. The teacher did not just give his views. He laid out what he expected the student to accept.

Moreover, teaching occurred within a relationship in which the teacher had authority over the student. The focus of teaching in the New Testament was upon teaching a way of life and the truths which underlay that way of life. Students were expected to follow that way of life, and the teaching was passed on with authority. Teachers were either elders, heads of a community or of some grouping within the community, or masters who took in disciples who submitted themselves for formation. Teaching was not a function in which an expert came and performed a service which a client was free to receive or not receive as he wished. The teaching occurred within a relationship in which the students acknowledged the teacher’s authority. Moreover, authority was primarily exercised within the early church not as much by individual direction, but by teaching given to a body, accompanied by the correction of individuals who were not following the accepted teaching (cf. 1 Tm 4:11; 4:16–5:2; 2 Tm 4:1–4; Ti 2:15; 3:8–11). In other words, the scripture views teaching primarily as a governing function, a function performed by elders, masters, and others with positions of government. In this context, the connection between teaching, exercising authority, and being subordinate can be seen more clearly.

The final word that needs attention is *authentein*, which is translated

not meant to have hierarchical functions of teaching and ministering in the Church. Has the Apostle’s precept been violated then? We can give a clear answer: No. In reality, it is not a matter of a title entailing hierarchical teaching functions . . .” (In *The Pope Speaks* 15, no. 3 [Fall 1970]: 221.) The change depends on a different usage of the title “Doctor,” one that does not connote a position of authoritative teaching in the church.

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“exercise authority” or “usurp authority.” *Authentein* only occurs once in the New Testament and is never used in the Septuagint, so there is no scriptural background for interpreting its meaning. The word could simply mean “exercise authority” and is normally translated accordingly. However, because of its etymology, it is possible that *authentein* conveys the notion of exercising authority on one’s own account (without authorization) or on one’s own terms (arbitrarily or autocratically). The former sense would point to a translation like “usurp authority,” the latter to a translation like “domineer.”

The meaning of the passage differs according to whether *authentein* is taken to mean “exercise authority,” “usurp authority,” or “domineer.”⁶ If it means simply “exercise authority,” the passage would therefore prohibit all exercise of authority over man by woman. If it means “usurp authority,” there are two possible different interpretations. The first is that *authentein* (“usurp”) indicates that every time a woman takes authority over a man, she is usurping authority because it does not belong to her. This too implies that all exercise of authority by woman over man is *ipso facto* wrong. A second possible interpretation of “usurping authority” holds that the passage forbids her to usurp authority over men, that is, to take it in an improper way. According to this interpretation, a woman could be placed in a position of authority over men if done properly. The passage would then prohibit only usurpers, like Athaliah. Finally, *authentein* could mean “domineer.” If this were its meaning, the passage would only forbid a woman to exercise authority over men if she were doing it in an autocratic way.

The possible meanings of the word *authentein* allow two different interpretations of verses 11–12. The first interpretation is that these verses forbid woman’s exercise of authority over man, with the possible implication that every time she does so she is usurping authority. The second interpretation is that these verses forbid woman to exercise authority over man only when she usurps that authority or exercises it in an arbitrary or domineering way. The whole passage would then simply be a prohibition of wrongful use of authority over men, not a complete prohibition of woman’s authority over man.

This second interpretation has been developed in a variety of ways. Some have suggested that the passage was aimed at wealthier women who thought their social position guaranteed them a leadership position. Others have speculated that the targets were bossy and domineering women in whose houses the church was meeting, or women who were publicly demeaning their husbands, or untrained or ungifted women who were at-

tempting to act as teachers. Though no one appears to have suggested this, following this second interpretation, the passage could also be directed at women well-versed in Christianity and spiritual matters who felt that they should be teachers despite the fact that they had no gift for leadership nor proper authorization to teach.

The major objection to the second interpretation—that the passage only prohibits wrongful exercise of authority—is the overall construction of the passage. The prohibition in the passage reads: “Let woman learn in quietness in all subordination. I do not permit woman to teach or to exercise authority over man. She is to remain in quietness.” First, no hint is given here or elsewhere in the passage that the concern is only with some women who are wrongly handling authority. The passage focuses simply on women; it was preceded by a parallel exhortation to men. Secondly, the terms “teach” and “exercise authority” are parallel. They are intentionally linked. The kind of teaching meant in the passage is allied to exercising authority; the kind of exercising authority which is meant is undoubtedly the kind which would accompany teaching. Authority and teaching are also parallel to subordination and quietness. Hence, the passage prohibits woman from taking a position where man is subordinate to her. The prohibition is not simply directed at some disorderly or untrained women acting improperly.

Thirdly, if the ruling was aimed at people wrongly exercising authority, it would be stated in a way that is applicable to men as well as women. Men are not free from such problems. If the writer intended to warn against the wrongful exercise of authority, he would have worded the passage differently—to keep people from supposing that all women are intended and to deal with the men who might fall into the same problem.

Finally, these verses about authority and teaching are followed by a justification which involves the story of Adam and Eve—how woman was created in relation to man. This clearly indicates that the rule concerns something that is out of place because it is women who are doing it, not because women are doing it in the wrong way. In short, the evidence shows that the passage concerns women because they are women and men because they are men. It does not deal with individual women who happen to be handling themselves wrongly. The passage simply prohibits women from exercising authority over men.

Some hold that the apostle prohibited women’s teaching because they were uneducated, that is, because of a condition universal to women of his day (but no longer true today). However, there is no hint of this in the

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passage either. If the prohibition was aimed at untrained or uneducated teachers, it would have forbidden both men and women to teach if they were uneducated. In fact, Ephesus was undoubtedly a place where some of the women would have been more educated than many or most of the men. Several educated pagan women held influential positions in society, and the Christian woman Priscilla was well enough educated to instruct an intellectual like Apollos.⁷ Women as well as men could have been trained in Christian teaching. Some of the deaconesses and workers in apostolic teams must have received such training. Thus there is no reason to think that the ruling in 1 Timothy 2:8–15 was given to make sure that teachers were educated. It is an instruction that women are not to teach men or exercise authority over men, and it is grounded in the roles associated with the way God created men and women.

1 Timothy 2:8–15 therefore concerns the role of women in relation to the role of men. It is a passage which gives direction to women because they are women and not because they are untrained or disorderly. Moreover, this passage links teaching and exercising authority to subordination and quietness. In other words, the passage concerns relationships of authority and subordination, and forbids a woman to hold a position of authority over men in the Christian community. Women are not allowed to hold positions of government in the Christian community—positions such as elder/overseer.* The ground which is given for this prohibition in 1 Timothy 2:11–12 is subordination based on the way men and women were created. In other words, the grounds lie in the basic social structure of the Christian community as it is ordered in terms of the roles and relationships of men and women. The passage, then, is a rule that states that those with governmental responsibility in the Christian community should not be women.

Some hold that the phrase “I do not permit” limits this rule. They argue that one apostle—the writer of 1 Timothy—is regulating the churches under his care, possibly in response to a specific disorder, and was not issuing a teaching intended for all Christians.⁸ To be sure, the vigor of his words does indicate that the apostle was trying to deal with some disorder and that he was exercising his personal authority. However, this does not mean that he intended his words as a personal ruling applying only to his churches.

* The conclusion that women are not to hold such positions of government is further confirmed by the context of the 1 Timothy passage on men and women. The epistle continues immediately with a section on the process of choosing overseers (probably meaning elders here) and deacons or servants. This indicates that the concern is with governmental positions.

First, as was pointed out above, the way he states his ruling indicates that he understood it as applying to all women because they are women, not because of some special circumstances—in his churches or among particular women. His situation called for a new assertion of this ruling, either because Christian women were assuming an improper position or because he was worried about the influence of non-Christian women on his people. Asia Minor was the place where women in the ancient world were freest to take positions of leadership and influence.⁹ But the statement of the ruling would not in any way indicate that he was dealing with the situation on any other grounds than to assert a ruling that would apply to all women, whether in his churches or in some other.

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Secondly, the phrase “I do not permit” no more indicates that the apostle is delivering a personal rule than the phrase “my gospel” in 2 Timothy 2:18 indicates that he had a separate or personal gospel for his own churches. More likely, he used the first person to back up the ruling with his own authority. 1 Timothy 2:12, then, is analogous to 1 Corinthians 11:16 as a passage in which a rule universal to the Christian people is reaffirmed on the basis of the apostle’s own personal authority. It is a personal reaffirmation, given by someone with the necessary personal authority to give such a reaffirmation, based upon universal teaching, and contained in a book probably intended to be something like a church order. All the evidence points to the conclusion that this passage has been preserved for us in the canon of scripture as a basic ruling on the roles of men and women in community leadership. This is the light in which the patristic commentators viewed 1 Timothy 2:8–15.¹⁰

This interpretation leaves us with many questions about the application of the prohibition against women teaching. According to the above interpretation, 1 Timothy 2 does not prohibit all teaching by women. As was observed in Chapter Five, women were expected to teach under certain circumstances and 1 Timothy 2 does not cancel or contradict that expectation.* This passage prohibits women from holding positions of authority in the Christian community such that men would be subordinate to them. It reserves to men the kind of teaching which is an exercise of authority over men or over the community as a whole. However, there

* See Chapter Five, pp. 107–110. Perhaps it is significant that the passage which exhorts older women to “teach” younger women (Ti 2:3, RSV) avoids the use of the word *didaskein*. This may indicate that the teaching of women by women, because it did not involve the older women or the deaconesses having authority over the younger wives, could not be considered “teaching” in the sense that *didaskein* would have conveyed.

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remain serious questions of application. 1 Timothy 2:12 has been used as an argument against allowing women to teach Sunday school or catechism and against their entrance into theological schools. It is difficult to see which of these would conflict with the passage and which not. The difficulty in applying the passage does not arise from an unclarity in the meaning of the passage, but from the difference between the approach to teaching taken by the modern church (and the modern world) and the approach of the early Christians. Teaching today is less a way of exercising authority in a relationship, and more an indoctrination or a transfer of information. Therefore, it is difficult to understand in many situations which contemporary teaching would qualify as the kind of teaching the passage is concerned with. Such issues of application will be considered in the later chapters of this book. At this point it is enough to note that the rule in 1 Timothy states clearly that men are to exercise governmental authority in the Christian community, and the kind of teaching discussed in the epistle is an expression of the exercise of that authority.*

The Grounding of the Passage

THE remainder of 1 Timothy 2:8–15 provides the reasons for the directive about women teaching and exercising authority. Like other key texts, this passage turns to Genesis and God's purposes in creation. Two reasons from Genesis are summoned to justify the rule: First, that Adam was formed before Eve; and, second, that Adam was not deceived but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. The first reason is possibly the main one since it is given first. 1 Corinthians 11:8–9 gives the same reason for woman having man as her head. 1 Corinthians 11 emphasizes woman's origins from man and being created for him, while 1 Timothy 2 emphasizes precedence. Both, however, point to the same basis. This reason needs no

* 1 Timothy 2 has many similarities with 1 Corinthians 14, enough to raise a significant issue over whether they are saying the same thing or something different. There are two clear differences between them: (1) 1 Corinthians 14 concerns something any woman might do in community gatherings, whereas 1 Timothy 2 seems to focus more clearly on the possibility of particular women taking positions of authority in the community; and (2) 1 Corinthians 14 seems to be more concerned with women asking questions in instructional situations while 1 Timothy 2 seems to be more concerned with actual teaching itself. How one sees their relationship depends on how one interprets each of the passages. However, if the exegesis given above is correct, then 1 Corinthians 14 is the broader passage concerned with all participation of women in teaching situations and the prohibition of speaking is based on the fittingness of certain kinds of speech in regard to her subordination, whereas 1 Timothy 2 is more specifically dealing with the possibility of a woman actually doing the teaching.

further elaboration since it was treated in the discussion of Genesis 2 and 1 Corinthians 11. However, the second reason is a new one and has given rise to considerable debate.

The Woman Was Deceived

The introduction of the deception of the first woman into the argument is troublesome for many. First, it appears to lay the whole blame for the Fall on woman. Eve is not blamed for the Fall anywhere else in the New Testament.¹¹ Paul's primary teaching lays the main responsibility on Adam, not on the woman:

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As sin came into the world through one man and death through sin . . . For if many died through one man's trespass . . . If, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man . . . Then, as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men . . . For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners . . . (Rom 5:12, 15, 17, 18, 19)

To be sure, the stress on "one man" is intended to provide a basis for the comparison with the one man, Christ, the one of whom Adam is the type. Nonetheless, the main responsibility for the Fall must belong to Adam as the father of the race.

Some hold that the difference between the teaching in 1 Timothy 2:14 and that in Romans 5 is so great that it proves that Paul did not write 1 Timothy, since he takes a position incompatible with the position in Romans.¹² Whatever judgment one makes about the authorship of 1 Timothy, such a view misunderstands the statement in 1 Timothy 2:14. It is, in fact, compatible with Romans 5. For the argument developed in 1 Timothy 2:13–15, as well as that in Romans 5, is that it would be an embarrassment for the woman to assume the main responsibility for the family and to bear the main burden of the guilt. Such an understanding would cut as much at the view of the man-woman relationship expressed in the statement "Adam was formed first, then Eve" as it would at the first Adam–second Adam typology in Romans 5. Actually, verse 14 does not state that the woman bears the main responsibility for the Fall. The verse rather states only that the woman was deceived. Being deceived was her role in the Fall, and that fact affects the appropriateness of women teaching and exercising authority. The question of the main responsibility for turning away from God is not addressed in the passage. One could presume, from his

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precedence and consequent governing authority, that man bore the final responsibility and hence for the author of 1 Timothy as well sin came into the world through a male. However, all that is explicitly stated is that Adam was not deceived—a fact which might well have been seen by the author as increasing, not decreasing, Adam’s responsibility. In short, the view expressed in 1 Timothy 2:14 is at least compatible with Romans 5.

Some find the role of the deception of the woman in the argument of 1 Timothy 2:8–15 as problematic because it bases the subordination of woman to man on the results of the Fall. If a rule about the roles of men and women is based on the “curses” that were given as a result of the Fall, then the rule should be reversed by the work of Christ. Here again the problem is a supposed inconsistency between 1 Timothy 2:8–15 and the rest of New Testament teaching or between this passage and other epistles that a particular commentator holds as authentically Pauline. Such considerations in their various forms do not rest upon a careful understanding of 1 Timothy 2:14–15. In fact, Paul does not found the subordination of woman on the consequences of the Fall, but on creation.¹³ His appeal is primarily to the fact that man was created first.

Verses 14–15 do concern the Fall and its consequences, but they do not justify the difference in roles between men and women or prohibit women from teaching by appealing to the consequences of the Fall or to the “curses.” Rather, verses 14–15 refer to a condition that was a cause of the Fall rather than a result of the Fall. Verse 15, as will be discussed further on, possibly affirms that the work of Christ overcomes the consequences of the Fall, but without implying that the redemption abrogates the role difference between men and women. Women’s “deception,” as stated by verse 14, did not occur before the Fall, but it was the first step of the Fall and occurred well before the human race faced the judgment of God or began to suffer the consequences of the Fall. The point made by 1 Timothy 2:14 actually rests on the fact that it was Eve as she was created to be who was deceived. The verse simply states that the first woman, created the way God intended her to be, was deceived.*

This fact, then, is given as grounds for the rule that woman should not teach or exercise authority over man. There are two acceptable explanations for this line of reasoning.¹⁴ One common explanation holds

* Nor do we need, in order to make sense of the passage, to hold that it presupposes that once Eve was deceived she began to teach Adam, nor that she used to teach Adam before the Fall but the privilege was taken away from her after the Fall, as some commentators do. The argument only rests on the fact that she was deceived.

that 1 Timothy 2:14 teaches that women are more easily deceived than men.¹⁵ This explanation can also be rephrased in a less negative way. According to such an approach, 1 Timothy 2:14 states that woman is more influenceable (open) or susceptible to spiritual influences than man.¹⁶ In some circumstances this quality makes her more easily deceived.* In other circumstances, however, the quality makes her more open to faith. Men's greater ability to resist deception makes them more capable of being a governor of the community and of maintaining the teaching of the community. They are better able to achieve one of the main purposes of those with governing authority: to provide stability and to protect the community against alien spiritual influences and deception. Those who hold such a view will often argue that history supports their interpretation. Shortly after 1 Timothy was written (perhaps even at the very time it was being written), women took a prominent role in Gnostic sects, a more prominent role than the one they held in the leadership among orthodox Christians. Women were similarly prominent in the development of Montanism. A case can be made for the view that women can be found clustering around new spiritual movements, both good and bad, in greater numbers than men.¹⁷ In short, one could reasonably hold that women have been historically more open to spiritual influences than men, and that they have been less inclined than men to concern themselves with establishing good order and sound doctrine.

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However, there is another way to understand the statement "the woman was deceived," a way which does not rely on empirical evidence for accepting the truth of the statement. Contemporary people who see the statement "the woman was deceived" as the basis of a role difference are inclined to look immediately for empirical evidence for it. Many accept the account of Adam and Eve as a revelation, but are not inclined to argue from it as the basis of a practice or rule in human relationships unless they can see that it has an empirical foundation. Hence one would ask about the sense in which woman is more deceivable than man and expect evidence for the assertion. Jewish or Christian writers in the New Testament period, however, would be more inclined to think typologically. That is, they would look at the pattern as presented in Genesis (or anywhere else in revelation) and see that pattern as a standard for later practice. The writer of 1 Timothy notes that "(the) woman was deceived," not "woman is deceivable." The

* 2 Timothy 3:6 provides a possible parallel. It could, however, have the same meaning as 1 Timothy 2:14, or it could simply mean "those women who are weak." That all women are weak is not the only reasonable interpretation.

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typological mode of thought would assume that if the woman was deceived and not the man, then the scripture must be indicating something about the place of women. Otherwise, scripture would not have preserved that feature in the story. Eve is a type of “woman” and the fact that she was deceived is a part of this portrayal. It is a fact which a typological mode of thought would see as a basis for what “woman” should do or not do. Therefore, 1 Timothy 2 might not be concerned with the deceivability of woman, but simply with the fact that “the woman was deceived.”

Typological thinking and empirical generalization are two different modes of thought. Typological thinking focuses on the concrete event—the “type” which reveals the general purpose or intention of God. Empirical generalization focuses on verifiable facts and observed regularities. Contemporary people are rarely satisfied simply with a typological approach. They want to know the empirical consequences of a typological consideration. For example, does the statement “the woman was deceived” imply that “women are more deceivable than men”?* This issue will be taken up again in Chapter Sixteen. At this point it is enough to note that the interpretation of the statement “the woman was deceived” does not necessarily imply that “women are more deceivable than men (in certain circumstances).” The human author himself might have simply intended a typological consideration when he wrote the passage, a consideration which in his view was adequate to establish the purpose of God for the roles of men and women.

“The Woman Will Be Saved . . .”

1 Timothy 2:14–15 contains another difficult sentence: “yet woman will be saved through bearing children, if she continues in faith and love and holiness with modesty.” Some have found this verse difficult because they think it defines the whole destiny of woman as childbearing. Others have even labeled the passage as heretical, because they think it states that childbearing rather than the atoning work of Christ will save women.

* There is another possible understanding of the “empirical consequences” than that discussed in the text; namely, the passage could be envisioning empirical consequences through a more “spiritual” causality. It could mean that if Christians fail to perceive God’s purposes for man and woman as manifest in the fact the Eve was deceived, and instead give women authority over men, they open the door to bad spiritual consequences because they will be at odds with the way God works to protect his people. Biblical thought often envisions spiritual consequences depending not upon empirically investigable chains of causality but on spiritually revealed ones (God’s faithfulness to his promises, decrees, covenant, etc.). Hence, scientific investigation might not be the proper method for looking into the significance of the typology here, yet there could still be empirical consequences.

Four main interpretations of the verse have been advanced and even incorporated into translations.* There is a linguistic basis to the different interpretations, as well as a basis in the context and flow of thought in 1 Timothy 2. The linguistic discussion centers primarily on the Greek phrase *dia tēs teknogonias*. *Dia* can mean “through,” “during,” and “by means of,” and *tēs teknogonias* can be translated either “childbearing” or “the childbearing” or “the bearing of the child.” The following are the main interpretations (and translations):

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1. The sentence should be translated “she will be saved by child bearing” or even “she will be saved by motherhood,” meaning either (a) that childbearing is salvific for her or (b) that childbearing is so much part of her call that she will find salvation in fulfilling this call (in the sense that one is saved by fulfilling faithfully and righteously the duties of one’s station in life).¹⁸
2. The sentence should be translated “she will be saved through childbearing/motherhood,” with the implication that she will be saved even though she is bearing children. This interpretation means that motherhood is a worthy calling, and not a consequence of the Fall and curses, even though it followed upon the Fall. The sentence reassures women that the bearing of children is not sinful, and would therefore counter those who forbade marriage (cf. 1 Tm 4:3).¹⁹
3. The sentence should be translated “she will be saved during childbearing.” This interpretation means that even though childbearing has become burdensome due to the consequences of the Fall (Gn 3:16), women will be saved throughout those difficulties if they keep persevering in faith and love and holiness. Even though woman’s childbearing has suffered from woman’s (and Adam’s) Fall, she can expect the help of the Lord in the very area of the consequences that came from that Fall.²⁰
4. The sentence should be translated “she will be saved by the birth of the child” or “she will be saved by The Childbearing.” This interpretation makes the phrase a reference to the birth of Christ. It means that even though woman became a transgressor, she will be saved by the birth of Christ, the seed of the woman (Gn 3:15). The passage would then be a reference to the central role of woman in salvation by bearing the

* These four major interpretations can be found in various translations of the New Testament. (For instance, NEB gives #2 [or #1], and cites #3 and #4 in the margin. RSV also cites #4 in the margin.) Since the Greek is most literally translated in a manner which leaves the question open, it is at times difficult to tell which interpretation is being preferred by a given translation.

savior who overcame everything that woman helped to cause when she was deceived and became a transgressor.²¹

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An analysis of the merits of these four interpretations goes beyond the scope of this book. The passage is difficult and probably none of the interpretations will ever be established definitively. However, two observations will prove helpful. First, the notion that childbearing is salvific for women would indeed be at odds with the central teaching of the New Testament that salvation is through Jesus Christ. However, this is a highly uncertain interpretation and it is a fragile basis for an assertion that 1 Timothy 2 is at odds with the rest of the New Testament. Given the seriousness of the contradiction being posited, it would be more responsible to view the conflict between this interpretation and the rest of early Christian teaching (including the rest of 1 Timothy) as evidence that the interpretation is unlikely. Secondly, the weight of the various interpretations see 1 Timothy 2:15 as an assertion that childbearing itself is not cursed (as one might believe from Gn 3:16), or as an assertion that the Lord will protect woman in the very area where she is experiencing the painful consequences of her transgression. In other words, 1 Timothy 2:15 is probably a qualification, somewhat akin to 1 Corinthians 11:11–12, to prevent readers from misunderstanding a teaching that could be viewed as negative toward the spiritual position of women or toward childbearing. This view is supported by the overall context of 1 Timothy—the letter counters currents that depreciated sex and marriage. 1 Timothy 2:15 is not a passage which sees the destiny of women or the salvation of women in childbearing and motherhood, but instead is essentially a passage which safeguards the spiritual worth of childbearing and motherhood.

Finally, 1 Timothy 2:1–15 does not base its approach to the structure of the Christian community on the defectiveness of woman. Woman's way of falling is no more an indication of her innate defectiveness than man's way of falling. Both man and woman were created with different roles and different strengths and weaknesses. Their characteristic weaknesses played their roles in the Fall. Being deceived was the way woman is vulnerable; disobedience was the way man is vulnerable (Rom 5:19). 1 Timothy 2 does not imply that woman is more defective than man, but that they are defective in different ways. To be truer to the text (since the text is not concerned with defectiveness), we should say that man and woman are different from one another and have different roles in the life of the Christian people and in the plan of salvation as well as different

points of vulnerability. Woman functions in complementarity to man. She complemented him in the Fall, to the misfortune of the human race, and she complemented him in redemption, to the blessing of the human race. The former showed her weakness, the latter her strength.

The New Testament places an importance upon woman's complementary role to the role of man in the plan of redemption, an importance that is a different illustration of the same underlying reality being asserted in 1 Timothy 2:14. Woman was the one deceived because she was the first to believe the serpent. But woman was also the first to believe God in the redemption. In the resurrection account, it is the women who first come to believe in the resurrection. Peter and the apostles do not believe them at first. It is undoubtedly significant either that the women were the first to believe or that the scripture preserved the memory that they were. The woman's faith in the event that overcame the Fall corresponds to her position in the Fall.²² Moreover, the man's role in the resurrection corresponds to his role in the Fall. Just as it was not until the man who was the head of the race joined his wife in transgression that the whole human race fell, so it was not until the apostles, the men with the governing responsibility for the group of disciples, joined the women in faith that the Christian people found new life in the resurrection.

Another example of the same truth can be found at the beginning of the gospel in the birth of Jesus. Luke presents two people who receive an annunciation from an angel: Zechariah and Mary.²³ Zechariah disbelieves the message and is struck dumb as a result. Mary receives the message with faith and submission. Consequently, according to the teaching of many of the Fathers, Mary became the new Eve, the one who reversed what Eve had done.²⁴ By accepting the word of God, she became the one who bore the messiah who was the savior of the world. It was only through a woman that God became man, and not a disobedient or deceived woman, but a woman of faith and submission. She was saved by her son, like the rest of the human race, but her role in his birth gave her the position of the new Eve. God's plan was not to save the human race apart from woman (1 Cor 11:11), but to save the human race with a savior born of woman (Gal 4:4).

The Grounding
of the Passage

► 9

SUMMARY ► THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING AS A WHOLE

THIS CHAPTER will summarize the teaching contained in the six key texts discussed in Chapters Four, Seven, and Eight. Key texts are those texts which explicitly and authoritatively address our subject—the roles of men and women. Of course other material from the New Testament is relevant for understanding the New Testament approach to the roles of men and women. Much of this additional material has already been considered, and Chapter Ten will consider further scriptural data in an attempt to see the teaching and patterns in a historical perspective. This chapter, however, simply summarizes those passages which explicitly teach about the roles of men and women.

This summary is a synthesis of the New Testament teaching, not a descriptive summary of attitudes toward men and women in the New Testament. The texts are approached here as teaching, instruction given authoritatively to direct the life of the Christian people. That teaching will be synthesized and the direction which emerges from it as a whole will be stated. Of course, the six key texts contain different perspectives and approaches, but they do not cancel one another out. They are basically compatible. This synthesis may leave out observations which would be of interest if the goal were to create a descriptive summary for historical purposes, or for the purposes of studying biblical theology as found in various works and authors. It does not, however, have to be imposed upon the texts by doing violence to any of them, or ignoring relevant elements of their teaching.

Summary of the New Testament Teaching

THE New Testament teaching can be summarized in the four points which follow.

- A. *The primary context of the New Testament teaching on the roles of men and women is the teaching on the nature of the redeemed community as the new humanity.* The Christian people are called to be the human race living according to God's original intention. They are able to fulfill that call because they have been restored in Christ to the image of God—corporately and individually. Men and women alike share in this fundamental truth. Men and women alike are fully in Christ, equally forming part of his body. Both are called to fulfill God's commission for humanity. From this point of view, the fact that men and women are Christians or (redeemed) humans is more important than the fact that they are males and females. Moreover, the daily relating of men and women to one another is not primarily determined by their sex differences. Rather, their relating is determined by their status as brothers and sisters in the Lord who are called to love one another and build one another up in him.

This last point could be stressed even more. An extensive discussion of the roles of men and women such as the one in this book seems to imply that nothing in human relationships is as important as the fact that human beings are male and female. The danger is that of overemphasizing the importance of sex differences—to the point of treating men and women as two utterly different creatures. In the New Testament teaching, the male-female difference is very important and conditions much of the way that members of the Christian community relate to one another. However, it is far from the most important aspect of human beings. Most New Testament teaching applies to men and women alike. The primary directives for daily life found in the New Testament are instructions to love one another, to forgive one another as Christ forgave us, to put away resentment, strife, and all the other obstacles to the love that Christ teaches. This daily life of mutual care and service is the core of the New Testament message about how to live as a Christian, and it applies to men and women alike.

- B. *Within the redeemed community, relationships have an order based on the structure of the roles of men and women.* This order stems from God's purposes for the human race as expressed in his original creation. There are two key elements in this order of relationships: (1) within the family, the man is the head of the woman and has the primary governmental authority over the family; (2) within the Christian people as a whole, the elders—those with governmental authority—are men. The order for the people as a whole is based upon and supports the family order. The purpose of the order in both the family and the Christian community is to create a unity where each member is ordered under another so that the family or community can function effectively as one. Such a unity and harmony also makes possible proper care for all the members of the community. The early Christians strove to be a body in good order, with every need being cared for and with the whole body providing an image of God's purpose for the human race.
- C. *The basic order of the roles of men and women in the Christian community is incarnated in certain explicit expressions.* Men and women should dress differently at the assemblies of the community (1 Cor 11:2–16). Men and women should likewise speak at the assemblies differently (1 Cor 14:33–35). Women, at least in the appropriate situations, should manifest character traits of respectfulness and quietness that express their submission to the men that they are subordinate to (1 Pt 3:4; 1 Tm 2:11). The men should honor their women such that the value and the respect they deserve is not undercut by their subordination (1 Pt 3:7). In essence, the basic order for men and women should be worked into the daily life of the Christian people. It should be expressed so that it can be seen and experienced, not just inferred from hearing the correct teaching.

There are some significant unclarities about the manner of cultural expression taught among the early Christians. The scripture directs women to avoid active participation in the teaching of the community and perhaps other directional matters that are being discussed, but exactly what might be permitted and prohibited is not clear. The concrete situation to which the rule applied is no longer part of our experience. The scripture directs women to wear some kind of headcovering at the assemblies of the community, but what qualifies as a suitable headcovering is unclear. The scripture teaches husbands to honor their wives, but what constitutes honoring them is

not recorded. In short, the scripture clearly teaches that there should be an appropriate expression in the community of the order of the roles of men and women. However, the exact manner of expression is not stated clearly enough that a contemporary group of Christians could try to copy the early Christians exactly and be confident that they were actually succeeding. In other words, the New Testament teaching encourages adequate cultural expressions, but does not enjoin an exact pattern of cultural expressions.

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New Testament
Teaching

- D. *In the early Christian communities, a broader role difference between men and women underlay the specific injunctions in the New Testament about man-woman order and about expressions of that order.* The teaching about man-woman order made sense because it ordered a role difference that was important in the conduct of daily life. The full roles of men and women as they were lived out in the early Christian community can only be pieced together. These roles are not taught or enjoined in the New Testament. But it is important to grasp some element of this broad difference between men and women in their roles, because that difference underlies the meaning of the statements about government in the family and Christian community.

Three points are especially helpful for filling out the picture provided by the key points of order stated in B:

1. Women normally functioned in positions of responsibility for others, but subordinate to the men. In the family, wives were to rule their households under their husbands; in the community, women were appointed as deaconesses (widows) to assist the men pastors in caring for the people. Women were not passive. They took active responsibility, but in a way shaped by their working relationship with the man who had the primary governmental authority.
2. In “rearing” and caring for the Christian people, men took the primary responsibility for other men, and women for other women.
3. Men and women had different spheres of responsibility in each communal situation. The men were “providers” and the women served the more immediate needs. Men and women between them divided up the responsibilities for the family and community.

The New Testament teaching on the roles of men and women is a teaching for relationships in the Christian community. Different roles for men

and women provide a way of patterning relationships so that the life of the community is built up most effectively. The order enjoined in the New Testament is primarily intended for communal relationships—the family and the Christian community as a whole. It does not necessarily or easily apply to functional relationships of the sort one might find in a modern factory. The New Testament teaching does not focus on jobs or activities, nor is it necessarily based on ability differences. The teaching centers on relationships and patterns for those relationships which adequately take into account the differences between men and women as they were created. It uses those differences as an advantage to build the life of the Christian community.

The scriptural teaching deals with the social structure of a people—the early Christian community. This can help us to understand it in a new light. It does not derive from some prejudice against women or a biased view about women's weakness or lesser competence. Rather, behind the teaching is an instinct for how daily life should be patterned. Women were needed as women. For the communal life of the Christian people to flourish, the women's role was essential and had to be filled competently. Later chapters of this book will take up the question of whether the social structure taught by scripture can provide helpful guidelines for the social structure of contemporary Christians who live in a technological society. However, it can profitably be pointed out now that much of what Christians need to have successful community was performed by men and women in the early church instinctively because they knew how to care for social life according to their roles.

Authority of the Teaching

THE above four points (A through D) summarize the teaching of the New Testament on the roles of men and women. A question still remains: Which elements of New Testament teaching are taught in a directive way? First, the principles of order are clearly enjoined. Women are urged to subordinate themselves to their husbands in the passages in Ephesians 5, Colossians 3, 1 Peter 3, (and Titus 2). 1 Timothy 2 requires that those who govern the whole people be men. The explicit directive in 1 Timothy 2 is strengthened by the instructions for the choosing of elders in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 and the choosing of apostles in Acts 1, all of which envision only choosing men. Secondly, Paul strongly enjoins some of the expressions of

the role differences between men and women—namely, the wearing and not wearing of headcoverings and the rule about speaking in instructional situations in the assemblies of the community. However, the “occasional” character of these passages suggests that Paul was concerned about two expressions of role difference among many, two that happened to be at issue. The implication is that Paul would have been equally concerned about other violations of what he considered the proper order. In other words, the passages in 1 Corinthians enjoin proper expression of the order for men and women in a broader way than the two items under consideration. To summarize, the New Testament provides us with (1) strong directives about order in men’s and women’s relationships; and (2) directives about expressions of that order which are considered important to maintain it.

Authority of
the Teaching

The New Testament does not enjoin the broader pattern of roles (point D) which underlies the teachings on order with the same directiveness. The pastoral epistles give instructions for the order of the Christian community which incarnate some of the broader pattern of roles. It would be too strong to say that the pastoral epistles insist on these patterns, but it probably would not be too strong to say that they expect these patterns will be followed. There is, however, another important reason for taking the broader pattern of rules seriously. The directives on order and on the expression of this order are not given legalistically, as if bare compliance with the letter of the law is all that the New Testament envisioned. These directives make sense only within a broader understanding of role differences for men and women that the directives were regulating. If the only difference between men’s and women’s roles in the Christian community were that the heads of the family and the governors of the community were men, keeping the rules would tend to be legalistic. A broader role difference is necessary for the directives on order to work maximally well. The New Testament does not insist that Christians for all time follow Israelite or early Christian social patterns in all their detail. But the New Testament does expect Christians to structure their relationships as men and women in a pattern similar to that of the early Christians.

Finally, it would probably not be accurate to say that the New Testament enjoins oneness between men and women in Christ. Rather, that oneness is given as the goal and the background. It is the fact upon which everything else rests. Christ was sent to be the source of a new humanity, and men and women alike are in Christ. There are consequences which follow from this fact. Both men and women worship together in spirit and in truth as responsible members of the body of Christ and both receive the

same care and service. No distinctions may be made in spiritual status or in love between men and women. Also, in order to be one person, there should be an order of subordination which creates a strong unity, and this order builds upon role differences between men and women. Both sameness of status and love and differences in role follow from the same fact; they are two ways of achieving the oneness intended by God. Thus, practical consequences follow from the fact, but the fact itself is more of a truth upon which a way of life rests than something which can properly be said to be enjoined. Of course, oneness between men and women in Christ is taught with full authority and is by no means less in importance than explicit injunctions.

The Intent of the Teaching

IT is clear that scripture teaches the basic pattern of men's and women's roles authoritatively. However, the intent or motive of the teaching must also be examined. An understanding of intent will allow us to better apply the teaching. For instance, if the scriptural teaching on the roles of men and women was intended to protect the early church against proto-Gnostic currents, or to deal with a handful of difficult women in Corinth and Ephesus, it could easily be decided that this teaching is not intended for us. In such a case, it could be agreed that the teaching was given authoritatively, but one might not feel called upon to respond to it any more than if we heard our father tell our little brother that he was not to cross the street. The intent of the teaching will be examined simply by an analysis of what the key texts are saying. The next chapter will concern itself with a discussion of the historical influences on the passages.

One approach to this question is that the key texts on men's and women's roles were all written to deal with a particular situation peculiar to the early church. The passages are often interpreted in terms of a specific difficulty in some of the first-century churches. For instance, it is sometimes said that the rules about speech, headcovering, and teaching were aimed at women who were talking too much and making a disturbance, or were designed to avoid scandal and ridicule from Greeks, or to avoid having women appear like prostitutes, or to avoid having them relapse into paganism. All these reasons have been discussed in the foregoing interpretations of the passages. Sometimes this position is stated in broader terms: The rules were laid down either because women were not educated enough or

because the writer wanted to ensure that Christian women fit in with the customs of the surrounding peoples.

The following is a list of these reasons, drawn from writers who think the New Testament teaching was aimed at particular problems or cultural circumstances in the early church. They say that the key texts were intended:

The Intent of
the Teaching

1. to avoid scandal and ridicule from the Greeks (1 Cor 11)
2. to ensure that Christian women fit in with the customs of the surrounding peoples (1 Cor 11, 14)
3. to keep Christian women from looking like prostitutes (1 Cor 11)
4. to prevent women from relapsing into paganism (1 Cor 11, 14; 1 Tm 2)
5. to enhance evangelism by doing things in a way more acceptable to Greeks or Jews (1 Cor 11, 14)
6. to avoid scandal to the Jews (1 Cor 14, perhaps 1 Tm 2)
7. to handle a situation in which women were talking too much, and causing a disturbance (1 Cor 14)
8. to correct a situation in which the women seated on one side of the assembly were calling out questions to their husbands on the other (1 Cor 14)
9. to restrict women in their speech in open meetings where their freedom might offend newcomers (1 Cor 14)
10. to keep women from speaking or teaching because they are not sufficiently educated (1 Cor 14, 1 Tm 2)
11. to produce conformity to the social order of the time (Col 3)
12. to enable Christian women to win their non-Christian husbands (1 Pt 3)*

This list falls into two broad categories of explanation: (a) explanations that see the teaching as aimed at situations in the churches (#1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8, #9, #10, #12); and (b) explanations that see the teaching as

* Some scholars propose that 1 Corinthians 11 and 14 were intended to counter specific problems in Corinth which had arisen as a result of some misapplication of Paul's eschatological teaching. It is suggested that some people in the Corinthian church were attempting to live fully in the *eschaton*, and were trying to realize in this life the lack of difference between men and women that would exist in the resurrection. This opinion is not listed because it does not interpret the passages as dealing with a specific circumstance in the life of some early churches or in the ancient world. Like the other opinions, however, it does not rest on anything stated in the text. It would, however, support the opinions given here.

designed to deal with the cultural situation of the ancient world in respect to women (#10, #11). All these views would point to something special about the situation of the New Testament church that might motivate different passages and hence make them inapplicable to modern Christians. Relatedly, all of them tend to avoid the explanation that the passages are directed to men simply because they are men and women simply because they are women.

The most important observation about this list of twelve reasons is that none of them are actually stated in the texts as the reasons for the teaching.* They are all suggestions given by various authors, hypotheses about the intention of the scriptural writer which are different than the actual reasons for the teaching given in the texts themselves. Most of these reasons are not even suggested by the texts themselves. Only #1, #11, and #12 are suggested by materials in the texts and, as has already been seen, these opinions develop the suggestions in the texts into theories that have no foundation in what the texts actually say. In fact, the key texts themselves state a rather different set of reasons and manifest a different set of concerns than those proposed by advocates of the “special situation of the early church” views.

It is interesting to compare the reasons given by the authors of the various key texts for their teaching. The following is a list drawn from the discussions in Chapters Four, Seven, and Eight of the main grounding given for all the instructions: the instructions on the sameness of status, the instructions on subordination of woman to man, and the instructions on the various practices expressing order among men and women:

1. The fear of Christ (Eph 5:21)
2. The example of Christ and the church (Eph 5:22–30)
3. The truth of the relationship (man and wife being one person) (Eph 5:28–30)
4. The one flesh of Adam and Eve in their marriage (Eph 5:31)
5. What is fitting in the Lord (Col 1:18)
6. To win the unbelieving husband (1 Pt 3:1–2)†

* See the following footnote for the possible exception.

† Both #6 on this list and #12 on the previous one cite the same reason for subordination in the same text. However, the context of the lists makes them different. In the first list this reason is cited as supporting subordination of Christian women to their husbands *only* if their husbands are non-Christian. However, as was discussed in considering 1 Peter 3 such a view is unwarranted. In the latter list, incorporating the correct interpretation, the reason is only supportive of a wife’s subordination to her husband in a particular circumstance. It is not the sole basis for the subordination of Christian women to men.

7. The value God places on a quiet and gentle spirit in women (1 Pt 3:4)
8. The example of the holy women of old (1 Pt 3:7)
9. The weakness of woman (1 Pt 3:7)
10. Women and men as joint-heirs of the grace of life (1 Pt 3:7)
11. In order that your prayers not be hindered (1 Pt 3:7)
12. Maintaining the traditions (1 Cor 11:2)
13. The order of headship (God–Christ–the man–the woman) (1 Cor 11:3)
14. The example of Christ as head and subordinate (1 Cor 11:3)
15. Man as the image and glory of God, woman as the glory of man; woman made from and for man (1 Cor 11:7–9)
16. The presence of the angels (1 Cor 11:10)
17. Man dependent upon woman, born from woman (1 Cor 11:11–12)
18. The comparison with hair (1 Cor 11:5–6, 14–15)
19. The universal practice of the churches (1 Cor 14:33b, 36) and of the churches and the apostle (1 Cor 11:2, 16)
20. Even the law’s example (1 Cor 14:37)
21. The command of the Lord (1 Cor 14:37)
22. The authority of the apostle (1 Cor 14:38; 1 Tm 2:12)
23. Adam was formed first (1 Tm 2:13)
24. Eve was deceived (1 Tm 2:14)

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the Teaching

Of these reasons, the comparison with hair (#18) is not properly speaking a grounding, since it is a comparison to strengthen a point, not an argument. It is incidentally the only item in the list which may be an appeal to something cultural. The rest fall into five main categories: (a) an appeal to authority, either that of Christ, the apostle, or the universal practice of the churches (#1, #5, #7, #12, #16, #19, #20, #21, #22); (b) the example of a model person (#2, #8, #14); (c) practical reasons leading to Christian goals, obtaining conversion to Christ and freer worship of God (#6, #11); (d) a weakness in woman (#9, #24); (e) revealed realities showing God’s purposes and intentions (#2, #3, #4, #10, #13, #14, #15, #16, #17, #23, #24).

In short, the view that the New Testament teaching on men and women derives from “the special situation of the early church” is a hypothesis unsupported by the key texts we have considered. Moreover, these texts are the only direct source of evidence for the intentions of the New Testament writers. If one prefers other reasons than those given in the key texts, one chooses conjecture and speculation based on what might seem plausible instead of the direct evidence in our possession.

New Testament
Teaching as
a Whole

There is a further view of the motivation for the teaching in the key texts that has to be considered. Some hold that the teaching in the key texts rests largely upon the scripture writers' view of the weakness, incapability, or inferiority of women. Two of the key texts do contain a reference to women's weakness: 1 Peter 3:7 and 1 Timothy 2:14. The interpretation of these two passages is somewhat problematic, as the discussions of each one have indicated, but three observations can be made with confidence. First, the passage in 1 Peter 3:7 does refer to the woman's weakness, but this reference is a basis for the injunction that the husband should honor the woman. It is not given as a reason for the woman to be subordinate to the man. Secondly, the New Testament does seem to attribute various strengths and weaknesses to both men and women, but it by no means attributes all weakness to women. Men as well as women are prone to characteristic defects. All that can be said here is that the New Testament seems to understand that men's particular combination of strengths and weaknesses better equip them for a governing position. (1 Timothy 2 is the only possible explicit reference here, depending on how it is understood.) Thirdly, the primary reason that the key texts give for role differences is not weakness in women, but God's purpose for men and women. If the relative strengths and weaknesses of men and women are a factor, it is strictly a secondary consideration.

Concluding Observations

THE key texts, then, take a different stand on the intent or motive of the New Testament teaching on the roles of men and women than the various hypotheses considered above. The reasons the texts give for the teaching are primarily (1) an appeal to something considered authoritative for the life of Christians, and (2) an appeal to revealed realities showing God's purpose and intentions. 1 Peter 3 is something of an exception to this observation, since the reasoning is primarily homiletic, either appealing to practical Christian advantages derived from following the instructions, or to the model of the holy women of old, or to the pleasure God takes in the submission of women.* Taken as a whole, however, the texts put

* Comparing the one key text traditionally attributed to Peter with those traditionally attributed to Paul reveals an interesting point. The passages in the Pauline epistles primarily appeal to the teaching about Genesis and with some frequency make an appeal to the authority of the writer (apostle) and all the churches. The passage in 1 Peter, while holding the same position

most of the weight on the appeal to authority and on the appeal to God's purpose for men and women.

Of the two primary reasons, the more fundamental is the teaching on God's purposes for men and women. It takes up the bulk of the material that grounds the practical instructions in Ephesians 5, 1 Corinthians 11, and 1 Timothy 2. In addition it lies behind Galatians 3:28. The key texts, therefore, indicate that the teaching on men and women in the New Testament is given because they are men and women (and not because of some special situation of the early church) and because God created them differently because he had different purposes for them. The second main reason—the appeal to authority—is likewise an important reason, although it is not as fundamental as the teaching on God's purpose. The appeal to authority is often a deliberate appeal to an approach taken by the highest teaching authorities of the newly formed Christian people. The consistency and strength of this appeal to authority indicates that the subject was important to the early Christians. The teaching on the roles of men and women, then, was not a casual matter, but a consciously adopted stand.

We are, therefore, faced with texts which present teaching on men and women grounded in an understanding of God's purpose for the human race and supported by authority. The argumentation in these key texts—at least that in Ephesians 5, 1 Corinthians 11, and 1 Timothy 2—would have to be considered theological and a matter of revelation. Moreover, it is based upon an understanding of some of the most fundamental truths in Christianity, for it concerns the purposes of creation as shown in the original acts of creation, the relationship of God and Christ, the relationship of Christ and the church, the fundamental meaning of the marriage relationship, the consequences of the coming of Christ, and the restoration of mankind to God's original purposes. In addition, the scripture teaches role differences between men and women as an integral part of a wider approach to the life of the Christian people, an approach that will allow the Christian people to be the new humanity that God is recreating in Christ. Any interpretation of the New Testament teaching concerning the roles of men and women which does not recognize this fact is missing

Concluding
Observations

as passages in the Pauline epistles, uses a completely different reasoning. The reasoning is less central to an argument and more homiletic (perhaps because no argument was needed for the audience of 1 Peter). The primary appeal, moreover, is to the example of Abraham and Sarah. This would at least point to a close dependence of 1 Timothy on Paul's teaching. "The woman was deceived" may not find an exact parallel in other Pauline writings, but the overall approach of 1 Timothy 2:8–15 does.

one of the most obvious features of the key texts and is missing the bulk of the evidence the texts themselves provide about their intent and motive.

New Testament
Teaching as
a Whole

The New Testament teaching about the roles of men and women is integral to its teaching about Christian personal relationships. It is not the most important of the teachings. The teaching about Christian character and Christian love is much more important. However, the teaching about men's and women's roles is no addendum to basic Christian teaching that sticks out like an ill-constructed addition to a house. Rather, it is an integrated part of an important teaching about the unity of the body of Christ and the good order that makes that unity possible. It is also grounded in some of the most important doctrines in the New Testament—the doctrines about the creation of the new humanity in Christ, the new Adam. In short, it is a teaching that the New Testament does not give grounds for passing over easily.

NOTE ON METHOD ▷ EXEGESIS

NOTE TO THE READER

This section contains some comments on how the exegesis in this book relates to some of the main currents of exegesis of the scriptural writing about the roles of men and women. This section is not essential to the argument of the book and can be skipped without missing any information or discussion that is needed for the later chapters or the main conclusions. The section is included to provide some help in understanding how this book compares to the body of literature we now have on the roles of men and women in scripture. It is designed for those readers who have some acquaintance with that body of literature.

The Exegetical Approach

WHEN someone explains what one or more scripture passages are saying, that person is giving an exegesis of scripture. Exegesis includes not only a linguistic and literary explanation of the meaning of the words, but it also involves a judgment as to what those words are referring to and what they are meant to accomplish.* Normally, however, exegesis is understood to mean the process of stating what the scripture says, and not the process of discussing how the scriptural statements are to be responded to or applied.

* A full exegesis for a Christian should involve not only a judgment about what the human author intends to assert and accomplish by the words, but also what the divine author intends to assert and accomplish.

There are views of exegesis which would extend the meaning of the word to include the application of scripture passages, but here the narrower definition is used. In other words, exegesis is one thing; application and response are something else.

Note on Method ▸ Exegesis

The first part of this book has been concerned with the teaching of the scripture on the roles of men and women. It has not attempted to discuss how that teaching would be responded to or applied. This discussion has been reserved for the last two parts of this book. A statement of teaching is not identical with a statement of exegesis. A study of New Testament teaching focuses on the authoritative statements in the New Testament that assert either what is to be believed or what is to be done, and attempts to synthesize them. An exegetical study simply describes what the New Testament says. Exegesis is foundational for a study of teaching. It is impossible to synthesize the directions the New Testament gives for an area of life without understanding what each of the relevant passages says. This excursus is not concerned so much with the statement of the New Testament teaching as with the exegetical approach which provides the foundation for it. The following comments are designed to clarify the orientation of the exegesis that went into the first part of this book.

The broad lines of the exegesis given in Chapters One to Nine of this book are relatively uncontroversial and rest on a solid support in exegetical works. The basic statement of the social structures of the early Christian community in terms of the roles of men and women (the husbands being the overall heads of the Christian family and those who exercised ultimate responsibility and authority in Christian community being chosen from among the men) is strongly supported. Also strongly supported are the basic outlines of the sketch given here of the sameness of status between men and women in Christ and the description of the theological grounding for that position. This is not to say that most of the particular points touched upon in the course of describing the New Testament approach are uncontroversial. Throughout Chapters One to Nine, an attempt was made to indicate the points of controversy and to give reasons for the approach taken to the point in question. Where this book takes controversial positions, it is almost never innovative; rather, the positions held here correspond to positions held by competent scripture scholars. However, the main outlines of the approach of the first part of this book never rest on strongly disputed exegetical positions. The exegetical approach taken in the first nine chapters is, in substance, uncontroversial.*

* In some of the more polemical works on women's roles, a key argument often depends upon

There is a stream of exegesis that could be called “liberationist exegesis” which would attempt to dispute what has been presented here, and that category of writings will be considered shortly.

It would even be accurate to describe the kind of exegesis that has been done in the first part of this book as restressing the obvious or highlighting the more likely approaches in the exegesis of scripture in the area of the roles of men and women. An example of restressing the obvious is the development of the importance of the appeal to the example of Adam and Eve in the scriptural grounding of the roles of men and women. The material in Chapter Six which states that Galatians 3:28 is an affirmation of the abolition of the spiritual differences taught by “the law” and not an affirmation of the abolition of social role differences between men and women would be an example of stressing the clearly more solid opinion. That these positions might be considered uncommon in the flood of recent literature on the biblical approach to the roles of men and women is more of a comment on what is going on in current writing on the subject than it is on the positions taken by this book.

The exegesis in this book has some distinctive features. They do not lie so much in the positions taken on current points of controversy as they do in the attention given to an aspect of the exegetical process that could be called “restatement of what the text(s) say.”¹ Much attention in exegesis is given to the linguistic and literary study of the text. Much attention is also given to the study of the situation from which the text comes. This includes a study of the events, trends, and history of ideas and institutions of the environment; a comparative analysis of the content of the passage with comparable texts in other religions and philosophies; and, when possible, a study of the author’s thought and development.² The same amount of attention, however, is many times not given to the problems of restating the text accurately for someone in the twentieth century (even by those most concerned about “the hermeneutical question”).³ To describe what

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choosing one of a number of alternative reasonable interpretations of a passage. For instance, there are books on women’s roles that base the strength of their argumentation on the view that the author in 1 Timothy 2:15 made women’s salvation consist in childbearing (and hence, the teaching in 1 Tm 2:15 was in clear contradiction to the rest of New Testament teaching; see, for example, McGrath, 36–37). While such an interpretation may have something to say for it, it is by no means the only possible interpretation, and any argumentation which asserts a contradiction, and claims to have definite evidence for it on the basis of such a disputed interpretation without making a strong case for its preferability, clearly moves in violation of good method. Perhaps one of the main reasons for not resting a case on a particular interpretation was the conviction that the main outline of the exegesis given in the first chapters of this book was well supported, and while it needed to be disentangled from confusing viewpoints, it did not need any special buttressing in terms of providing more evidence.

a text from one culture and situation says to people in a different culture and situation involves a judgment about what is an equivalent.

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For instance, it is one thing to say that the scripture states that the wife should be subordinate to her husband. It is quite another thing to describe what that subordination consists of in such a way that a woman in twentieth-century America would know whether she was doing what the writer of the scripture had in mind. It is also another thing to know whether the subordination taught in scripture is the kind of relationship between husband and wife that official Chinese Communist ideology would oppose, or whether that subordination would be counted as discrimination according to some legal definitions of the equality of men and women. Yet much writing about men and women goes from exegesis of the text to a discussion of the application or relationship of the text without carefully considering the problems of relating the two different cultural situations. Nor does this problem appear solely in discussions of application. The process of restatement goes on in the very actions of linguistic and literary study and in study of the situation of the text, because every statement of the meaning of the text that is not simply repeating the text includes some judgment of how that text should be translated into a different language and framework. Often such an exegesis is undertaken without adequately considering the problems involved in restatement.

There are three aspects of the process of restatement that often cause difficulty in the exegesis of passages connected with the roles of men and women: (1) understanding the reality being referred to; (2) understanding what activities and relationships have similar functions in different cultural systems; and (3) translating accurately into a different conceptual system.

First, New Testament discussion of and references to the roles of men and women or anything connected with or manifesting those roles can only be understood well by grasping the kind of reality being referred to there. The roles of men and women in scripture are a question of social structures. The exegesis given in this book has been based upon the view that the first step in intelligently speaking about New Testament passages on men and women is to understand the concerns of those passages in terms of the proper category—namely, social roles and social structure. It may be stimulating and aesthetically interesting to discuss the images of women in scriptural writing. It may be challenging to attempt to state the scriptural view of the “nature” of man and of woman. But the meaning of the New Testament texts cannot be restated accurately nor discussed with fairness unless it is first recognized that one is dealing with how a whole

society or culture patterns itself in terms of sexual differences, and that such patterning has social purpose and utility.

Much current writing on the roles of men and women misses the significance of social roles and of men-women differences as they relate to social roles. The resulting restatements of the New Testament, as well as the evaluation and understanding of the New Testament, can be seriously distorted. For instance, exegeses of 1 Corinthians 14:34–35 are given which do not even take into account that the passage might be holding its position simply on the basis of the fact that it is women who are speaking and such speaking is incompatible with their role. Many authors do not seem to be able to understand why someone would want to make a ruling on that basis. To give a similar example, many speak very freely about the prejudice of the New Testament writers or of Jews or others against women without being able to distinguish between a personal prejudice and an instinctive understanding that comes from an approach to social roles. Or again, some use as a conceptual framework the categories of “advance” and “restriction” in their analysis of scriptural writing concerning men and women. The result is that the area comes out as a simple conflict between greater or less favorableness to women. Such a view lacks an appreciation for the fact that a social role has a purpose, and ancient societies gave roles to men and women and made laws about these roles because they had a certain social structure within which those in the society were trying to live their lives.⁴

These remarks should not be taken to indicate that it is unfair to evaluate the way another society or culture approaches the roles of men and women. Rather, evaluation (and any process that involves restatement) should only be done with the understanding that the roles of men and women are part of a social structure, and that evaluation should be done by comparing two (or more) social structures and not simply isolated statements in texts.

Relatedly, it is impossible to restate accurately something in the New Testament and to speak about it intelligently without understanding its equivalent (if any) in a different social system. One has to be able to understand when two things function alike. For instance, many carry out discussions of 1 Timothy 2:12 without adverting to the transformation in “teaching” over the last few hundred years. The result is often an inability to understand the concerns of 1 Timothy 2:12 and, normally, an inability to make a good judgment as to how the passage might be applied (if at all) to the contemporary situation. Something similar is true in relation to governing positions. Many discuss the prohibitions in the New Testament

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and early Christian tradition of women being elders without discussing how much governing positions have changed in social function. The result is very often a lack of comprehension of either what is being said in the New Testament about governing positions or the reasons for it.

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Finally, restatement has to include careful attention to the conceptual framework used for understanding a restatement. Exegesis is often done without clarifying the terms, especially the social structural terms. For example, “equality” has a very different meaning in modern usage than in scripture. Today it has a weight of ideological meaning. Yet passages in scripture are labeled as teaching “equality” or as not teaching “equality” without so much as a pause for conceptual analysis. Whole books rest on the assumption that equality and personal subordination are incompatible, and that those passages in scripture which teach equality therefore contradict those which teach personal subordination. If the assumption were even argued for, the situation would be better, but often it is simply presumed. Most of what is in such books is so confused or arbitrary in its basic conceptual framework and the application of that framework to a different cultural situation that most of the exegesis put forth turns out to be of limited value.

If this book has a distinctive approach to exegesis, that distinctiveness lies not so much in the uniqueness of its positions on various controversial points, but on the amount of attention paid to categorizing the New Testament concerns about men and women accurately and comparing the New Testament approach to social roles and structures with contemporary Western approaches. The exegetical approach of this book also rests on the conviction that the differences in scriptural interpretation are rarely a matter of simple disagreement over the facts of what is in the New Testament, but rather are to be found in the antecedent understandings with which interpreters approach the facts.

Christian Liberationist Exegesis

THERE is an obvious exception to the earlier statement in this excursus that the exegesis in this book is, in the main, uncontroversial. In comparison to one body of writing, it is very controversial. That body of literature might be called “Christian Liberationist.” Christian Liberationist literature is the literature of those who could be described as part of the women’s liberation movement who profess to find their views in the scripture itself. Earlier, the

term “Evangelical Feminist” might have been used to describe this literature, but many of the exegetical approaches of “Evangelical Feminism” have now been taken over by others who are not Evangelicals. Since the concerns and mentality of most of those who write from this perspective are from the women’s liberation sector of the feminist movement, the term “Christian Liberationist” is used here for lack of a better term. This term will be used simply to characterize a configuration of exegetical approaches.⁵

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In the last twenty years, especially within the last ten years, the discussion of the roles of men and women has been enormously polemicized, especially in the United States. The rise of women’s liberation and other forms of radical feminism, and a vigorous effort to persuade society to change its approach to the roles of men and women, have had great impact on Christians of all denominations. As Christians began to be affected by these movements, they had to come to grips with scripture and other Christian writings that seemed to present obstacles to the adoption by Christians of many forms of feminist ideologies. Over the past twenty years, three strategies toward scripture and other Christian writings have been developed by some Christian feminists in order to remove those obstacles:

1. *Calling into question either the authority or the applicability of scripture, or both.* This strategy concedes that scripture teaches a role difference between men and women, but argues that one does not have to take what scripture teaches seriously. Different authors choose different reasons for holding this view, for example, the “rabbinic origin” of such teachings, the “anti-feminism” of Paul, the “time-bound nature” of the scriptures, etc.
2. *Reinterpreting the normal exegesis of the scripture passages that speak about the roles of men and women.* This strategy would hold to, or at least profess, a respect for the authority of scripture, but it would protest that scripture has been misunderstood. For instance, Paul did not really mean that wives should be subordinate to their husbands; that is a sexist interpretation of the passage.
3. *Finding contradictions in scripture.* This strategy holds that scripture contains various lines of thought in the area of the roles of men and women, and that these lines of thought are mutually incompatible. We are therefore forced to choose among them. The two key points of contradiction most often chosen are found to be between Galatians 3:28 and most of the key texts, and between Jesus and Paul.

These strategies are by no means mutually incompatible. In fact, they are often combined in the same author. But nonetheless, they are three distinct ways of dealing with the obstacle that the scriptures seem to present.

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The first wave of Christians affected by the various currents in the recent upsurge in the feminist movement tended more readily to adopt the first strategy. Writers like Rosemary Ruether, Mary Daly, Josephine Ford, Albertus Magnus McGrath, and others expounded a version of women's liberation for Christians that rested heavily, though not exclusively, on dismissing the applicability or authority of scripture when it spoke about the roles of men and women. A second wave began with the birth of Evangelical Feminism. Evangelical Feminists came from a Christian tradition that stresses the authority of scripture very highly, and hence they were not ready to call into question the authority of scripture or to speak of it with disrespect. Moreover, they also had a greater familiarity with earlier attempts to deal with the teachings of scripture when "women's emancipation" was the issue in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and they drew inspiration at times from writers like Katherine Bushnell and Jessie Penn-Lewis. Evangelical Feminists, especially at first, were careful to speak of the scripture with the highest respect, but they have held almost all the positions that other radical feminists have held (including sometimes the approval of homosexual relations and extramarital intercourse, although usually less commonly and more tentatively than other feminists). The only strategy, therefore, that the Evangelical Feminists could successfully use was the re-exegesis of many passages. As a result, an approach to exegesis developed that was the first stage of what could be called "Christian Liberationist" exegesis. It is represented in the works of Letha Scanzoni, Nancy Hardesty, Phyllis Tribble, Queenie Adams, and others. As Evangelical Feminism continued to develop, however, it became less respectful of scripture, and also influenced more writers who were not Evangelicals. Hence, the "Christian Liberationist" approach broadened and tended more and more to include the strategy of finding contradictions in the scripture. Thus a writer could be the champion of Jesus, or of the "true" Paul, or of the "newness" in the Christian message, while dismissing most of what the canonized New Testament explicitly teaches about the roles of men and women. Later Christian feminists include Virginia Mollenkott, Paul Jewett, Robin Scroggs, Wayne Meeks, and others.

The concern here is simply with the Christian Liberationist approach to exegesis, not with ways of calling into question the authority or applicability of scripture. A type of exegesis has developed in the area of the roles of men and women that is a distinctive exegesis, with a set of characteristic

principles and opinions of its own, that can be historically attributed to the influence of the recent feminist movement. Many of the opinions set forth in this exegesis are ingenious and are based on a great deal of intricate scholarship, but they are basically unfounded and call for a restressing of the obvious or an underlining of the more likely opinion. The following is a list of some of the opinions that have commonly been advanced in the literature of Christian Liberationist exegesis:

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- ▶ Genesis 2 does not indicate any subordination of woman to man when it uses the word “helper” to describe woman’s role, because the word “helper” itself does not necessarily imply subordination.⁶
- ▶ When Adam names his new wife, he is not exercising any authoritative role (although he probably is when he names the animals).⁷
- ▶ Woman is the climax of creation in Genesis 2.⁸
- ▶ There is no subordination of woman to man in Genesis 2 at all.⁹
- ▶ Woman actually handled her part of the Fall in a fairly creditable way.¹⁰
- ▶ Adam represents the human race, even after the creation of woman, and not man as distinguished from woman.¹¹
- ▶ Jesus was revolutionary in regard to Jewish custom in his relationships to women.¹²
- ▶ In the parable of Martha and Mary in Luke 10, Christ is teaching that women do not have to be bound by womanly tasks and roles.¹³
- ▶ Phoebe held a governing position in the Christian community.¹⁴
- ▶ Junias was a woman apostle.¹⁵
- ▶ There were elders in the early church, and 1 Timothy 5:2 refers to them.¹⁶
- ▶ Priscilla wrote Hebrews (probably or even possibly).¹⁷
- ▶ The “Elect Lady” in 2 John 1:1 was possibly a woman bishop.¹⁸
- ▶ “She who is in Babylon” in 1 Peter 5:13 was possibly a woman elder or bishop.¹⁹
- ▶ The word “head” does not indicate any governing role or any subordination of the woman in 1 Corinthians 11:3 or in Ephesians 5:23.²⁰
- ▶ “Subordination” does not involve obedience.²¹
- ▶ The purpose of Ephesians 5:21–33 is solely to exhort the husband to care for his wife and not to exhort the wife to be subordinate to her husband.²²
- ▶ There is no obedience of wife to husband being referred to in Ephesians 5:21–33.²³

- ▶ The headcoverings in 1 Corinthians 11 are simply a symbol of woman's authority and not at all of her subordination.²⁴
- ▶ Paul argues poorly in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 and knows it.²⁵

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More opinions like these could have been listed. Some of these can be traced back earlier than the beginnings of Evangelical Feminism. But, on the whole, these opinions either originated with Christian Liberationist exegesis or received a new prominence with it. There are, of course, other characteristic exegetical opinions in Christian Liberationist writings, but the above list was restricted to those opinions that are clearly unfounded or seemed to have been developed primarily for the sake of holding the new exegetical position.

Christian Liberationist exegesis is an extreme case of a basic trend in scriptural interpretation that operates when scripture seems to teach something directly at odds with current opinions or social trends. It surfaces not only in the area of the roles of men and women, but also in the areas of sexual morality, the exercise of authority, and similar areas. Madeleine Boucher, herself something of a feminist, in commenting on Stendahl's interpretation of Galatians 3:28, expresses the trend this way:

Theologians are often led to fresh insight by the new factors operating in their own time, especially intellectual and social factors. Then, because they stand in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, they turn to the Bible in search of the texts with which to undergird these new insights. Yet, because they are seeking to answer contemporary questions, questions unknown to biblical writers, they sometimes interpret the biblical texts in a way which is more true to contemporary thought than to the thought of the biblical writers.²⁶

There are some difficult questions to answer in approaching the issue of the roles of men and women as presented in the Bible and as lived today. Nonetheless, there is a clear tendency to interpret the Bible in a way consistent with a modern position that distorts the meaning of the biblical text. Those who attempt to say that the actual text of the scripture itself holds that there does not have to be any subordination of woman to man will inevitably provide distorted exegesis.

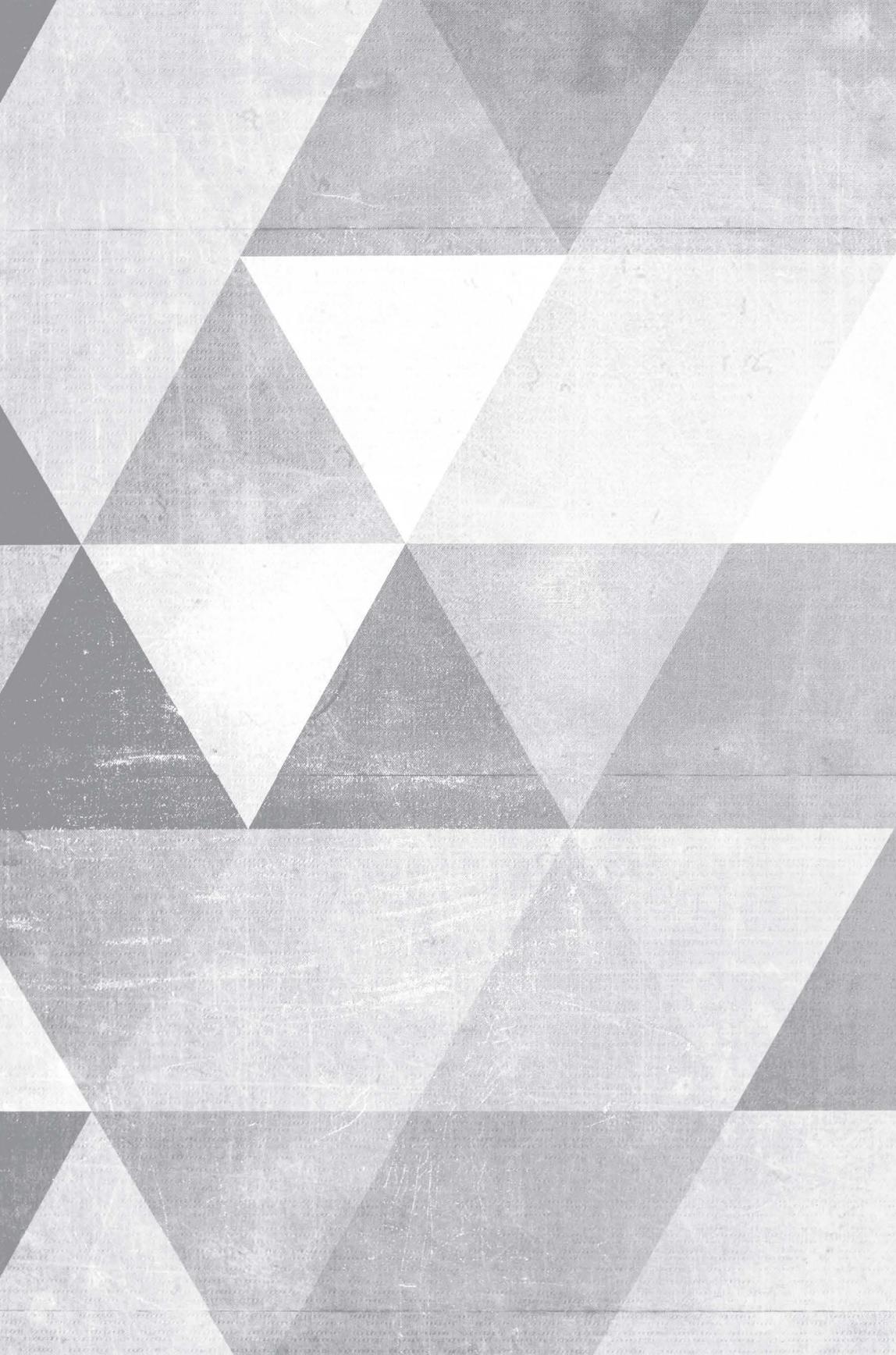
In 1951, all but one of the teachers holding academic positions in New Testament studies in the Swedish universities issued a statement in response to the efforts of the Swedish government to introduce the ordination of women into the Church of Sweden, a state church. The statement is as follows:

We, the undersigned, professors and lecturers in the field of New Testament exegesis at our two universities, hereby declare as our definite opinion, based on careful investigation, that ordination of women would be incompatible with New Testament thought and would constitute disobedience to the Holy Scriptures. Both Jesus' choice of apostles and Paul's words concerning the position of women in the congregation have significance of principle, and are independent of circumstances and opinions conditioned by any particular time in history. The current proposal that women should be admitted to priesthood in the Church of Sweden must therefore be said to meet with grave exegetical obstacles.²⁷

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Twenty-five years later, it would be difficult to find one professor holding an academic position in exegesis at a university in Sweden who would endorse this statement. For some, the reason for their change has been a change in their view of the applicability of scripture. Such a change is creditable. But many writers today would dispute the exegetical results embodied in the statement. No significant new evidence has been found to warrant such a reversal. The only explanation for it is that the climate of opinion has changed, influencing exegetes to come up with opinions that are acceptable nowadays. Either the Swedish exegetes in 1951 were determined by extra-exegetical factors, or the current exegetes are so determined. The investigations in this book would indicate that the problem in this case lies more with the current exegetes. Twenty-five years ago, Christian Liberationist exegesis would have been dismissed out of hand by competent exegetes. Now it has influenced many of them and can be found in the most respectable journals. Social historians two hundred years from now will probably find this a good example of how scholarship can be influenced by political ideology and propaganda in the midst of a movement of social change.

In summary, the exegetical position taken by this book is a basically uncontroversial one in its overall outlines. Only Christian Liberationist exegesis would dispute this assertion, but Christian Liberationist exegesis is not, for the most part, sound in its underlying principles and approach. There is a distinctive approach to the exegesis in this book, but the distinctiveness lies more in the attention paid to responsible restating of what the scripture says than in a distinctiveness of the positions taken on controversial points.



Assessing the Scriptural Teaching

2

► THE FIRST PART OF THIS BOOK SURVEYED THE teaching of the scripture, especially in the New Testament, on the roles of men and women. It concluded with a synthesis of that teaching. There are, however, many further concerns touching upon that synthesis, some of which the second part of this book will attempt to address.

Some of these concerns arise primarily from the historical perspective of modern scholarship, which examines the scripture as a collection of historical documents from the ancient world. This perspective raises issues about the consistency and distinctiveness of the scriptural teaching, as well as its nature as an expression of an ancient culture. These issues will be taken up in Chapters Ten and Eleven.

Some of these concerns which bear upon the preceding synthesis of scriptural teaching arise from the perspective of Christian tradition. This perspective raises issues about the agreement of tradition subsequent to the New Testament with the interpretation of scriptural teaching given here, as well as about the approach of the Christian church through the centuries to teaching about the roles of men and women in circumstances different from those of the New Testament world. Chapters Twelve and Thirteen will consider these issues.

Finally, some concerns arise from the perspective of certain views about the nature and authority of scripture. This perspective raises issues about how one should respond to scriptural teaching. These issues will be taken up in Chapters Fourteen and Fifteen.

All of these chapters deal with the authority that the scriptural teaching has over Christians. They do not attempt to develop further the content of the scriptural teaching, but to assess its validity for determining Christian life. ►

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THE NEW TESTAMENT APPROACH ▶
JESUS AND PAUL

IF CHRISTIANITY is revelation of God and his ways and will, then this revelation comes to us in very human form. We receive it through a nation of Semites, the Jews, who seem somewhat superstitious, primitive, and “different” to the modern eye. In particular, this revelation comes to us through one Jew from the more backward part of Palestine who received neither a Greek education nor an education in the most advanced Jewish academies of his day. He was a Jew who probably never traveled more than 150 miles from his birthplace and who may not have spoken more than the languages of his own people. We learn this revelation from other Jews, of whom one in particular carried special influence. This second Jew, a diaspora Jew from Tarsus, traveled widely through the world, had the best education that Judaism could offer, spoke a number of languages, and was somewhat acquainted with Greco-Roman thought and philosophy. Finally, revelation was passed on to us by a very mixed collection of Jews and Gentiles spread throughout the Roman world. This group was made up mostly of people of the lower socioeconomic classes and of slaves, but it also included some wealthy and educated citizens who were trained in their culture and literature.

If Christianity is revelation, then revelation of the divine comes to us mediated by human realities: human beings belonging to a particular age and culture; human languages with their distinctive thought forms and patterns of expression; human events revealing distinct personalities and cultural types. In the face of the humanness of Christianity, the temptation that recurrently and insistently presents itself is that of finding and then eliminating the human in order to reach the divine. And yet the revelation

of Christianity is not simply a revelation of God, but also revelation which concerns the human. Christianity concerns God's desire for the human race, his idea of what the human race should be. Relatedly, God's revelation comes through human beings. To be sure, not everything in the words, people, and events mediating the revelation is part of the revelation. The gospel can be preached in English as well as in Aramaic or Greek. We may be called to imitate Paul, but not in his Jewish or Greek literary style, the peculiarities of his personality, or the mode of transportation he used in his missionary journeys. Nevertheless, Christian revelation comes to us not simply in universal truths, but through particular events at particular times and places, through particular individuals and communities that provide a pattern for us, and through particular formulations and statements of some universal truths.

In other words, Christianity is historical revelation that comes at a particular point of human history and is conditioned by its circumstances. The historical nature of New Testament teachings is stronger in our consciousness now than in the consciousness of people three hundred years ago. Consequently, we raise questions about that teaching that would not have occurred to most people three hundred years ago. So far, this book has focused on patterns for the roles of men and women among the early Christians by examining the key New Testament texts that teach about these roles. In this and the following chapter, those teachings will be examined in their historical flow and setting. Questions of consistency, distinctiveness, and cultural conditioning will be considered.

A Distinctive New Testament Approach

THE previous chapter attempted to synthesize the New Testament teaching on the roles of men and women. However, not everyone accepts the view that there is only one New Testament approach, or that the approach or approaches found in the New Testament are distinctively Christian. In fact, the view related in Chapter Nine is only one of four main views which have been taken of the New Testament teaching on the roles of men and women as seen in its historical setting:

1. The first of these four main views is the *cultural conflict* view.¹ This view holds that Christian teaching in the New Testament was under a strong Hellenistic influence. The process began with Jesus, who

was heavily influenced by the Hellenistic Gentiles living in Palestine, at least in the area of men's and women's roles. As a result of this influence, Jesus moved toward an approach to men-women relationships which pointed to an elimination of different roles for men and women. This same cultural influence also affected Paul somewhat, especially in Galatians 3:28 and in the way women served in missionary work with him. However, Paul was also a converted rabbi, and his rabbinism showed itself in some aspects of his teaching. Hence there is a contradiction within New Testament teaching in the area of the roles of men and women. This contradiction is due to unresolved differences between the conflicting influences of Hellenistic thought and ways and rabbinic thought and ways.

2. The second view could be called *canonized rabbinism*.² According to this view, the teaching in the New Testament on the roles of men and women consists mainly of a residue of rabbinic influence on the early Christians. The New Testament teaching is identical to rabbinic teaching and is grounded in the same approach to theology used by the rabbis. Undoubtedly Paul and his rabbinic background are responsible for this. Many who take this approach want to see something distinctively Christian in Galatians 3:28, or in the way Jesus related to women, or perhaps in some other elements in the New Testament teaching on men and women. They would say that in the few places where we find the new Christian approach we can perceive a conflict with the residue of rabbinic teaching—that is, with most of the New Testament teaching on men and women. Thus, in its various forms, this approach attributes most or all of the New Testament teaching to rabbinic influence on the early church. This view is usually used to warrant the claim that contemporary Christians should ignore, or even root out, effects of this teaching.
3. The third view is the *conformity to culture* view.³ This view holds that the New Testament teaching on the roles of men and women was designed by Paul and other early Christians to help the early Christians blend more easily into the culture and customs around them, either for the purpose of avoiding conflict or for preaching the gospel more effectively. One variation on this view is the opinion that much New Testament teaching is based upon an underlying principle of acceptance of existing societal institutions and standards. Therefore, Christians should not cause disturbances but should do what society would regard as fitting and well-behaved. The thrust of such a view

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leads to the approach of changing Christian teaching when the order of society changes. Hence, contemporary Christians should so shape their approach to the roles of men and women that they adapt to the society in which they live.

4. The fourth view could be called the *distinctive approach*.⁴ According to this position, the New Testament contains a distinctive approach to personal relationships and social structure, one that is neither reducible to Greek nor rabbinic influences, nor shaped by a principle of adaptation to societal practices. The teaching on the roles of men and women is part of that distinctive teaching. Moreover, in this view, both Jesus and Paul saw the Christian teaching on personal relationships as central to the purpose of Christianity. Hence this teaching is something that the early Christians would have experienced as being integral to their message to new Christians.

This chapter and the one following view the *distinctive approach* as the one most in accord both with New Testament teaching and with a careful historical perspective on the subject. In order to show that Christians of the New Testament period adopted a distinctive approach to the roles of men and women, it is necessary to show that (1) the New Testament teaching is consistent and (2) that it can be clearly distinguished from rabbinic and Hellenistic teaching.

The consistency of the New Testament approach is mainly challenged at two points. The first is within the Pauline writings themselves. As was noted above, many have held that Paul was either influenced by Hellenistic currents, or else formed by his new Christian insights enough to propound some teachings in disagreement with other elements likely inherited from his rabbinic training. Earlier chapters have shown, however, that the problem exists not within Paul's writings themselves, but rather in the minds of people who want to attribute to Paul certain views of their own. Paul's writings, as has been shown, do take a reasonably consistent approach.

The second point at which the consistency of the New Testament has been frequently challenged is that of the "conflict" between the teaching of Jesus and Paul. This chapter will consider the relationship between the teaching of Jesus and Paul on the roles of men and women. It will also examine how Jesus was situated in regard to rabbinic teaching and the customs of the time. The next chapter will consider the question of the distinctiveness of the New Testament approach in relationship to rabbinism and to Hellenism.

Behind the discussion about the distinctiveness of the New Testament approach to the roles of men and women lies a search for a basis for evaluating New Testament teaching in general. This search for authority characterizes some modern New Testament scholars who have put aside the traditional approach to the authority of scripture and tradition in an attempt to discover what in the New Testament is authoritative in the midst of so much that seems unauthoritative. Often one can sense a desire to find a core of teaching not culturally conditioned or historically determined, as if that core would turn out to be the “true” revelation in the midst of the New Testament writings.

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Approach

Much of the discussion about the distinctiveness of the New Testament approach in this area also stems from an attempt to find a “reasonable” way of applying the teachings of the New Testament. Often, those who are concerned about this cannot conceive of themselves straightforwardly applying the teachings in anything like the sense in which the New Testament writers intended. Their hope is to find some elements of New Testament teaching that are timeless and hence applicable in every age and situation.

Neither this chapter nor the next discuss the authority of scripture or the application of New Testament teaching. These two issues will be considered further on. Rather, these chapters investigate the existence of a distinctive approach in the New Testament to the roles of men and women. This investigation will be made primarily from a historical perspective. The results of this discussion will allow us to proceed with greater clarity to the discussion of the authority and the application of scripture. The next chapter will also include a discussion of the possibility of this distinctive approach being considered merely cultural.

Jesus and First-Century Judaism

IN Israelite Jewish practice, an evolution occurred in the area of the roles of men and women. In the earlier texts of the Old Testament, women are not presented as being restricted to women’s quarters or normally separated from men in speech or activity.⁵ Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Miriam, Deborah, Abigail, Huldah—not to mention Jezebel, Athaliah, and some other less distinguished figures—were women who enjoyed a fair amount of freedom of movement. Likewise, the women of that time seem to have played a relatively more significant role in public life.⁶ These differences between earlier Israelite society and later Judaism, however, do not indicate

that the basic order sketched out in the discussion of Genesis in Chapters One and Two was ever overthrown or discarded. The man was always the head of the family throughout the Old Testament period, and the woman “belonged” to him, either as wife or as daughter. Women did not hold governmental positions in Israelite society, nor were they part of the priesthood. Moreover, there were many Jewish customs which incarnated a role difference. While it does seem that the differentiation between men and women in the Old Testament has often been exaggerated, there did exist a deeply rooted, almost instinctive difference.

The role of women began to change sometime during the Exilic or Post-exilic period. By the time of the Mishna and Talmud, one can see that a well-developed approach to the roles of men and women had evolved, an approach involving a great deal of separation along carefully worked out rules of conduct for relations between the sexes. This was the beginning of what could be called a rabbinic approach to the roles of men and women. This developing approach probably existed in its main outlines in Jesus’ time. However, it becomes clearly traceable only in the Mishnaic writings, writings which date from the second century in their written form.⁷

In rabbinic understanding, women were restricted to the women’s quarters of the home, at least ideally. They were not allowed to go out except for certain specified purposes and then their faces were to be fully veiled. Their duties consisted mainly of preparing meals, cleaning, bearing and feeding children, making beds, and working with wool. Women had few marital rights. A husband could legally marry more wives without the existing wife’s permission. While he could divorce his wife freely, only in very special situations did she have any rights of divorce. A fair amount of separation between husband and wife was present even within the home. Husbands were discouraged from talking much with their wives. There is little evidence that husbands and wives prayed together, except for certain family celebrations. When guests were present in the home, women were not supposed to be present or even to serve at meals.

The separation was even stronger in public life. A man was not supposed to speak to a woman in public if he could at all avoid it, and he was by no means to touch a woman who was not his wife. Women were separated from men at the synagogue and in the Temple. Often, women were not able to see the services. For example, most of the worship in the Temple was conducted in a court to which women had no access. Women had a different set of religious obligations than men (see Chapter Six). They were obligated to the chief prayer, to the mezuzahs, and to table

prayers (i.e., to domestic religious rites), but not to the Shema (the prayer “Hear, O Israel”) or to the study of the law. Neither were women counted as part of the assembly. Lack of obligation in these matters did not mean actual exclusion from them, but women were not considered regular or full participants in them.

Finally, there is an unmistakable misogyny in rabbinic writings. Statements betraying a dislike or disrespect for women were by no means uncommon, as the following examples illustrate:

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Ten qab of emptyheadedness have come upon the world, nine having been received by women and one by the rest of the world.⁸

Without both male and female children the world could not exist, but blessed is he whose children are male and woe to him whose children are female.⁹

It would, however, be much too strong to say that misogyny was characteristic of the rabbis. Their writings also provide numerous instances of praise and honor for women. For example:

Our rabbis taught: Concerning a man who loves his wife as himself, who honours her more than himself, who guides his sons and daughters in the right path and arranges for them to be married near the period of their puberty, Scripture says, “And thou shalt know that thy tent is in peace” (Job 5:24).¹⁰

Our rabbis taught: Greater is the promise made by the Holy One, blessed be He, to the women than to the men; for it says, “Rise up, ye women that are at ease; ye confident daughters, give ear unto my speech.”¹¹

We cannot be certain why this rabbinic approach to the roles of men and women developed. Possibly, the Jews were influenced in their approach by their close contact with Mesopotamian culture during the Exile, contact which would have continued after the first exiles returned. Increasing urbanization probably accounted for some of the change. Women’s quarters and strict separation of sexes appeared more commonly in urban areas than in rural ones, probably because of the requirements of farm work and possibly because of an increased need to protect women in cities. An additional factor may have been greater wealth, since such arrangements

seem to have occurred more often among the wealthy. Some of the change was likely due to a greater strictness in legal matters. Men were protected from seeing women other than their wives out of a concern for sexual ethics, and women were protected from other men out of a concern for their chastity. Moreover, greater separation helped keep men from accidentally incurring ritual impurity when women had their times of menstruation. In addition, one could probably say that disrespect for women and their abilities was increasing.

We can contrast Jesus with the rabbis as seen in the Talmud and Midrash. Jesus does not behave the same way.¹² Women come to him and he helps them directly. He heals them (Mk 5:25–34). On occasion he touches them (Mt 8:14–15). He talks to them individually, regularly in private and sometimes in public (Jn 11:17–44). On one occasion he even talks to a woman when both of them were unaccompanied (Jn 4:7–24). He teaches women along with the men (Lk 10:38–42). When he teaches, he speaks of women and uses womanly tasks as illustrations. On occasion, he makes use of two parables to illustrate the same point, one drawn from the activities of men, the other from the activities of women (Lk 15:3–10). He never shows disrespect to women, nor does he ever speak about women in a disparaging way. He relates in a brotherly fashion to women whom he knows. He has some women traveling with him to serve him (Lk 8:1–3). Finally, he calls women “daughters of Abraham” (Lk 13:16), explicitly according them a spiritual status like that accorded to men. One might add here that after his resurrection Jesus appears to women first and lets them carry the news to the men (Jn 20:11–19; Mt 28:9–10).

Jesus clearly related to women differently than the rabbis whose teaching about women one finds in the Talmud and Midrash. Yet this fact does not suffice to solve the question of how Jesus’ approach compared with the customs of his time. Some would hold that Jesus’ approach was revolutionary, that Jesus consciously and deliberately chose to break away from the dominant customs of the day, as recorded by rabbinic writings which reflected the normative Judaism of that time. By observing what he did more than what he said, it is argued, one can see how revolutionary he was and infer his real intentions in the area of men’s and women’s roles. The weak form of this view is that Jesus carefully broke with Jewish customs in a way that would not cause excitement. In this line of thought, it is assumed that Jesus would have gone further had he felt free to do so. An even stronger form of this view is sometimes also taken, namely, that Jesus was frankly egalitarian and treated women in a way identical to men.

Still others would hold that Jesus was not revolutionary in his approach to women. They would point out that there is, in fact, little evidence that he departed significantly from Jewish customs. Jesus did not follow the rules for a strict Pharisaic rabbi—but then he was not a strict Pharisaic rabbi. He was not a Pharisee, nor even primarily a rabbi, but rather was more of an eschatological preacher. Moreover, they would point out, there is no evidence that the majority of the Jews in Palestine in Jesus' day followed strict Talmudic practice either. If, in other words, Christianity produced a change from Palestinian Jewish custom, there is no evidence that Jesus began that change.

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Some people would modify this approach. While agreeing that Jesus was not revolutionary in respect to the prevailing customs of his day and that he did not want to radically change the social structure of Judaism in the area of roles for men and women, they would see as more significant the new way Jesus did relate with women. Not only was he more open than the later rabbis were, but he was more open with and interested in women than any other Jew of his century or the preceding two centuries. Moreover, Jesus consistently treated women as being as important as men in the eyes of God, and he felt free to alter or even break prevailing customs when he judged it proper to do so.

The view that Jesus was not revolutionary in regard to social roles and customs for men-women relations, but that he accorded them a higher spiritual status than Jews who were his contemporaries, accords best with the available evidence. The view that he was revolutionary is normally advanced by those who wish to assert an inconsistency between Jesus and Paul. Thus, this view will be the focus of concern in the rest of this section. The view that Jesus was no different from his contemporaries at all seems to miss an important aspect of his work, but has not played a significant role in recent discussions of the roles of men and women.¹³

The Variety of First-Century Judaism

If the Talmud and Midrash are accepted as presenting the normative approach of Judaism in Jesus' time, one would have to say that Jesus was at least very eccentric, and possibly revolutionary, in his approach to women. One would have to place his approach to women in the same category of extraordinary behavior, relative to the prevailing practice, as his approach to tax collectors and sinners. Yet such a conclusion cannot be made easily. In recent years, largely because of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls,

a clearer perception of Judaism in the time of Jesus has developed, a perception which would call such a simple conclusion into question. Before the discovery of the scrolls it was much more usual to assume that the Judaism of Jesus' time was a fairly uniform phenomenon, dominated by the teaching of the scribe-rabbis (perhaps: Pharisaic scribes), who were the forebears of the rabbis who wrote the Talmud and Midrash. Their teaching was much the same as that of the later rabbis. It was known that other forms of Judaism existed in the period before the uprising against Rome, and that there was some question as to how far back it was possible to attribute a Mishnaic opinion, but the idea of "normative Judaism" as reconstructed through rabbinic material had a strong hold and often controlled the discussion of Jesus and his relations to Judaism.

It is much clearer now that Judaism before 70 AD was a variegated phenomenon, and that the Pharisees were only one sect among a number, although they were the strongest.¹⁴ The Pharisees were opposed not only by the Sadducees, but by groups as spiritually strong and respected as the Qumran community. Movements like that of John the Baptist could grow even in opposition to the Pharisees and still be enthusiastically supported by the people. In fact, the *am ha-aretz*, the "people of the land" who did not follow the law in a way that was acceptable to the Pharisees, often included prominent and respected people not attached to any particular sect in Judaism. Possibly many of the scribes would not have accepted Pharisaic interpretations of laws such as those regarding purity and tithing. Finally, the influence of the Pharisees was probably weakest in Galilee—Jesus' own area. In short, it is clearer now that the fact that Jesus did not follow the ways of Pharisaic scribe-rabbis is only one consideration in evaluating his relation to the approach(es) of the Judaism of his time.

Moreover, there is the further question of just how much the material in the Talmud and Midrash clearly illustrates the approach of the scribe-rabbis of Jesus' time. Some of the material that reflects the approach ascribed above to the rabbis in the area of men's and women's roles is attributed to rabbis of the period before 70 AD. However, most of this material comes from rabbis after that time. In 70 AD, the upheaval caused by the destruction of the Jewish commonwealth, the Temple, and the sacrificial system caused a break in the approach of the scribal-rabbinic tradition. Thus, it is not always clear how much of the teaching, even in the earlier Midrashim, can be attributed to the period before 70 AD. This might be particularly true for customs concerning the roles of men and women. After 70 AD a greater strictness was introduced into rabbinic customs and a greater strictness in regard to the roles of men and women could easily be another

illustration of the same trend. Moreover, many of the customs cited above are not found directly in the law, nor are they decisions interpretive of laws; hence they were probably freer to change.*

Finally, the evidence indicates that in the time of Jesus the customs bearing on the roles of men and women varied according to social class and between urban or rural areas. While the wealthy Jerusalemites, Pharisee and non-Pharisee alike, probably had women's quarters and practiced a fairly strict separation of women, the same was probably not true among poorer people or those in rural areas.¹⁵ In other words, while one can say with some confidence that many of the practices described in the Talmud and Midrash were characteristic of scribe-rabbis in the time of Jesus, one cannot say that all of the practices were characteristic, or even that all scribes held them. Neither can one say that the practices characteristic of the scribes would have been considered normal for most of the Jewish people.

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Jesus' Treatment of Women

The simplest and most striking fact to begin with in examining Jesus' approach to women is the lack of apparent controversy created by it. The

* There are three types of material at issue. One is the written law, which would have been accepted equally before and after 70 AD. When something is in the written law, it can be assumed that it was accepted as valid, even though there may have been variation in interpretations. There is also the accepted interpretation of the written law, the interpretations of the sage-scribe-rabbis as found in the Talmud and Midrash. Some of this was probably the common law of Judaism before 70 AD. Some of it was possibly just the interpretation of the Pharisees and might not have been widely accepted outside of the numbers of the Pharisees. Some of it was a later development. Finally, there are manners and rules for proper behavior in the Talmud and Midrash. Some of this material may have dated from earlier times, but there is some indication that these manners became stricter in certain areas in the rabbinic period. Moreover, manners were freer to change than law or legal interpretation (halachic rulings).

Rules about speaking to women and touching women and questions of separation of women from men were probably in the category of manners for the most part. Rules about men relating to women that stemmed from concern for purity might well have been specifically Pharisaic interpretations, as were rules about associating with sinners, washing of hands before meals, etc. To the degree that questions about touching were based on fear of incurring impurity, they would be in the category of Pharisaic interpretation. Rules of the sort that were discussed in Chapter Six would probably be in the category of common law for all Jews.

The dating of rabbinic materials is a complex question. The material provides internal evidence for dating, both through actual attribution and through internal evidences of a ruling's origin in the history of rabbinic tradition. However, some judgments can also be made of how likely material was to develop. Scriptural material was fixed before the New Testament period. Basic common law interpretation was probably fairly conservative, though in fact it was constantly adapted. Customs and behavior were more open to change.

For all these questions, the gospel records themselves are one of the main ways of determining whether the approach of the rabbinic material would have been normal before 70 AD. They are near-contemporary sources compared to the rabbinic material and contain more "normal-life" descriptions.

evidence—mostly from the gospels—indicates that his relations to women never caused the same kind of surprise and concern as did his relations to tax collectors and sinners. On one occasion, when he seemed to be acting toward a woman in a way that was deemed improper (his conversation with the Samaritan woman in Jn 4:27), the surprise shown by his disciples indicates that the incident was an exceptional event in Jesus' life. The most likely interpretation of the disciples' words would be that Jesus did not normally speak to women in public in the way he did with the Samaritan woman. While much is made of the fact that Jesus felt freer to speak with and deal with women than the scribe-rabbis did, it is not often observed that at the same time women in the gospel writings also felt freer to approach Jesus than would be expected if the customs portrayed in the Talmudic writings were the common Jewish practice at this time. One is dealing, in other words, with a freer situation altogether. The evidence indicates that Jesus' normal behavior with regard to women was not understood to be revolutionary by people in his environment.

Some of Jesus' deviations from the norms of the rabbis as expressed in Talmud and Midrash can also be explained by Jesus' role. Jesus did not view himself or act as merely a scribe-rabbi.¹⁶ He acted like a popular preacher and prophet as well. He was not, in short, primarily engaged in teaching law and theology himself or in training others to teach law and theology so that they might become judges or lawyers. Rather, he was primarily engaged in calling the people of Israel to turn to God in a new way and to prepare for God's kingdom. His message was for men and women alike. Therefore, he taught women, healed women, used examples of women and their work in his teaching, and had women accompany him in his travels. Jesus was also willing to reach out to a Samaritan woman to evangelize her and then let her share that news with her town. His willingness to touch women in healing them should probably be understood in this context. It was more a sign of his ability to bring the messianic salvation with its physical and spiritual wholeness for everyone than a sign of willingness in daily life to break with Jewish custom. We should also note that Jesus, unlike the scribe-rabbis, did not marry. This fact is not often mentioned in the contemporary discussions of Jesus' approach to women, but it is surely one of the points of greatest difference between him and the scribe-rabbis of his day. He related to women more as prophets like Elijah and Elisha did than in a way prescribed by scribal tradition.¹⁷

This context provides a good framework for viewing the question of whether women were disciples of Jesus. Women are never referred to as

disciples in the gospels. Only once in the New Testament is a woman referred to as a “disciple,” and that is the description of Tabitha in Acts 9:36. Throughout Acts, however, “disciple” is used as an equivalent of “believer” or “follower of Jesus,” meaning simply “Christian.” Mary in Luke 10:39 is sometimes cited as taking the position of a disciple, since she sits at the feet of Jesus and is taught by him. She is portrayed that way, and this feature of the story is important for understanding its message. However, this does not automatically mean that Mary was viewed as a disciple by Jesus or the other disciples. Even the later rabbis, who strictly separated women from men when guests were in the house for a meal, did not forbid the woman of the house from listening in.¹⁸ Jesus may have allowed the women of the house to listen to his teaching as disciples would do without considering them disciples. The story in Luke 10 would make its point adequately, and perhaps even better, if Mary were not considered a disciple, but rather one who took the position of a disciple at the feet of Jesus when he was in her home.

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However, the answer to the question of whether women were disciples of Jesus probably lies in understanding more clearly what the word “disciple” means.¹⁹ In the New Testament, “disciple” could have been used (and probably often was) in close parallel to the rabbinic use of the word “disciple.” A “disciple” in this sense is someone who is being trained by a master (rabbi) to fulfill the same role the master himself holds, that is, someone being trained to be a rabbi or to fulfill rabbinic functions. In the Old Testament period, prophets seemed to train younger prophets in a similar way. Jesus was a prophet and teacher and he trained the twelve disciples to represent him and carry out a role similar to his own.

The New Testament also seems to have the word “disciple” in a broader sense, closer to the English usage of “adherent” or “follower.” Acts uses the word in this broader sense. The disciples of John the Baptist were also, perhaps, disciples in this broader sense. The narrow and broader senses are related in Luke–Acts. One can see there that although those who came to believe in Jesus after the resurrection did not take up an apostolic ministry in the strict sense, they did succeed to the role of the disciples in their relationship with Jesus. They followed Jesus and related to him as their teacher. There is no evidence that Jesus chose women as disciples in the narrower sense. When he chose apostles or disciples to be trained, he chose only men. While women were near him serving, the circle of Jesus’ co-workers is exclusively male.²⁰ In short, the evidence would indicate that only men were disciples in the narrower sense of receiving training for specific ministry

which involved being a teacher, but women as well as men were disciples in the broader sense. The account of Mary in Luke 10 (part of Luke–Acts) then, simply exemplifies the way all believers could enter into the same relationship with Jesus that the Twelve did in that they could follow Jesus and receive his teaching.

The New
Testament
Approach ▶
Jesus and Paul

Very little of Jesus' teaching in the gospels bears on the roles of men and women. Only passages on sex, marriage, and divorce are directly relevant. However, these passages are more concerned with either sexual purity or the nature of marriage than with men's and women's roles. Jesus' teaching on divorce does put the man and woman in the same position in their marital rights, but the goal of this teaching seems to have been to increase the oneness between men and women in marriage, not to give equal rights to divorce. Elimination of the woman's legal disadvantage in the area of divorce was merely a byproduct of Jesus' new approach to marriage. His teaching in the sexual area (Mt 5:27–31) might reasonably be interpreted as a support of the separation of men and women in daily life, but such a view goes beyond anything explicit in the text.

The only explicit reference outside the gospels to Jesus' teaching on the subject is the "command of the Lord" in 1 Corinthians 14:37. This could well be a reference to proper order for women in meetings. If so, then Jesus did, at least in one area, teach a role difference for men and women that agreed with his own actions.

In summary, if Jesus wanted to be revolutionary in his approach to the roles of men and women, one could expect something in his teaching that would point in that direction. However, there is no such evidence in his teaching. In fact, there is possibly even some evidence (1 Cor 14:37) that points in the opposite direction. Even without this evidence, however, the fact that he did not teach about role difference between men and women does not constitute evidence in support of the view that he did not accept the Old Testament role structure for men and women. To the contrary, it is evidence that he did accept it. Jesus did not teach against idolatry either, but that is evidence that he accepted the basic Old Testament teaching on the subject, not that he allowed idolatry.

Jesus, then, in no way calls into question the basic Old Testament pattern of roles for men and women. There is no evidence that he even modifies the basic rules of daily Jewish custom for a man talking with, touching, or otherwise relating to a woman. He does relate to women differently than a scribe-rabbi would have done, but most of the differences can probably be explained by (1) the fact that he does not see himself as just a scribe-rabbi;

and (2) the fact that the approach of Jewish society in his time was freer in this area than it was for rabbis in the Mishnaic and later Talmudic periods.

Some have nevertheless held the view that Jesus would really have liked to have broken more decisively with the Jewish approach, but he kept silent because he knew that the people of his time could not have accepted it. As has been indicated, once the later rabbinic customs bearing on men's and women's roles as expressed in the Talmud and Midrash are no longer the standard of comparison with Jesus' approach, there is no indication that Jesus would have wanted to make any significant change in the normal Jewish approach of his day. However, there is even less indication that Jesus would have held back some of his most revolutionary teaching because he was afraid of the reaction of those around him. Jesus did not seem to approach his relations with the Jewish people and the scribe-rabbis so timidly. His teaching on relating to tax collectors and "sinners" was no more acceptable than his teaching on women would have been, if this teaching had, in fact, been so revolutionary. If Jesus had wanted to avoid trouble, he certainly should have been more careful with his Sabbath teaching. His teaching on ritual purity was not acceptable to the Jews—it was truly revolutionary—yet he spoke it at a time when he was already in enough trouble. There is no indication that Jesus suppressed or restrained a desire to break with the approach of his society in the area of men's and women's roles. The fact that he did treat women very well, with love and respect, is by no means incompatible with acceptance of role differences between men and women. Only someone who believes that genuine love and respect must be incompatible with role differentiation would be able to detect a revolutionary intent in Jesus' behavior despite the lack of evidence for it.

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Even though Jesus was not revolutionary in the sense of wanting to change the basic patterns of roles for men and women that are founded in the Old Testament, or even the daily life customs of his Palestinian environment, it would be a mistake to overlook that which was genuinely new in his approach to women. The fact that Jesus saw his role as being that of a prophet explains many of his differences from rabbinic customs in relating to women. But this also points to something more. The gospels, particularly those of Luke and John, preserve a portrait of Jesus' relations with women that shows that he had markedly brotherly relationships with women and also a striking concern that they hear his message and understand it. Martha and Mary are not only close to him, but they both receive his teaching. Mary sits at his feet (Luke 10), and Martha is the one whom Jesus teaches about the resurrection (John 11). Jesus chooses the unknown

Samaritan woman, the one called by the Greeks Photine, “the enlightened one,” to hear about himself and the gift of the Spirit. Not only does he teach her, but she then becomes the first “evangelist” to the Samaritans. When Jesus sees a woman who had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years, he has compassion on her and heals her without her asking. He does so because she is a daughter of Abraham and is thus worthy of his concern. Jesus’ recognition of the woman’s spiritual status along with the sons of Abraham may not have been original, but it may well have been, since the first extant rabbinic parallel to such a phrase dates from about seventy years later.²¹

The interest Jesus shows in women is striking, both in his concern for their “religious” life and in his brotherly love for them. There are no parallels to it for his century or the century or two before. Were the historical sources fuller, perhaps one could find some parallels, but, nevertheless, none are known to exist. Jesus does not treat women as if only men were full Israelites. He treats women out of his role as preacher-teacher-prophet-healer whose message and concern is for the whole people of Israel. Jesus’ loving concern for women is quite likely another indication of his concern to return to “the beginning,” to God’s original creation, to the model of the patriarchs and prophets. His approach to women can also probably be traced to his message of repentance and faith, to his teaching about God’s desire for “mercy and not sacrifice,” to his impatience with the tradition of the elders, and their view that purity consists in “what goes into a person rather than what comes out.” The righteousness Jesus taught was for all of Israel, for men and women alike, without distinction. Jesus did not come to abolish the law, but he did come to restore it to its true place, and one aspect of that restoration was a change in status of women in Israel.*

* The discussion in this chapter has touched mainly on customs of separation between men and women and the manner in which a religious leader like Jesus or a scribe-rabbi would have included women in instructional situations. The reason for this has been primarily because this is the area which is most commonly given as illustration of Jesus’ revolutionary approach, mainly on the strength of the comparison with rabbinic materials. To raise the question about how Jesus approaches the halachic questions about women in regard to the law and to religious status would be more significant (cf. Chapter Six, pp. 151–152). Would he, for instance, have accepted the view that women were not fully obligated to public worship? Would he have accepted the principle that women are only obligated to duties that did not occur at set times?

The answer is not easily given here. There is no widely accepted comprehensive scholarly treatment of Jesus’ approach to what could be understood as the common law of his time in religious matters. This is partly due to the difficulties in establishing what was the common law of his day in religious matters and in knowing how much of the rabbinic material is representative of earlier common law and not just Pharisaic or later developments (see Neusner, *Rabbinic Traditions*, pt. 3, 239–313). Probably Jesus accepted common law and abided by it. Even his teaching on purity in Mark 7:1–23 does not necessarily imply that he would have taught his followers to disregard basic laws of purity in ritual situations (see David Flusser, *Jésus* [Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1970], 49–53). On the other hand, we could well expect him to view the common law in a different framework than many of his contemporaries. His message of repentance

This does not mean that Jesus came to abolish role differences, any more than Galatians 3:28 means this. But it does mean that he opened the kingdom of God to men and women alike.

To summarize, Jesus related to women with love and respect. He spoke to them, taught them, healed them. He never spoke of them in a contemptuous or downgrading manner and never treated them as if they were unimportant. In his eyes, they had the same spiritual status as men. At the same time, the evidence is that he accepted a role difference for men and women and that he even respected the normal Jewish customs in the area. He was not, as one recent speaker claimed, “a man who breaks all categories, who goes beyond all accepted norms.”²² He did break some categories and went beyond some accepted norms, but only the ones that were due to scribal or Pharisaic interpretation of God’s teaching that he judged to be erroneous. Jesus was not revolutionary with regard to the roles of men and women. His revolution lay rather in the area of what constituted true righteousness and of the spiritual relationship of men and women alike to God and to Israel. The consequence of his teaching and approach in this area was a very significant spiritual and social change for women, one that allowed them, as Christians, to have the same spiritual status as men, to be treated with the same “brotherly love” as men, a change that was described in Chapter Six.

Jesus’
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of Women

Paul and Pagan Culture

IN comparing Paul with Jesus as he appears in the gospels, a picture presents itself that overturns some recently popular prejudices. One recent author states the relationship of Paul to Jesus this way: “Actually, Jesus’ attitude

and preparation for the kingdom and his baptism were for all the people—men and women alike, Pharisee and “sinner” alike. He desired to restore Israel to its condition before the onset of hardness of heart, to God’s purpose from “the beginning.” Hence we might well say that “neither male nor female” was a reflection of Jesus’ teaching as well as Paul’s.

Such a view, in addition, would raise the question of whether Paul himself would have accepted the normal Jewish common law of his time as it dealt with women and religious matters as something obligatory for the circumcised. Would he, in other words, have expected Jewish Christians, at least Jewish Christians in Palestine, to have observed the normal Jewish interpretation of what was obligatory for men and women? There is no well worked-out view of how Jewish Christians would have approached the halacha in various areas. We can only surmise that it must have been different from the way Pharisees approached the halacha and been somewhat different from the later rabbis, without always being able to specify the differences. However, there is a good chance that Paul would have expected Jewish-Christians to follow the normal common law approaches. If that were the case, the approach of Jesus and Paul to the status of women would have been identical, and everything that was said in Chapter Six would hold of Jesus as well.

toward women was completely unlike Paul's."²³ According to this writer, Paul is an anti-feminist, while Jesus was "woman's best friend" and treated women as "persons." The basis for this view is mainly the fact that most of the scriptural passages which enjoin a role difference between men and women are in Paul's epistles. Therefore, many would draw a contrast between Jesus and Paul, and favor the approach of Jesus over that of Paul.

However, the evidence shows no basis for the contemporary prejudices against Paul; in fact, it points in the opposite direction. There is more evidence for Paul's friendships with women than for Jesus' and more examples of the way Paul "furthered" the woman's role than of how Jesus did this. First, one can see from Paul's letters a great deal of praise for women who have deserved it. Romans 16 provides a full example of this:

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchreae, that you may receive her in the Lord as befits the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a helper of many and of myself as well.

Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus. . . . Greet Mary who has worked hard among you. . . . Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord. Greet Rufus, eminent in the Lord, also his mother and mine. . . . Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. (Rom 16:1-3, 6, 12, 13, 15)

Philippians 4:2-3 provides a glimpse into Paul's relations with some women who probably had worked with him, and exemplifies his concern for them:

I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. And I ask you also, true yokefellow, help these women, for they have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life. (Phil 4:2-3)²⁴

Paul's love and respect for women does not appear to be less than that of Jesus. In fact, it is probably not accidental that the Gospel of Luke, the Gospel that most clearly preserves the memory of Jesus' love and concern for women, is the Gospel also associated with Paul.²⁵

Moreover, the evidence indicates that Paul worked more actively with women in service than Jesus did. The examples given in Chapter Five in the discussion of the role of women as missionary workers come from Paul's

work. Paul possibly provides the earliest example of a Christian leader working with deaconesses.²⁶ In contrast, one does not find Jesus sending women out on mission the way he sent out the Twelve or the seventy-two. Neither does one find Jesus making use of women's services in the course of his preaching in the way he made use of the services of the Twelve. The difference may be due to Paul's innovativeness in the area, or else due simply to the fact that Jesus did not need the same kind of helpers that an apostle founding a new church in a predominantly Gentile environment did. Whatever the reason, Paul appears with active women co-workers while Jesus does not.

Paul and
Pagan Culture

Finally, there are no indications of any difference between Paul and Jesus in regard to speaking with, touching, teaching, traveling with, or respecting women. Both probably observed the normal Jewish customs in these areas. Both were willing to speak to and teach women in public when it was a matter of bringing them the gospel message. Both were respectful of women.²⁷

All of this is not to say that Paul loved, respected, or "furthered" women more than Jesus. Rather, it is simply an indication of how far removed the popular prejudice against Paul is from the actual evidence. It shows once more that many contemporary lines of interpretation are inspired by the view that anyone seeing value in a role difference for men and women must somehow value women less.

The key difference between Paul and Jesus, as far as the evidence is concerned, lies in the fact that we have explicit New Testament teaching on the roles of men and women from Paul and none from Jesus.²⁸ As stated earlier, rather than indicating that Jesus did not accept a role differentiation between men and women, this lack of teaching from Jesus indicates that Jesus did accept such role differentiation. The explanation for the difference between Jesus and Paul in this area lies in the fact that they dealt with different situations, not that they took different approaches.

Jesus' world was Palestinian Judaism. Those whom he taught and those to whom he preached were mostly Jews who lived in a Jewish culture and were committed to the teaching of the scriptures as they understood it to be. Jesus lived in an environment, in other words, where much of what we now know as "Christian teaching" was not only accepted but followed rigidly and zealously. Adultery was clearly condemned. Homosexuality was out of the question. The father was the undisputed head of the family. Women held no position of public authority. Of course, Jesus and the first Christians within Palestine were in contact with Gentiles, and had

to deal in various ways with the Gentile influence upon Judaism.²⁹ Their predominant environment, however, was militantly Jewish, and their predominant task in ethical teaching was to relate themselves to other currents in Judaism. Jesus may have had to clarify his position on divorce, but he did not have to explain why he had not chosen a woman apostle.

The New
Testament
Approach ▸
Jesus and Paul

Early in their history the Christians moved outside of the Palestinian Jewish environment to lands that were predominantly pagan. Thus they “inherited” a position equivalent to that of diaspora Judaism. The Christians were surrounded by pagan religions and philosophies and by a culture shaped by various forms of paganism and teachings that did not stem from the scriptures. They needed to distinguish themselves from the surrounding pagan society and establish a way of life that was different from that of their neighbors. The early Christians could draw on the model of diaspora Judaism, which had to deal with the threat of idolatry and with moral standards that were very different from those of “the law.” But Christians in pagan lands had to do more than just follow the example of the diaspora Jews; they had to develop a teaching for the “Christian diaspora” that was faithful to Christ and his interpretation of the scriptures and of Judaism.

Paul, then, was handling a pagan environment in his epistles, as were most of the writers of the New Testament epistles. It was an environment that contained many diaspora Jews, but was predominantly pagan. It was an environment in which sexual ethics and the pattern of roles for men and women as the early Christians understood them were not being observed.³⁰ Pagan cults had priestesses. In fact, the Greco-Roman world of that time seemed to have been experiencing a dissolution of its own traditions in the area of family life and the roles of men and women. Family life seems to have been weakening in some areas, and women were playing roles in society that they would not have played in Palestinian Judaism or in earlier Greco-Roman society. There is some indication that Asia Minor, and Ephesus in particular—the place from which 1 Corinthians was written and to which 1 Timothy was probably directed—had moved particularly far from Judeo-Christian patterns of roles of men and women. Perhaps this was because the region was the center of forms of pagan worship in which female deities and priestesses were prominent. The same currents were affecting other places in the Hellenic world as well, Corinth and Macedonia being two of the more significant.

Paul also had to face some movements within the new Christian communities he had founded that undermined what he considered basic Christian standards, both in the area of the roles of men and women and in other

areas. These currents have been labeled “enthusiastic,” “proto-Gnostic,” and even “proto-Montanist.” Whatever the proper description and understanding of them, Paul and his co-workers and successors had to deal with them as these currents moved toward discarding many of the patterns and traditions Paul had taught.

Thus, the explicit teaching on the roles of men and women in the New Testament arises from the development of Christianity in a Gentile-pagan environment. It arises in that environment not because it was first invented there or imposed on Christians by a nervous ex-rabbi. It arises in that environment because the universal practice of the Christian churches was challenged in that environment. Paul had to teach many things that Jesus did not teach, not because Paul was developing a different approach, but because he could not presuppose that his converts would always accept what the early followers of Jesus took as a matter of course. Had Jesus preached and taught in the same environment as Paul, he undoubtedly would have had to say many of the same things. The fact that the New Testament teaching on roles is Pauline and not explicitly from Jesus is no reason to call into question its authentic Christianity. One could just as logically reconsider the circumcision question because only Paul left explicit teaching on the subject. The teaching of the “key texts” arises in the context of the “Pauline” environment of the mission to the Gentiles and to the Jews who lived among them because those were the Christians who needed to hear such teaching. Paul shaped Christian teaching for the Gentile world, but he did it in continuity with the approach taken by Jesus.

Paul and
Pagan Culture

▶ II

THE NEW TESTAMENT APPROACH ▶ SETTING AND CULTURE

THE KEY TEXTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT concerning the roles of men and women present a consistent teaching. Each text has its own point of origin and its own perspective and content, but together they sketch out what can be accurately described as the New Testament approach. These key texts are chiefly Pauline, composed in response to problems that arose in the context of the mission to the Gentiles and the Jews who lived among them.¹ Thus the teaching in the New Testament on the roles of men and women originates in the context of the movement of Christianity from Palestine to the Gentile world of paganism and diaspora Judaism. While the debate over circumcision and Jewish ritual was the center of attention for Christians living in the Gentile world, it was by no means the only issue. The roles of men and women seems to have been another.

That teaching must now be placed more clearly against its background. The setting, intent, and purpose of New Testament teaching on the roles of men and women must now be considered. Is this teaching simply the result of cultural influences, rabbinic and/or Hellenistic? Is it simply an attempt to deal with a given social environment? Is it, in short, “just cultural”? Or does this teaching flow from a distinctively Christian understanding of the human race and of what human beings are supposed to be? Is it based on revelation?

The New Testament does see the roles of men and women, at least in certain respects, as of basic importance to God’s work of redemption in Christ. Furthermore, the New Testament sees Christian teaching in this area as distinctive, and not only accidentally so. It is distinctive because

the roles of men and women as taught in the New Testament are an integral part of Christian teaching. This does not mean that the teaching on the roles of men and women is the most important part of the Christian message. However, this teaching is something more than an unreflective assertion of cultural prejudice or unconscious influences. It is also more than an attempt at accommodation to a given social structure. As some would express the point, the New Testament teaching on the roles of men and women has theological grounding. To illustrate this, it is helpful to explore three areas: (1) the position of the teaching on personal relationships as a central focus of the New Testament, with the teaching on the roles of men and women as an integral part of that teaching; (2) the relationship of the teaching on the roles of men and women to rabbinic tradition and Greek culture; and (3) the criteria for deciding whether or not teaching of this kind is “just cultural.”

II ◀

The New Testament and Social Structure

THE Christian message in the New Testament centers upon Jesus and his work of redemption. It also centers upon the purpose to be achieved by Jesus' work of redemption, namely, the creation of a people, a social body living a way of life that reflects God's own nature. As was shown earlier, the New Testament concerns the creation of a new humanity, humanity as God meant it to be. Jesus' work involved a restoration that would accomplish God's original intention for the human race, and this work involved the restoration of full righteousness to God's people. Jesus was a preacher of the coming of the kingdom, but he was also a teacher whose greatest controversies with others often involved differing interpretations of the righteousness of God. Paul shared this vision of a new humanity restored in Jesus. The redeemed were to form a community that would be so united that it could be described as the body of Christ. With Christ and in Christ, the redeemed were to make up one person who is the son of God. Moreover, in Christ they were to be formed in the image of God so that they look like God. Paul understood the restoration of that image largely to involve the restoration of those character traits which make the Christian people like God. In other words, this restoration involves forming Christians in a new way of behavior. Central to the Christian message, then, is the formation of a body of people living in a way of life that is a reflection of their heavenly Father's nature.

The early Christians' view of the body of Christ highlights this point from what could be described as an ancient sociological perspective. They saw the Christian "church" as being a people or nation (1 Pt 2:9; Eph 2:12), a social body with its own government, laws, and courts. The terms they used to describe the heads of their people were mostly drawn from secular government (see Chapter Five). They spoke in terms of their own laws, and they expected to have legal cases decided by competent individuals within the Christian community rather than by secular judges in secular courts (1 Corinthians 5–6). They saw themselves as a people (nation) living in countries that belonged to other nations. They saw themselves the way diaspora Jews saw themselves—as resident aliens, a people residing outside their own country, subject to the government of the country in which they were living, but organized together as a subject political body.² Hence, the early Christians fully expected to have a way of life of their own, with their own laws and customs, as every other people did. They would have thought it very strange to be a people without a distinctive "law," that is, a way of life. Of course, the early Christians did not view their way of life as simply one among many. In their minds, their customs were true and righteous, born out of the worship of the one true God and based on his teaching (Ti 3:1–8). From the sociological perspective of the early Christians (which perhaps comes closer to our anthropological perspective), a distinctive way of life was essential for them to truly be the people of God.

Christian Teaching on Personal Relationships

This distinctive way of life was expressed in a teaching for new Christians. Recent scripture scholarship has shown clearly that a basic teaching on personal relationships constituted part of the early Christian catechesis.³ There has been much form-critical debate over the origin and shape of this catechesis, but the net effect of all the discussion has been to put in clearer relief the fact that the early Christians did have a basic teaching on personal relations and that this teaching was used as basic instruction for pagans who wished to be baptized. This early Christian teaching probably developed from similar teaching that diaspora Jews had used for their proselytization of pagans. The form of the earlier Jewish teaching probably owes something to the popular moral teaching of the ancient world, especially that of the Stoics, but the content was developed primarily from the Jewish Torah—the teaching of the Old Testament. The Jewish teaching to pagans, both in the form of apologies to non-Jews and

in the form of instructions to new proselytes, was intended to clarify the difference between paganism and Judaism and to win people to a new way of life. In other words, the Christian teaching on personal relations was a reworked tradition, reworked first from Old Testament teaching by the diaspora Jews in order to meet the requirements of their new contact with paganism, and reworked a second time by Christians in order to meet the requirements of the new life in Christ. This new life required a transformed Jewish teaching.

Christian
Teaching
on Personal
Relationships

There is clearly a significant focus on personal relations and social structure teaching in 1 and 2 Thessalonians, probably the first New Testament writings. Many elements of this concern also appear in 1 Corinthians, a letter which is probably almost contemporary with Romans and which, like Romans, exhibits a strong “doctrinal” concern. Personal relations and social structure teaching is not markedly more prominent in documents such as Jude which are generally accepted as being among the latest in the New Testament. In other words, there is very little evidence that concern for personal relations teaching and social order developed gradually among the early Christians over several generations. It was always a concern, and its elaboration was a constant task of early Christian writers. They did so partly in response to local needs (1 Corinthians 11), and partly because of the intrinsic importance of the topic and its relevance to their doctrinal concerns (Colossians 3–4 and Ephesians 4–6). Moreover, these topics were discussed not only in documents which seem to reflect a church at peace (1 Timothy), but also in those written for people undergoing persecution (1 Peter and Hebrews). The relationship between the specific living situations of the early Christian communities and the specific statements about personal relations and social order may well be interesting and important, but the relationship is generally not one that justifies viewing the scriptural injunctions merely as responses to particular and local circumstances outside the community or to individual and temporary crises within it.

The point can be made even more strongly. The New Testament teaching on personal relations and social structure shows a concern for unity with mutual love and subordination that is stronger than what can be found in other teachings of the time, except for Essene-Qumran teaching. The household codes, one unit in the New Testament teaching on personal relations, illustrate this well. Similar types of teaching can be found in the Stoic and diaspora Jewish writings of the time. The Christian writings differ from the Stoic ones in stressing the mutuality of obligation in relationships, especially between husband and wife.⁴ In the Christian household

codes the responsibilities are reciprocal, and both parties of a relationship (husbands . . . wives, parents . . . children, masters . . . slaves) are exhorted. The Christian writers also differ from the Stoic and diaspora Jewish authors in the way they exhort the subordinate parties so prominently, calling upon them to enter into the relationship with a willing spirit for the sake of the Lord. Hellenistic and even Jewish parallels put more emphasis on the husband-father-master, expecting him simply to keep the relationship working right. Finally, the primary focus in the Christian household codes is on subordination, the subordination of the wives, children, and slaves. This subordination is called forth from their commitment to the Lord.

In short, the Christian form of the teaching is relationship-centered like the Jewish form rather than individual-centered like the Stoic form. Further, the Christian teaching lays an even heavier weight on unity and subordination and calls all Christians to commit themselves to that ideal—men and women alike, slave and free alike. Throughout the New Testament, in fact, there is a concern for unity, mutual love, and the order of subordination that would have to be seen as the New Testament ideal for human relationships and as a special characteristic of New Testament teaching.

The Importance of Teaching on Roles

The New Testament teaching as expressed in the key texts on the roles of men and women forms an integral part of the basic Christian teaching in the New Testament. First, as has been thoroughly discussed in the previous chapters, New Testament teaching in this area is consistent. As outlined in Chapter Nine, there is no trace of inconsistency or disagreement on the most central points. Second, as has also been already discussed, the New Testament teaching on the roles of men and women is consistently grounded in theological reasoning whenever it is presented in any length. For the most part it is grounded in five things: (1) teaching about Adam and Eve; (2) God's purpose in creation and its restoration in Jesus; (3) the correspondence between the marriage relationship and the body of Christ; (4) the order of headship (God–Christ–man–woman); and (5) the example of the patriarchs. In 1 Corinthians there is also an appeal to the universal practice of the churches. Throughout the New Testament, cultural adaptation is never given as a reason for men's and women's roles. It is a serious mistake to overlook how consistently the reasoning given in the New Testament is "theological" and how central those reasons are to God's basic purpose for creating a new humanity in Jesus. Of course

someone can say that the theological reasoning is just a cultural prejudice, a smokescreen for a process of rationalization. But one should say this only after examining the strength of the theological reasoning in the texts which present the New Testament teaching on the roles of men and women. One must also take into account the lack of evidence which could reasonably be viewed as supporting the position that the New Testament advocates roles for men and women as a means of cultural adaptation.*

The Importance
of Teaching
on Roles

Some people would say that the only genuine New Testament teaching in the area of the roles of men and women is the teaching that we are to give ourselves to our neighbor within the limitations placed on the relationship by the existing social order.⁵ When such a view is presented in a responsible way, it is normally presented as an observation about the teaching of the household codes, especially those in Colossians and 1 Peter. In their basic structure, the household codes in Ephesians, Colossians, and 1 Peter are simply exhortations to preserve right order in husband-wife, master-slave, and parent-child relationships. From the New Testament's point of view, there is nothing specifically Christian about this set of exhortations. Good order is fitting in relationships among non-Christians as well as among Christians. However, it is also important to give due weight to some of the ways the household codes are developed. When a thorough theological grounding is given for these exhortations, a very different grounding is given for each relationship, showing that the relationships were viewed differently. The closest thing to theological grounding for how to conduct oneself in a slavery relationship is the teaching that in Christ it does not make that much difference whether one is a master or slave. The New

* This point was clearly brought out in the course of the controversy in the Church of Sweden during the 1950s concerning the ordination of women. E. Sjöberg, writing in favor of women's ordination, clearly acknowledged, but dismissed, the strong theological reasoning in the Pauline passages in these words:

In the Report—in which the shaping of the exegetical section was primarily my responsibility—it was not stressed strongly enough that Paul's assessment of the role of women in the service of worship builds upon a concept to which he himself attached decisive and fundamental significance. The Report points out, to be sure, that in 1 Corinthians 11 Paul refers to the order of creation itself in support of his view. But that should have been emphasized more strongly. Paul is trying to find the most forcible argument available in order to show that his view is based on the order of nature and of creation. The order of representation expressed in the model God—Christ—man—woman and the consequences which follow therefrom have absolute validity according to Paul. To break with that would be to break with God's order and with that of nature. For Paul this is not a pragmatic question but a question of principle, and a matter of deep religious conviction.

The reason this fact was not more strongly emphasized in the Report was that the committee did not seriously consider the possibility that Paul's view in this matter would be cited in the contemporary debate as a generally valid Christian view, normative for all times . . ." (cited in Stendahl, *The Bible and the Role of Women*, 7–8).

Sjöberg had the great merit of clear-sightedly recognizing the exegetical facts and of putting the issue where it actually is: How are we going to respond to Paul's teachings?

Testament does not actually ground the institution of slavery itself in revelation. On the other hand, the New Testament does give theological grounding for the institution of marriage. This grounding appears somewhat in the household codes, but also in other parts of the New Testament, and includes grounding of husband-wife subordination within marriage. Indeed, it is no accident that the basic exhortation in Colossians to husband and wife is expanded in Ephesians by one of the most significant New Testament considerations of the marriage relationship. In Ephesians, the marriage relationship is seen as modeled upon the marriage of Christ and the church by which the new humanity is created. In short, while the household codes may be primarily intended to teach about good order in a specific set of relationships, one cannot deduce from this that the New Testament views all those relationships the same way and therefore that its only concern is with good conduct according to the social structure within which we happen to find ourselves.

Although the New Testament teaching on the roles of men and women is grounded in the basic truths of Christianity, the relationship between the two is not self-evident.⁶ It would be impossible to take a statement of the Christian message (centering, for instance, around the death and resurrection of Jesus) and directly derive from it the New Testament approach to the roles of men and women. Such a theological grounding cannot be provided, and those who look for such a grounding or require it will not find it. But then, such a theological grounding can be provided for very little of the New Testament teaching on personal relations. The commandments against murder and adultery cannot be derived any more easily from the central Christian message (or, for that matter, from the Judaic message) than the subordination of wife to husband, even though such commandments are clearly among the essentials of a Christian ethical position. Instead, the New Testament presents a different sort of grounding. The New Testament grounds its teaching on the roles of men and women by relating it to God's original purposes in the creation of the human race and to the overall shape of God's plan. The New Testament's grounding in this area amounts to the statement that the social structure presented for men-women relations in marriage and community was intended by God from the beginning, and still holds true in Christ's restoration of humanity. It amounts to saying that some social structure is needed for successful human functioning and that this is the structure God wanted and created for the human race. Hence, it is an integral part of God's design for the body of Christ.

The New Testament teaches more than matters of belief (what some would call “doctrine”) and universal ethical principles. It also teaches a social structure for those who have found faith in Christ and are being built in him into the new human race. It teaches a social structure which involves coming together in one body in Christ, a body which is ordered under its elders or governors. This social structure also involves the formation of families within that body in such a way that each family is one person under the head who is the father. In other words, the New Testament teaches the restoration and strengthening of relationship in Christ—communal relationship and family relationship.*

The New Testament in Its Setting

The New Testament and Rabbinic Teaching

THE fact that the New Testament consciously teaches an approach to personal relations involving certain social structure teachings, and that it grounds many of those teachings in God’s work of creation as restored by Jesus, gives us a better perspective from which to view claims that the Pauline teaching on the roles of men and women was simply taken over from rabbinic teaching.

Neither Jesus nor the early Christians saw themselves as rejecting the

* Most of the personal relations teaching in the New Testament is based on the new social order that the early Christians envisaged and lived in. Much, if not most, of the personal relations teaching is teaching for life in the body of Christ, not universal ethical principles. To be sure, the early Christian view was that everyone ought to be converted and become part of the body of Christ. But nonetheless most of the personal relations teaching in the New Testament is more accurately described as teaching on how to love brothers and sisters in the Lord who you live with as members of one body because you have been redeemed by Christ, belong to him, and have been filled with the power of the Spirit to love God and other human beings in a new way. It is not a teaching about what can be expected of all men simply by virtue of its universal validity.

There is evidence that the early Christians would have seen some of their teaching as being what we might call universal ethical teaching. Romans 1:18–32 and 2:12–16 show indications of such a view, and in this Paul was possibly continuing a line of thought familiar to us from rabbinic writings which attempted to trace out the commandments obligatory on Gentiles because they were given with the Noachic covenant to all men and not just to the Jews with the Sinaitic covenant.⁷ However, much of the New Testament teaching on personal relations was based on the Pentateuchal teaching about what should obtain between covenant brothers in distinction from what should happen in relating to those who were not part of the people of God (cf. Dt 15:1–6, 12–18, 23:19–20; Lv 25:35–46). To be able to make this distinction implies that understanding a social structure like the people of God is essential to understanding how to conduct oneself in relation to others.

Judaic religion or the Judaic revelation. Jesus viewed himself as a teacher belonging to Israel who was teaching the true understanding of God's righteousness. The early Jewish Christians saw themselves as Jews who were zealous for the law, but who believed that the messiah had come, that he would come again, and that they were already living in the messianic age in which the Spirit had been poured out. Paul viewed the Gentile Christians as grafted on to the tree of Israel. All the early Christians saw that the Jews as a whole had rejected God's word for them in rejecting Jesus, the one whom God had sent. The early Christians held that the larger body of the Jewish people was, once again, not responding rightly to God. But they did not therefore completely reject Judaism as a whole. Nor did they reject the Old Testament. Jesus, Paul, and all the early Christian writers viewed the Old Testament as simply the scriptures—the authoritative writings that contained God's revelation. They believed that it was important to have the right interpretation of the Old Testament. They also believed that the Pharisees, Sadducees, and much of the scribal tradition did not know what God's righteousness was. But they did not therefore give up on the Old Testament.

Neither did the early Christians reject all the Judaic thought of their time that could not be found strictly in the Old Testament. The New Testament doctrine of angelology and demonology, for instance, cannot be found simply in the Old Testament,⁸ and there is no evidence that the early Christians thought Jesus or the apostles had invented this doctrine as a new revelation. Christians accepted it as a doctrine from other teachers of the time. There are even passages in the New Testament that refer to uncanonical writings such as the Assumption of Moses and the Book of Enoch as being in some way authoritative (Jude 1:9, 14–15). On the other hand, the early Christians did not simply accept everything in the Judaism of their time. Jesus took a clear stand against the “tradition of the elders” and many scribal teachings and interpretations of the law in matters such as purity, sabbath teaching, association with sinners, and divorce. Paul likewise clearly rejected some central rabbinic opinions, though his teaching had many rabbinic parallels. His opponents were at one point described as both believers (in Christ) and members of the Pharisaic party who were unhappy with his views (Acts 15:5). Paul was a convert who had probably been a rabbi, and he was still able to describe himself as a Pharisee on occasion (Acts 23:6). However, he also clearly taught the difference between Christianity and much of rabbinic Judaism on a number of points.

There are two possible grounds for holding that Paul was simply car-

rying over his former rabbinic teaching when he taught about the roles of men and women. The cruder version would hold that Paul's teaching is Judaism and not Christianity because it is founded in Old Testament teaching. The other and more common view is that Paul's teaching on men and women is rabbinic because there are parallels to it in rabbinic writings.⁹ However, both Old Testament foundations and rabbinic parallels are to be expected, since the early Christians viewed themselves as teaching a variety of Judaism correctly understood and interpreted, and they based this teaching on the Old Testament. Furthermore, they did not reject all the later developments in Jewish religious teaching held by their contemporaries, but selected those they viewed as right. The early Christians were not duty-bound to avoid everything any rabbi ever thought.* In fact, one principal objective of many New Testament writings was the clarification of which rabbinic thoughts and teachings were in accord with Christian teaching and which were not. If Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, the one who fought against Judaizing and against imposing the entire Mosaic law upon Gentile converts, did not have authority in his scriptural writings to say which Jewish teachings were in accord with Christianity and which were not, a contemporary writer impressed at finding some parallels in Paul to rabbinic writings is not going to turn out to be a safer guide or a greater authority.

The New
Testament
and Rabbinic
Teaching

In their teaching on the roles of men and women, the early Christians were more similar to the rabbis than different, because they accepted the whole Old Testament even while having some principles for deciding how various parts of the Old Testament applied in the new age (such as Mt 19:3–9). Moreover, despite what centuries of controversy on both sides might have one believe, the Christians and the rabbis were fundamentally of the same religion. But, at the same time, the early Christians were clearly different from the rabbis (and not always where modern writers would like them to be different). Where Christians saw the need for a distinctive approach, they had one. Their differences from Judaic and rabbinic teaching about men and women can be summarized in the following main points:

1. *Spiritual status.* The primary difference was the one summarized earlier in the discussion of Galatians 3:28: In Christ all believers, Jew or

* In evaluating rabbinic parallels, one also cannot rule out the existence of Christian influence on rabbinic thinking, both in the sense of being formed by Christian teaching, and in the sense of reacting against it. Since the rabbinic texts are later, and for the most part attribute the relevant opinions to rabbis later than Jesus and Paul, the parallels could as easily argue for Christian influence on rabbinic thought as for the reverse.

Gentile, male or female, slave or free, are one and belong fully to the new humanity. Their spiritual status as sons and daughters of God is identical.¹⁰ In a larger context, this means that Israel “according to the flesh” could no longer be viewed simply as the people of God, excluding Greeks and others. Nor could the social structure based on teaching designed for Israel “according to the flesh” be simply upheld. Hence, the various gradations of spiritual significance which the law made according to social role and descent were outmoded. It was no longer the case that only a free male of pure Israelite descent could have full privileges in the civic and religious life of “Israel” and greater access to God. Birth no longer determined spiritual privilege or status. As a consequence of this fundamental shift, the New Testament taught that women were partners with men in spiritual life, that men and women were to be loved alike with full care, that women were expected to bear as full a responsibility as men for conducting themselves rightly toward the family and community order. The New Testament taught also that women could pray, prophesy, work as missionary and pastoral workers, and take an active role in the work of the Christian people.

2. *Order in relationships.* The second difference is one that contemporary Christian writers often have the most difficulty perceiving, namely, that the Christians were much more disciplined as a people in their approach to personal relationships than was the Jewish nation as a whole. The Christians were not more disciplined than the Essene-Qumran sect, which had a rather different approach to community discipline. But Christian teaching on community life laid a heavier stress on order and subordination than did most contemporary Jewish practice. Their teaching on subordination was not paralleled among the rabbis, nor was it found in the Old Testament in the same way. At the same time, Christian teaching strongly emphasized mutual love and service, and sacrificial love (related to the example of Christ and his cross) in a way that was not foreign to Judaism but was characteristically stronger among Christians. These two teachings—subordination and mutual love and loyalty—create a much stronger emphasis on relationships than do either the Old Testament or Judaism. Christian teaching about personal relations and social structure can be seen as a teaching about the restoration and strengthening of relationships, especially the redeemed community relationship and the family relationship.

3. *Marriage*. The third difference, the change in approach to marriage, could be viewed as a subpoint of the second. Jesus took a stricter approach to marriage and the husband-wife relationship. He did not favor polygamy and divorce, and thus he strengthened the marriage bond. In addition to following Jesus' teaching in this area, the early Christians put a greater stress on mutual love and spiritual service between husband and wife than did the Judaism of their time. While Jewish teachers did not neglect to teach husbands to love and respect their wives, they did not teach men to regard their wives as their spiritual partners the way the early Christians did.¹⁷ In other words, even though the Jews had a very strong approach to the marriage relationship in comparison with most pagans, the early Christian approach strengthened the marriage relationship even more.

The New
Testament
and Rabbinic
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In comparison with paganism, the early Christian approach was clearly Jewish. But by comparison with the rabbinic approach to Judaism, the Christian approach was distinctive. It was distinctive in a way that many contemporary Christian writers, with their own individualistic, non-communal approach to life, find difficult to understand. It was even stronger on relationships and order in community than were the dominant currents within Judaism.

The point that concerns us here, however, is the fact that the Christian approach was distinctive in regard to *rabbinic* Judaism. Distinctiveness does not mean that everything corresponding to rabbinic teaching was avoided in the pages of the New Testament, any more than it means that everything corresponding to Old Testament teaching was avoided in the pages of the New Testament. The existence of New Testament teaching which agrees with rabbinic teaching does not rule out the New Testament having a distinctive approach. The writers of the New Testament were quite able to decide to approach an area differently from the rabbis, and they often did so. Distinctiveness rather means that when the New Testament teaching on a subject is put together, it exhibits an approach that at some points is significantly different from the rabbinic approach. One who asserts that a particular piece of New Testament teaching is simply rabbinic and not Christian has to show not only that there are rabbinic parallels, but also that the teaching in question is at odds with Christian teaching in the minds of the New Testament writers. Failing that, it would be better to ask why modern minds have difficulty accepting some teaching that is both Christian and rabbinic.

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The perspective provided by seeing that the New Testament teaching on the roles of men and women is grounded in central New Testament teaching on Christian personal relations and social structure also illumines the relationship of the New Testament teaching to Greco-Roman society. If the key texts are passages which give the mind of the New Testament writers, then the evidence drawn from an analysis of those passages shows that the motivation for the core of New Testament teaching on the roles of men and women was not adaptation to the culture or surroundings. Rather, the motivation was faithfulness to a tradition of revelation of God's purpose for the human race in its social structure.

There is, of course, some evidence of cultural adaptation in the New Testament teachings on the roles of men and women. Paul may have applied the principle of missionary adaptation in this area (see 1 Cor 10:32–33; 1 Cor 9:17–23). The teaching on headcoverings for women is one likely example of such adaptation. The early Christians and perhaps diaspora Jews before them were probably adapting the Jewish custom of the veiling of women in daily life to the Greco-Roman environment. Consequently, since women did not go veiled in daily life in the Greco-Roman world, the Christians restricted the custom to worship situations, the one time they felt it to be essential, and hence to the privacy of their own gatherings. It is possible that the role of women in service in the Christian community is another adaptation, because our evidence for the degree of active service for women comes from Gentile, not Palestinian or Jewish-Christian, environments. Many have held that this indicates that Gentiles and Jewish-Christians approached this area differently and, hence, that the approach of the Gentile Christians represents an adaptation to their environment.¹² This view is by no means established, since it rests upon the lack of clear evidence for how the Jewish-Christian communities approached service by women. Yet it is possible, and, if true, it would be another example of cultural adaptation. However, the core of the Christian teaching on men's and women's roles—the insistence that the governing authorities in family and Christian community should be men, the insistence upon expressions of role differences in certain situations, and the basic patterns of family and community life in terms of the roles of men and women—shows no evidence of arising from cultural adaptation. Rather, the New Testament upholds this core of teaching as part of a view that the order in the Christian community is based upon God's purpose in creation.

Here it is worth stressing that the New Testament could have drawn the line in a different place if adaptation to local customs was the main consideration. In other words, Paul and the other early Christians could have taken a different approach with respect to their environment than the one actually advocated in the pages of the New Testament if it had seemed right to do so. The rule about headcoverings in the form stated by 1 Corinthians 11 was not a Greek, Asian, or Roman Custom. Neither are there such parallels to the custom about women speaking in the assemblies in the form in which the custom is stated in 1 Corinthians 14. The rulings in 1 Corinthians 11 could have been omitted without causing any scandal to the local Gentile population. In addition, Greeks and Asians allowed priestesses and permitted a greater participation of women in the leadership of religious services and even of religious associations themselves. In other words, Paul and the other early Christian leaders were in an environment in which they would have taken a different position if adaptation to local custom was the primary principle they were following. Instead, they held out for an approach that made Christians different from their neighbors on a number of points, and they did so out of conviction that they were following God's way.

The New Testament teaching on the roles of men and women can more safely be understood as drawing a line in how far Christians can go in adaptation, rather than as primarily motivated by adaptation. Some of the key texts bear signs of being something like standard teaching, that is, teaching given on a variety of occasions to help people with areas of their lives, rather than teaching which is especially designed to handle particular problems. The household code passages, for instance, are probably in this category. However, in other passages the writer is attempting to deal with a specific situation or is countering a specific trend. Both of the passages in 1 Corinthians seem to be in this category, as do some elements of the passage in 1 Timothy 2. The language used in all three of these passages is the kind used when someone is taking a stand. It is more emphatic, using more personal authority than is normal for standard teaching. The corrective character of these passages comes to especially vigorous expression in 1 Corinthians 11:3, 1 Corinthians 11:16, 1 Corinthians 14:34, 1 Corinthians 14:36, and 1 Timothy 2:12. Moreover, as was indicated in Chapters Seven and Eight, the motivation in these passages seems to be a concern for subordination as upheld in the practice of all the Christian churches. In other words, these passages take a stand against some trends or threats within churches in a Gentile environment. The stand they take shows

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evidence of being an assertion of something regarded as basic Christian teaching on social order.

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Many questions arise at this point. What approach are these passages countering? Were people in the Corinthian church advocating women praying and prophesying in worship services without headcoverings and taking part in instructional situations without observing “good order”? Were Christians in Asia Minor saying that women should perform some of the leadership functions of the elders in the community, especially giving authoritative teaching, or saying that women should become elders? Some have suggested that the passages are countering Greek cultural influences, and that one can see here the effect of the secular women’s “emancipation” currents upon the early Christians.¹³ Others have suggested that the problems being addressed in the passages arose from the conclusions some of Paul’s converts drew from his proclamation of freedom in Christ. Others have held that the teaching countered a movement that could be labeled proto-Gnostic, a movement which leads to the kind of emphasis on women characteristic of Gnosticism. These latter two positions could be merged together, since Christian teaching like Paul’s may well have been a factor giving rise to Gnosticism.

This whole question is complex and goes beyond what can be adequately discussed here. For our purposes, two observations are sufficient. First, one is dealing with problems stemming from a Gentile environment, an environment that was open to approaching the roles of men and women more loosely than Paul or other early Christians would find acceptable. The evidence is strong that Greco-Roman society was undergoing a weakening of traditional customs in the area of men-women roles and family life. This looseness may well have been part of a general weakening of social structure in Greco-Roman society, especially in Asia Minor and Greece, and could well be the background for both 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy. Second, whatever these influences from Gentile society might have been, the passages in question were taking a stand against them. The early Christian teachers were being pushed to a point beyond which they believed it was not right to go.¹⁴

A Distinctive Christian Approach

In attempting to understand New Testament teaching on the roles of men and women in relation to the Gentile environment which served as its context, one is confronted with an impressive array of influence and cultural

adaptation theories. The very variety of these theories and their failure to harmonize with one another, even at times within the same author, gives the impression that many scholars are saying, “but the early Christians *must* have been adapting themselves to their culture.”¹⁵ Many of the theories are plausible, at least superficially. In the final analysis, however, they are not borne out by the evidence. There is no positive evidence for them in the New Testament, whereas the New Testament does give strong indications that the decisive factor in the formation of the early Christian approach to the roles of men and women was faithfulness to a tradition of teaching on men, women, and social order that came to Christians from Judaism and was transformed in accordance with the gospel message. The New Testament shows evidence that the Christians were adopting a consciously distinctive approach.

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They were clearly distinguishing themselves from the society surrounding them and the influences that worked on them. The early Christians held a consciously distinctive approach and, whether or not their approach satisfies those who may disagree with it, it cannot be dismissed as simply a matter of adaptation, reaction, or unconscious influence. Of course, it is always possible to say that the early Christians were “culture-bound” and therefore could not have devised an alternative to some of the basic points of their teaching about men and women. To be sure, it probably would not have occurred to them to come up with the approach of eliminating all role differences in family and society—the alternative that the contemporary environment proposes. However, it is not difficult to guess what the early Christian teachers would have thought of this modern Western alternative if they could have seen it—provided that they were sincerely committed to their own principles and not holding them merely out of a conscious or semi-conscious rationalization. They might not have very readily known what strategy to take in contemporary society, but the principles they used to decide how to approach Gentile society in their time would not have let them simply adopt a “no differences between men and women other than those indicated by competency” approach, even for reasons of cultural adaptation. They would have to abandon their fundamental principles in the area before they could begin to consider such an approach.

In summary, the evidence points to the view that the early Christians deliberately took a distinctive approach to the roles of men and women in relationship both to the Gentile environment and to rabbinic teaching. The Christian approach was distinctive in somewhat different ways in relation to each. The Christians built upon the Jewish tradition in the

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full conviction that it came primarily from God's revelation, but they produced a distinctive understanding of that tradition based upon their understanding of the proper approach to interpreting the Old Testament as well as upon their understanding of the coming of the messiah and the requirements of the new age of the Spirit. As a result, their approach to the roles of men and women was different from that of the rabbis. They based their approach to the Gentile environment, however, on another set of principles. While there are some traces of cultural adaptation in the sense of modifying practices inherited from Judaism, there is more evidence of the early Christians taking a stand against Gentile practices. In most aspects of personal relationships teaching, they followed an approach which saw pagans as subject to uncleanness, to their own desires, and to evil spiritual influences. Hence early Christians saw pagans as unable to judge well about what is true righteousness (Eph 4:17-24; Lk 22:24-27; 1 Th 4:1-8; Ti 3:3-8; etc.). The approach of the early Christians to the area of the roles of men and women cannot be characterized simply as yielding to outside influences or as simply reacting against different cultures. The New Testament teaching on roles is not simply the sum total of the influences on the early Christians. Rather, this teaching is a distinctive approach of its own. It combines a respect for the authority of Old Testament revelation, an awareness of the change produced by the coming of the messiah, and a sensitivity to the need for some adaptation to different circumstances. It is a distinctive teaching, consciously faithful to a basic approach.

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THE New Testament presents a consistent, distinctive approach to roles of men and women, one that is grounded in the basic truths of God's purposes for history. Yet that approach is very often dismissed as "just cultural" or as "culturally conditioned." Often this view is expressed in terms of positions discussed earlier in this chapter, positions which too easily assume a simple cultural influence. As has been seen, it would be a mistake to view the New Testament writers as culturally naive individuals who did not deal with the cultural issue at all. To the contrary, the teaching on the roles of men and women was developed precisely as the New Testament writers attempted to deal with the cultural issue, and they did so from a set of teaching principles. Nonetheless, because of how the term "cultural" is used in much contemporary thought, the understanding outlined thus far cannot explain the whole issue. The very framework behind phrases

like “just cultural” or “culturally conditioned” must be considered and related to the previous discussions in this chapter.

Social Structure and Social Expression

The term “culture” can be used in two significantly different ways. Sometimes it is used in a universal sense, as when one speaks about “the advancement of culture.”¹⁶ In this sense, “culture” refers to human social life insofar as it is developed by human beings and not simply given in an instinctual or semi-instinctual way by “nature.” “Culture,” however, can also be used in a particular sense to refer to the way of life of individual cultures, for example, the Palestinian Jewish culture or the contemporary American culture.¹⁷ In this sense, the term “culture” often refers primarily to those characteristics which are particular or unique to a given culture. When people speak of something as being “just cultural,” they normally mean that it is part of one culture and not considered a necessary part of any culture.

Two major categories of cultural elements can be distinguished: those which belong to social *structure* and those which are matters of social *expression*.¹⁸ Social structure is more fundamental than social expression. Something is a matter of social structure when it is a matter of the basic patterns of human life. The institutions, values, and principles of a society go into making up its social structure. Some elements of social structure which have already been discussed in earlier chapters include marriage and the way it is formed, the value placed on love in the New Testament, the order of subordination in marriage, and Christian community. By contrast, something is a matter of social expression when it concerns the way an action is *carried out* in a particular culture. Languages and gestures, art forms, and the minor ceremonies which mark off different areas of human life from one another are all matters of social expression. Some such matters already discussed in previous chapters are braided hair, headcoverings, and silence in assemblies.

Failure to distinguish between social structure and social expression often causes confusion. Discussions often take place in reference to matters of social *expression*, and the conclusions from these discussions are then mistakenly applied to matters of social *structure*. This results in distortion. For instance, in one culture, respect to elders may be expressed by bowing to them upon meeting; in another culture, respect may be expressed by not speaking to them or acknowledging their presence until the elders speak first. On the level of social expression, these two cultures could be seen as completely different in this area, since what is done in one

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culture is the opposite of what is done in the other. Yet on the level of social structure, these two cultures might actually be rather similar, since it may well be the case that in both cultures respect is being given to the elders for the same basic reasons. The different expressions of this respect might indicate some fundamental differences in value, but they might not. So too the variety of cultural expressions in the area of the roles of men and women can often mask a great similarity in basic structures. In other words, social expression can be likened to the “language” of social structure. The same social structure can often be translated into many different forms of expression.

Another important distinction in cultural matters or customs is between matters of little fundamental importance and those of greater importance. In considering the roles of men and women, people will often say, “that practice was just part of the culture of the day,” or “that was just the custom of the day,” or even “that was just traditional.” This usage is illustrated by the sentence, “The essential justification for the wearing of veils was simply social custom.” Although inaccurate, this statement manifests well a common attitude. The word “simply” (it could be “just”) implies that since one can put the wearing of veils into the category of custom, tradition, or “culture,” one is justified in approaching it as being of little significance, as something that can be passed over as one goes on to deal with matters of real importance. To be sure, some customs, traditions, and cultural practices have less importance than others. Yet some customs, traditions, and matters of cultural distinctness are part of the fundamental practices of a people. They are so important that they are foundational to a people’s way of life, as well as of far-reaching consequences to the quality and success of that life. This is true of matters of both social expression and social structure, although it is normally more true for the latter.

The issues before us in the area of the roles of men and women are indeed questions of social customs or culture, but it is not enough to categorize them as such, to say a few things about cultural influences and parallels, and then move on to something “more important.” The real issue has to do with the place of those customs, traditions, or cultural matters in the life of a people. Ethics are customs, but they are customs which define a way of life held to or followed with commitment. The United States Constitution and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man are statements of modern customs in government, but they would not be considered “just customs” or “just traditions” by the people in the United States or in France, even by those in opposition to them. Shaking hands might be considered “just cultural” in the United States, but the Ameri-

can Constitution is surely on a different plane. The same is true of some cultural expressions. Burning incense before idols was “just” a social custom in the ancient Roman world, but many Christians became martyrs because they refused to take part in it. A modern man might be amazed at the importance given to a gesture which seems to him of such little significance. But one who cannot understand how significant this “gesture” was cannot be said to have grasped Christianity at all, for he has missed one of the most central values in all Christianity, and along with that the significance of a custom which expresses this value.

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Modern Attitudes toward “Culture”

The attitude of many modern people toward cultural questions is formed by two basic approaches, apparently mutually incompatible but actually often coexisting in harmony. These approaches are (1) cultural relativism and (2) the view that modern Western culture is superior to earlier, less advanced cultures.

When one who has taken an approach of cultural relativism, saying that something is “cultural” means that it is thereby relative and hence has no intrinsic authority. According to this view, one culture is as good as another, and therefore one culture’s practices are as good as another’s. Cultural relativism has entered into modern Christian thought in an influential way. It is not uncommon to hear Christians dismiss the subordination of the wife to the husband as “a Jewish custom” or “a matter of the culture of the ancient world.”¹⁹ The conclusion one is left to draw from these labels inevitably is that the custom has no authority in our lives because it is based on something relative and hence valid only for another culture. The same point is often made also about matters of sexual morality. Scripture’s ban on homosexual intercourse is seen as a restriction that comes from another culture and is therefore not universally valid. Even belief in God and Christ are often viewed as expressions of the religious consciousness of a more primitive culture or a particular society. For example, a noted Christian feminist who began by dismissing the authority of scripture in the area of the roles of men and women has recently drawn the implications of her principles in the area of belief in Christ:

A logical consequence of the liberation of women will be a loss of the plausibility of Christological formulas which reflect and encourage idolatry in relation to the person of Jesus. . . . The prevalent emphasis upon the total uniqueness and supereminence of Jesus will become less meaningful. To

say this is not at all to deny the charismatic and revelatory power of the personality of Jesus (or of other persons). The point is, rather, to attempt a realistic assessment of traditional ways of looking at and using his image.²⁰

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The other approach to cultural questions is the view that our culture is advanced, or that as cultures evolve they improve, and therefore our culture is somehow “higher” than Jewish culture in the time of Jesus or than medieval society. This view allows one to ascribe such practices as a distinction in the roles of men and women to the cultural prejudice of a more primitive state of society. This attitude is well expressed in the following quote from a feminist writer:

It is not surprising that Paul did not see the full implications of this transcendence. There is an unresolved tension between the personalist Christian message and the restrictions and compromises imposed by the historical situation. It would be naive to think that Paul foresaw social evolution. For him, transcendence would come soon enough—in the next life. The inconsistency and ambivalence of his words concerning women would only be recognized at a later time, as a result of historical processes. Those who have benefitted from the insights of a later age have the task of distinguishing elements which are sociological in origin from the life-fostering, personalist elements which pertain essentially to the Christian message.²¹

In other words, society is now at a more advanced stage of evolution, and the experience we have gained from living in this society enables us to distinguish the more primitive and sociologically determined elements of Christian teaching from those that are truly advanced. Such a belief in social evolution is logically inconsistent with cultural relativism. In fact, however, the two approaches quite often coexist in the same person: Cultural relativism is used to dismiss something from the past, and belief in the “advanced nature of our society” is used to justify modern practices over past practices.²²

For the Christian, the view that cultures are evolving and progressing is problematic. An evolutionary view is more convincing when applied to the history of technology; there has been a clear progress in man’s ability to master the natural environment and produce material things. Whether or not there has been a corresponding social or moral evolution to a higher level is debatable. A Christian who maintains Christian standards of judgment independent of the current opinions of society would, in fact, have to raise serious questions about the progress of our society. Neither cultural

relativism nor a view of cultural progress which places our society at the pinnacle of human achievement can be automatically accepted by a Christian, no matter how prevalent these views are in our society.

A Christian Culture

If, as was said earlier, Christianity comes as a new way of life with its own teaching on righteousness and goodness and with a social structure of its own, then Christianity has to be seen as a culture of its own. The claim of the New Testament, translated into contemporary terminology, is that Christianity is God's culture, that is, the revelation of God's views on the way human beings should live their lives. In other words, Christianity teaches a human culture that is in harmony with God's purposes and nature. Although the New Testament does not use the word "culture," it recognizes the cultural implications of its message. It recognizes that conversion to Christianity requires a radical change in a person's or society's way of life:

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Now this I affirm and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds; they are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart; they have become callous and have given themselves up to licentiousness, greedy to practice every kind of uncleanness. You did not so learn Christ!—assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus. Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. (Eph 4:17–24)

Moreover, the New Testament has a term for the social and cultural system in which Christians live that is not explicitly formed in Christ, and that term is "the world." Sometimes the term "world" in scripture simply means all created things. But more often it is used to designate non-Christian society with all of its cultural ways. Against this society the scripture takes a firm stand:

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If any one loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father but

is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides for ever. (1 Jn 2:15-17)

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? (1 Jn 5:4-5)

Unfaithful creatures! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (Jas 4:4)

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The scriptural opposition to the world is not an opposition between spiritual things and material things (or divine things and created things), as opposition to the world often came to mean for later Christian writers. Rather, scripture speaks about an opposition between God's people living in God's social order according to God's way, and the non-Christian peoples living according to their own customs. It is an opposition between two social groupings and two cultures (even though one cannot say that all non-Christians form a united social grouping and culture).²³ Later Christians gradually lost a consciousness of the scriptural meaning of opposition to the world as all members of society gradually became members of the Christian church. First the Roman Empire and then other nations converted to Christianity and began to transform their cultures according to Christian values and principles. As a result, a "Christendom mentality" developed which saw a particular set of nations and the Christians as the same. Much of the modern discussion on the roles of men and women is still based upon the unconscious assumption that what is acceptable in society should be acceptable among the Christian people. If society accepts a new principle such as the elimination of role differences between men and women, the Christian people should accept that principle too.²⁴ However, a scriptural perspective should allow the Christian to see more clearly that the culture and ways of modern society do not have to be his. In fact, they *cannot* be his if he is to have friendship with God.

From the standpoint of New Testament teaching, a spiritual principle is at issue here that has serious consequences. The principle is this: The form a human culture takes depends on its spiritual relationship to God. When a human culture does not explicitly acknowledge the one true God and follow his ways, it will end up in perversion of true righteousness. This perversion will include distortion of sexual morality and family life. Paul puts it this way:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse; for although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles.

Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever! Amen.

For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. Their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error.

And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a base mind and to improper conduct. They were filled with all manner of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's decree that those who do such things deserve to die, they not only do them but approve those who practice them. (Rom 1:18–32)

There is spiritual peril for Christians, then, in accepting the culture in which they find themselves and in approving the practices of the nations they live in. The New Testament called people to give up their old culture and to find a new one in Christ, and that call is still the same today. This does not mean rejecting everything in the old culture. But it does mean gaining enough spiritual separation from that culture so as to be free of its intellectual authority and influence. It also means gaining the ability to distinguish between good and evil in the culture according to the teaching of God rather than according to the accepted standards of the culture itself.

Christianity, then, forms a culture of its own.²⁵ However, this does not mean that it has only one cultural expression or that it cannot be incarnated

into and transform a variety of cultures. At various times Christianity has looked native to Jews, Greeks, Romans, Spaniards, Germans, Filipinos, Americans, Chinese, Bantus, and most of the major peoples of the world. Christianity can be translated into many cultures, expressing itself through a variety of languages, art forms, and social manners. Christianity does not have to bring Latinization or Westernization along with it. At the same time, as Christianity is translated into various cultures, the essential Christian way of life, social structure, values, and principles have to remain the same. Otherwise the result is not a translation but a new message. God's culture can be expressed in some very different ways, but it still has to be God's culture that is expressed in those ways. Christians cannot be content merely holding beliefs about certain doctrinal facts and then, in all other respects, living like those around them. Although Christian cultures can be expressed in a variety of ways, there are limits.

Christianity cannot indiscriminately take on all the expressions of a particular culture without modification. Burning incense to "the gods" is a cultural expression, but it is a cultural expression that is closely linked to idolatry. In the same way, baptism is a cultural expression that cannot be severed from Christianity. Christian worship can indeed take on a great deal of the surrounding culture. Its language, music, poetic expression, and often its ritual can become acculturated, but Christianity cannot take on every cultural form or abandon everything from its Judaic roots. Moreover, the need for missionary adaptation should not blind us to the fact that one culture can be superior to another in various ways. Some cultures are poorer in means of expression, or handle human emotions less successfully, or are less capable of material survival than others. Thus there are more principles of cultural adaptation than the principle of accordance with God's teaching. Many of the issues involved in adapting the scriptural teaching on the roles of men and women to a variety of cultural expressions go beyond the scope of this book. However, the last two parts of this book will dwell at some length on the problems presented in adaptation to the kind of environment produced by the modern way of life developed in Western society since the technological revolution. The question will be twofold: (1) how to remain faithful to the way of life and social structure (the culture) taught in the New Testament while living in a very different social environment, and (2) how to incarnate that culture in fitting expressions.

The above discussion on culture puts us in a better position to evaluate the modern quest for elements of Christian teaching that are not historically or culturally conditioned. Trying to determine whether or

not a teaching is historically or culturally conditioned is not helpful in evaluating its worth, since everything human is historically and culturally conditioned. The real issue is this: Among the historically and culturally conditioned teachings we find before us, which have God's authority behind them? Which are expressions of his ways, his character, and his purpose for the human race? When it comes to a conflict, which has more authority: a human culture, or the culture that God taught through Jesus and his apostles? The recent attempt to separate culturally determined elements from timeless truths in the area of Christian personal relationships and the roles of men and women has been just as much a failure as was the liberal attempt in the nineteenth century to identify the progressive, timeless elements of Christianity. Both attempts failed for basically the same reason. The reason is not, as is sometimes stated, that the enduring truths simply cannot be distinguished from cultural elements that are not essential to the Christian teaching. Rather, the reason is that when the scripture is allowed to speak for itself, it becomes clear that it is precisely those elements in it that many modern people would like to expunge as time-bound and culturally determined that the scriptural writers considered most central and fundamental. In consequence, modern writers who set out to disengage Christian teaching from culturally determined elements end up by canonizing the approach of their modern culture and using that as a standard by which to judge the teaching of scripture. They do this because they cannot find any standard within scripture that would allow them to accept the elements they want to accept and reject those they want to reject.

The cultural question for Christians should be very different from what it is for contemporary people who are not Christians. Contemporary Christians should be seeking to preserve the culture revealed by God while they live among people whose way of life is no longer compatible on many points, including many of the most fundamental ones, with what God has taught. This involves sorting out inherited cultural traditions so that the Christians can see more clearly what came from God's revelation and what was accumulated from a particular culture and history. This also involves understanding what the distinctive Christian approach should be and how to wisely translate it into contemporary society so that Christians can be all things to all men—that they might by all means save some (1 Cor 9:22).

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CHRISTIAN TRADITION ► HUSBANDS AND WIVES

AT THE END OF 1 TIMOTHY, Timothy is exhorted to “guard what has been entrusted to you,” or perhaps, “guard what has been deposited with you.” This exhortation calls to mind the image of one person depositing a large sum of money or some other valuable item with another for safekeeping. The scriptural writers and the Christian writers who followed them saw the Christian truths and way of life as a great treasure, one that had been entrusted to their care and that was to be handed over intact to the next generation. As was remarked earlier (see Chapter Seven), the modern mind tends to view “tradition” very differently—as something left over, unexamined, something which probably needs to be updated or discarded. It is “just tradition.” By contrast, the first Christians viewed tradition as the careful handing on of their greatest treasure—the life in Christ and the teachings which made that life possible. They could not be truly faithful to Christ unless they could hand on well what had been handed on to them. They could not really be faithful to Christ unless they could maintain and uphold that with which they had been charged (see 1 Tm 1:18; 6:14; 2 Tm 2:2; 4:1–5).

There was a time in Christian history when people would have been directed to Christian tradition, especially to the Fathers, if they wanted to test their own reading of scripture. Those who had authority in the area of scriptural interpretation were those who stood in the succession of Christian teachers, men who were dedicated to faithfully passing on what they had received, who were known to be committed Christians and holy men, and who sometimes gave their lives for what they believed. It was

with their writings that Christians compared their own thoughts. For all the differences in their reading of tradition, this was true for Protestants as well as for Catholics and Orthodox, at least for men such as Luther, Calvin, and Wesley. In more recent years, however, there has been a shift. People are now supposed to compare their interpretation of scripture with that of scripture scholars, Christian or pagan, preferably those who are the most recent. Underlying this change in scriptural interpretive authority is a further change in the understanding of scriptural interpretation: a change in the Christian mind that is one of the more significant changes among the Christian people in recent centuries.

The last chapters presented the scriptural teaching on the roles of men and women; they included a discussion of the ideas and insights of modern scripture scholars. This chapter and the next will compare the views of the early teachers in Christian tradition (the Fathers) with the results of the previous chapters. While the understandings of the Fathers of the Christian church have been present in the earlier chapters, as the footnotes and occasional references in the text reveal, these two chapters will consider them and the rest of Christian tradition explicitly. For a subject like that of the roles of men and women, Christian tradition can more easily be treated in a brief form, since the primary contribution it makes is to underline and strengthen the results of the scripture discussion. Christian tradition does have more to say about the roles of men and women than appears explicitly in scripture, but it does not diverge from or add significantly to the main outlines of the roles for men and women as set forth in scripture.

Many have remarked that one of the main advantages of reading Christian tradition is the protection it gives modern Christians from the limitations of their own age when they come to read scripture or think about Christianity. The subject of the roles of men and women is one of the areas where tradition can best perform such a service. As was pointed out in the last chapter, our age is quick to judge that cultural conditioning relativizes the contributions of the past, but it does not at the same time eagerly apply this same approach to the dogmas of the present. By contrast, Christian tradition consistently sees the distinctiveness of the scriptural approach to the roles of men and women and carries on that scriptural teaching from age to age and from culture to culture. The steady witness of tradition can help us see more clearly how the views of the present age color a reading of the scriptural message about the roles of men and women.

What Is Tradition?¹

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“Tradition” (*paradosis*), as was discussed in Chapter Seven, means “handing over,” “handing on,” or, more literally, “giving over.” In this and the following chapter, the word refers to the handing on of what was taught by Jesus and the apostles. There is tradition in scripture. Scripture sees the basic gospel message itself as a matter of tradition (1 Cor 15:1–5; 2 Th 2–5; see also Col 2:6–8; 1 Th 2:13). It also sees basic teaching about the Christian way of life, including Christian social customs, as a matter of tradition (1 Cor 11:2, 23; 2 Th 3:6; Rom 6:17; Phil 4:9). In a real sense, all of the New Testament could be said to be tradition. The books of the New Testament were carefully handed on with their authority attested to by those who handed them on.²

Tradition continued from the scripture to the early church. The teaching of Jesus and his apostles was handed on from teacher to teacher.³ Later ages termed the great teachers of the earliest tradition “Fathers” of the church. These men were pastors, most commonly bishops but also presbyters or elders, both officially ordained and unordained. They were men with a recognized teaching gift and of recognized holiness of life and tested doctrine. Because of the kind of men they were and the kind of teaching they did, the Fathers were seen as men who taught with great authority and therefore men whose opinions carried weight. Not all of them were of equal authority, however. Ignatius of Antioch, Irenaeus, Athanasius, Basil, Ambrose, John Chrysostom, and Augustine were clearly recognized as greater authorities than Athenagoras, Methodius, Lactantius, and Didymus. Nonetheless, all the Fathers were seen as witnesses to true Christian tradition.

Sometimes when people refer to Christian tradition, they are primarily referring to the Fathers and referring only in a secondary way, if at all, to later Christian tradition. There is, however, a broader meaning of “Christian tradition” than the scriptural sense of the handing on of teaching. What was handed on in tradition, in and through the kerygma and teaching, was the presence and life of the Lord Jesus and the active working of the Holy Spirit. Christians handed on a living relationship with Christ. Thus, in a sense, tradition refers to all of Christian history—the history of the Christian people being led by the Spirit through many circumstances and teaching his word in the face of many challenges and new situations.

There are many views of how to approach the writings from Christian

tradition. Orthodox, Catholics, and some Protestants acknowledge a reliable and authoritative Christian tradition. Most Protestants find much of Christian tradition helpful, even if they do not hold it as being authoritative. There is, however, a convergence on some of the most central aspects of viewing tradition. First, Orthodox, Catholics and Protestants agree that no writing from tradition equals scripture in authority.* In the view of some, tradition might be of highest authority because they see it as a passing on of the revelation given through the apostles, but no individual writing outside the canonized scripture is equal in authority to scripture.†

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Second, no orthodox Christian views tradition as a substitute for scripture. Rather, the writings of tradition are seen as an aid in understanding scripture. Even among Catholic theologians who hold that some of Christian revelation was preserved in tradition but is not contained in scripture,‡ there is clear agreement that the primary purpose of tradition is to aid in the interpretation of scripture.

Finally, for Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant alike, not everything found in Christian history or written by one of the Fathers is true tradition in the sense of having been authentically handed over by Jesus or the apostles. First, in addition to the handing on of the basic Christian proclamation and teaching, there is what could be called good Christian human tradition. Good Christians in the past, like good Christians now, have had to deal with new circumstances. As a result, they have had new insights and wisdom, and have learned from the writings and experiences of others, including non-Christians. Much of this has been done with the

* The concern of this and the next chapter will be with what could be called “the monuments of tradition,” (for a discussion of the concept, see Congar, 427ff.), those written documents which are indications of teaching passed on by the early Christians. These writings are evidence both for the living tradition of the Holy Spirit present among the Christian people and for the teaching tradition passed on from teacher to teacher. Especially as indications of the teaching tradition, they can be used as evidence for what Jesus and the apostles taught. They are, in other words, helpful in interpreting scripture. For an example of how they can be useful, see the discussion of deacons and deaconesses in Chapter Five.

† Catholics would consider other materials “canonical” besides the canonical scriptures. Some decisions of councils as well as some statements of popes would be in this category. A canonical decision in a doctrinal controversy, however, or a canonical decision on how to order the life of the church would be authoritative (a “rule” for how to proceed), but it would not be in the same category as inspired, apostolic writings. See Second Vatican Council, *Dei Verbum*, sec. 21.

‡ The question of the sources of revelation was debated at Vatican II. Some Catholic theologians hold that there is revelation passed on in oral tradition that appears in later writings that is not contained in scripture. Other Catholic theologians hold that all authoritative revelation is in scripture, even though it is often not clearly stated and needs tradition for its explication. The issue was not decided at the Council, so that both would have to be considered acceptable Catholic opinions.

help, discernment, and even inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Second, there is also mistake and corruption in Christian tradition in the broad sense, and failure to faithfully pass on Christian tradition in the narrower sense. Even the greatest of the Fathers made mistakes and omissions, and their teaching is not on the same level of authority as the scriptures. Hence, Christian writings through the centuries, the patristic writings among them, have to be sorted out and tested to find the reliable elements and also to find what in it is true tradition in the full sense of teaching faithfully handed on from Christ and the apostles. Because of the nature of the tradition on the roles of men and women, especially because of the uniform consensus on matters of social role until most recent centuries, the theological differences among Christian groups on assessing tradition do not affect the results of the study. These chapters can easily operate within the field defined by the convergence of the major Christian theological positions.

These chapters will provide a brief survey of the sources from earlier centuries about the roles of men and women among the Christian people and then consider the further history of that tradition.⁴ Each chapter will take one area in the scriptural teaching on basic social structure and trace it through the Fathers. Chapter Twelve will treat the husband-wife relationship in the family, partly because of its intrinsic importance, and partly because it presents one of the clearest examples of a unanimous confirmation of scripture by tradition. Chapter Thirteen will treat the rule that the governing authorities of the Christian community should be chosen from among the men of the community. In the course of these two chapters, other aspects of the teaching of tradition on the roles of men and women will be considered, but the focus will be upon the two areas just described.

Family Order in Tradition

THE New Testament presents a clear and consistent teaching on the husband-wife relationship. It can be summarized as a relationship of mutual partnership in which the wife is subordinate to the husband for the sake of greater unity. The husband, as the chief governing authority or head of the family, has a responsibility to care for his wife, while she has a responsibility to be subordinate to him. This role difference is based on a difference in their areas of responsibility: The wife's primary responsibility is internal to the family, while the husband's is oriented more to the broader life of the people, both the Christian people and secular society. All of this teaching

about the relationship of husband and wife is set within the context of how two Christians, in this case husband and wife, should love one another as brother and sister in the Lord.

This basic New Testament teaching has been held with a clear consistency throughout most of Christian history. Today, many Christians no longer accept the headship of the husband in the family, or even the idea of any role difference at all. But in early tradition the New Testament teaching was carried out in a way that indicated a unanimous consensus about the area. One can read exhortations to husbands showing that the husband was often not performing as the head of the family the way he was supposed to be in theory. However, one cannot find even a small controversy in early tradition over who should be the head of the family, much less over whether there should be a head. Few areas in early Christian teaching are as uniform, and fewer still were held with the same consistency as long as this one, since the first Christian voices advocating a different approach were raised only in about the nineteenth century. The following series of quotations illustrates how consistent the teaching on the husband-wife relationship was among the early Christian teachers.*

Family Order
in Tradition

The Apostolic Fathers

The first witnesses to tradition after the New Testament are the Apostolic Fathers, orthodox teachers who lived at a time close enough to the apostles to have been taught by them personally. The Apostolic Fathers show a great deal of similarity to the epistle writers of the New Testament in the way they teach about the roles of men and women. The “household code” tradition lives on in their writings, and though household life by no means takes up the bulk of their writing, their general exhortations on Christian living often pass on a relationship teaching similar to that in the New Testament. Some examples of such teaching are found in the letter of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians (ca. 95 AD). In commending the Corinthians for the good order they had shown in the past, he says:

The wives you enjoined to discharge all their duties with a conscience pure and undefiled and to cherish a dutiful affection for their husbands; you taught them also to stay within the established norm of obedience in managing the household with decency and consummate prudence. [*Or*: you

* It is beyond the scope of this book to give a full survey of early Christian writings on this subject, and there appear to be no adequate scholarly surveys of the material to date.

taught them to keep in the rule of obedience, and to manage the affairs of their household in seemliness, with all discretion.] (1 Clement 1:3)⁵

Later in his letter Clement gives the following exhortation in urging the Corinthians to good order:

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Let us guide our wives [*or* women] to what is good. [*Or*: Let us train our wives in all that is good.] Let them exhibit the loveable quality of purity, let them display their sincere gentleness of disposition, let them show the forbearance of their tongues by their silence, let them bestow their affection not with partiality, but in holiness upon all alike who fear God. (1 Clement 21:7)⁶

One of the epistles which Ignatius of Antioch (107 AD) wrote on his way to martyrdom was addressed to Polycarp of Smyrna instructing him on how to be the bishop of a Christian community. The letter is reminiscent of the pastoral epistles and contains this exhortation:

Tell my sisters to love the Lord and be contented with their husbands in body and spirit. In the same way, charge my brethren to love their wives as the Lord loves the Church. . . . It is right for men and women who are marrying to form their union with the approval of the bishop, in order that their marriage may be in accordance with the Lord's will and not to gratify desire. Let it all be done to the honor of God. (*Letter to Polycarp* 5.1-2)⁷

Finally, Polycarp of Smyrna, a disciple of the apostle John and the recipient of one of the letters of Ignatius, gives a similar exhortation in a letter he wrote to the Philippians (probably when he sent them copies of Ignatius's letters [ca. 107 AD]):

So knowing that we brought nothing into the world, and can take nothing out of it either, let us put on the armor of righteousness and teach ourselves first of all to follow the command of the Lord. Then teach your wives to live in the faith that has been given them in love and purity, being devoted to their husbands in all sincerity and loving all alike with perfect chastity, and to bring up their children in the fear of God. (*Letter to the Philippians* 4.2)⁸

The writings of Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp provide a picture of communities formed by the kind of teaching given for Christian churches in Gentile lands. Their writings show a concern both for communal life

and for solid relationships among Christians. Their exhortations to different categories of people show that these writers were concerned not only with relationships within the household (an impression that studies of the household codes in the New Testament sometimes leave), but with a whole range of relationships within and outside of the Christian community. Their teaching on relationships stands within the tradition of New Testament teaching. The first quotation from Clement is particularly interesting in showing that Clement understood that the wife should rule the household. The second quotation from Clement and the quotation from Polycarp are of interest for their view that the husbands should instruct wives to take their proper roles. The quotation from Ignatius about getting the bishop's approval for marriages indicates that the Christian community provided the kind of support the family or clan provided in Israel. It also shows how the early Christian community could view marriage as a unit of community life, of concern to the whole Christian people.

The Apostolic
Fathers

Second- and Third-Century Fathers

A second sampling of early Christian writings can provide a picture of Christian teaching on family life about 200 AD, roughly half-way between the apostles and the great Fathers of the fourth century. Two teachers from the Alexandrian school, Clement of Alexandria and Origen, give a full picture of the Christian household, at least among upper-class Christians in Alexandria.⁹ At the same time Tertullian, the first Latin "theologian" and a presbyter in Carthage in North Africa, provides a view of Christian marriage in the West. Clement (d. ca. 215 AD) is particularly helpful. Christian living is a major concern of his *Pedagogue* and *Stromata*, and marriage and family receive extensive treatment. The following quotations contain some of the passages most relevant to this survey:

The virtue of man and woman is the same. For if the God of both is one, the master of both is also one; one Church, one temperance, one modesty: Their food is common, marriage an equal yoke; respiration, sight, hearing, knowledge, hope, obedience, love all alike. And those whose life is common, have common graces and, a common salvation; common to them are love and training. (*Pedagogue* 1.4)¹⁰

We do not say that woman's nature is the same as man's, as she is woman. For undoubtedly it stands to reason that some difference should exist between each of them in virtue of which one is male and the other is female.

Pregnancy and childbirth, accordingly, we say belong to woman, as she is woman and not as she is a human being. But if there were no difference between man and woman, both would do and suffer the same things. . . . As then there is sameness, as far as respects the soul, she will attain to the same virtue; but as there is difference as respects the peculiar construction of the body, she is destined for childbearing and housekeeping. (*Stromata* 4.8)¹¹

Moreover, women must with their own hands, bring from the pantry whatever we need. And it is not dishonorable for them to work at the millstone, nor to tend to food preparation in order to be pleasing to their husbands; nor is the spouse to be disapproved of, who keeps her house and is a helpmate to her husband. If a woman gets out of bed in order to bring her husband something to drink when thirsty, or to bring him something to eat, such an act can only be an exercise beneficial to both her physical and moral health; our Teacher approves of such a woman, who puts her shoulder to the wheel and holds her spindle firmly . . . she also knows how to open her hand to the poor and stretch out her arms to the beggar; she is not ashamed to emulate Sarah in the most beautiful of services: to be helpful to travelers. Abraham, indeed says to her, “knead three measures of wheat flour and make loaves cooked in the ashes.” “Rachel, daughter of Laban,” says Scripture, “arrived with her father’s ewe lambs.” But this is not all: In order to teach us humility, the text adds, “She herself led her father’s sheep to pasture.” (*Pedagogue* 3.10)¹²

But it is the same man and Lord who makes the old new, by no longer allowing several marriages (for at that time God required it when men had to increase and multiply), and by teaching single marriage for the sake of begetting children and looking after domestic affairs, for which purpose woman was given as a “helper.” (*Stromata* 3.12)¹³

“Let the husband give the wife her due and likewise also the wives to the husband.” In fulfilling this delegation she is a helper in the house and in Christian faith. (*Stromata* 3.15)¹⁴

In Origen (d. ca. 255 AD) the treatment of men and women in family life is more incidental. He does, however, take an approach very similar to that of Clement, as the following quotation shows:

“Sarah stood listening at the tent entrance behind Abraham.” May these examples of the patriarchs instruct women; may the women learn, I say, to

follow their husbands. It is not written without purpose, that Sarah kept behind Abraham: This is to show that if the man is first in meeting the Lord, the woman must follow. I wish to say that the woman must follow when she sees that her husband clings to the Lord. (*Hom. on Gen.* 4.4)¹⁵

The first quotation from Clement of Alexandria is one of the strongest statements of the principle that man and woman are alike in the most important respects. This statement from the *Pedagogue* is Clement's explanation of "neither male and female" in Galatians 3:28. Men and women have a common destiny, and their spiritual status and accomplishments can be equal. Although Clement does explain the relationship of man and woman from a second-century viewpoint, he is a clear witness to the fact that Paul's basic teaching on the oneness of man and woman in Christ was considered important a century after the death of the last apostle. Nonetheless, Clement also took role differences seriously. Woman was to be subordinate to man, especially in the family, as her husband's helper. Her sphere was the home, and there she was essential to her husband both for childbearing and for the management of the household. Origen's view is basically the same. For him the man and woman are equal, but the husband is the head. His responsibility is to lead his family in prayer, instruct them in right doctrine, and direct them in daily life. Thus the Christian household of Alexandria of about 200 AD emerges to light as having the same outlines as the Christian households portrayed by the Apostolic Fathers.

Second- and
Third-Century
Fathers

Tertullian (d. ca. 220 AD), a presbyter-teacher in Carthage, has been called the first Latin theologian because he was the first significant Christian writer in Latin (the Roman church was still using Greek at this time), and played a decisive role in the formation of Latin as a language of Christian teaching. Toward the end of his life he came under Montanist influence, which for him involved increasing rigorism in his approach to matters of Christian living. Providing a balanced interpretation of Tertullian which allows one to use him as a sound representative of Christian teaching on family life is therefore not easy.¹⁶ Nevertheless, he does present a fair amount of material which provides a picture of how Christian family life was lived in the North African church. The following quotation illustrates Tertullian's approach to marriage in his pre-Montanist period:

How can we be equal to the task of singing the happiness of a marriage which the church unites, the Eucharist confirms, the blessing consecrates, the angels proclaim, the Father ratifies? Not even in the world do sons marry rightly and properly without their father's consent. What is the tie

of two believers with one hope, one discipline, one service? They are siblings; they are fellow slaves; there is no separation of spirit or flesh. They are truly two in one flesh; where there is one flesh, there is also one spirit. Together they pray, they work, they fast, teaching, exhorting, supporting one another. Together in the church of God, at the banquet of God, in anxieties, in persecutions, in joys; no one hides anything, avoids the other, or is disagreeable to the other; willingly the sick is visited, the poor is helped; alms without afterthought, sacrifices without hesitancy, daily zeal without obstacle; no greeting is hurried, no congratulation lukewarm, no blessing unspoken; among themselves they sing psalms and hymns, and challenge one another to sing better for God. When he sees and hears them, Christ rejoices and sends them his peace; where the two are, there he also is, and there is no evil. (*Ad Uxorem* 2.9)¹⁷

This is a remarkable picture of love and harmony in a Christian household. Tertullian has been called a misogynist, for reasons that will be considered in the next chapter, but he seems to have been happily married and been a loving, respectful husband to his wife. For him, married life is a partnership, not only in the material matters of daily life, but in the Christian service carried out through the household. At the same time, Tertullian sees the man as the head of the household and, additionally, as the one who takes the primary concern for what happens outside the household.¹⁸

The Fourth-Century Fathers

The fourth century is the great age of patristic Christian teaching. For the most part, the Protestant reformers, as well as Catholic and Orthodox authorities, have considered the leading writers of that century the most important Christian teachers after the apostles. From the extensive material in this century, Ambrose, John Chrysostom, and Augustine provide a good picture of the teaching on the Christian family household of fourth-century Christians, both East and West.¹⁹

Ambrose (d. 397), the bishop of Milan, was the great leader of Western Christianity in his day and one of the foremost teaching authorities of the Western church. The following quotations illustrate his view of husband-wife relationships:

Grace is not only for men, while woman would be alien to sanctification; and the nature of the two sexes is distinct so that bodies are not confused in procreation. Men have their tasks, and women have the precise functions

of their sex. The generation of human succession belongs to women; it is impossible to man. (*De Cain et Abel* 1.10.46)²⁰

Woman must respect her husband, not be a slave to him; she consents to be ruled, not to be forced. The one whom a yoke would fit is not fit for the yoke of marriage. As to man, he should guide his wife like a pilot, honor her as a partner in life, share with her as a co-heir of grace. (*Ep.* 63.107)²¹

How great is the power of marriage, that the stronger is also at the service of the other. (*De Viduis* 13.79)²²

The
Fourth-
Century
Fathers

Most of Ambrose's teaching on the role of women comes in the context of his teaching on virginity but, as the above quotations indicate, his writings also contain basic instructions on marriage. They show that fourth-century Christian households were formed on the same principles as those of 200 AD and the New Testament period. The husband is clearly the head of the family, but at the same time the wife is his partner in daily life and in spiritual matters. The woman subordinates herself freely to her husband. Man and woman alike have their different responsibilities within the family and therefore in other areas of life as well.

John Chrysostom (d. 407), the Antiochene presbyter who became bishop of Constantinople, was a close contemporary of Ambrose. His writings provide a corresponding picture of family life from the Eastern church. Chrysostom preached more often than Ambrose about family life and, consequently, his writings give a somewhat fuller picture of his thought in this area. The following quotations are characteristic of his approach:

And that not only in cities, but also in each family there might be greater unanimity, He honoured the man with rule and superiority; the woman on the other hand He armed with desire: and the gift also of procreation of children, He committed in common to both, and withal He furnished also other things apt to conciliate love: neither entrusting all to the man, nor all to the woman: but "dividing these things also severally to each;" to her entrusting the household, and to him the market; to him the work of feeding, for he tills the ground; to her that of clothing, for the loom and the distaff are the woman's. (Homily 34 on 1 Cor)²³

Since our lives consist of two kinds of affairs, public and private, the Lord has divided the task between man and woman: to her he has assigned the

responsibility of the home, while to man is assigned the affairs of state, all those affairs which occur in public—trials, consultations, army orders, and all the rest. *Quales Ducendae Sint Uxores*)²⁴

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Further, in order that the one might be subject, and the other rule; (for equal honor is wont oftentimes to bring in strife;) he suffered it not to be a democracy, but a monarchy; and as in an army, this order one may see in every family. In the rank of monarch, for instance, there is the husband; but in the rank of lieutenant and general, the wife; and the children too are allotted a third station in command. Then after these a fourth order, that of servants. For these also bear rule over their inferiors, and some one of them is oftentimes set over the whole, keeping ever the post of the master, but still as a servant. And together with this again another command, and among the children themselves again another, according to their age, and according to their sex; since among the children the female does not possess equal sway. And everywhere has God made governments at small distances and thick together, that all might abide in concord and much good order. Therefore even before the race was increased to a multitude, when the first two only were in being, He bade him govern, and her obey. And in order again that He might not despise her as inferior, and separate from her, see how He honored her, and made them one and even before her creation. (Homily 34 on 1 Cor)²⁵

The wife is a second authority; let not her then demand equal honor for she is under the head; nor let him despise her as being in subjection, for she is the body; and if the head despise the body, it will itself also perish. But let him bring in love as a counterpoise to obedience; as is the case with the head and the body; the body yielding the hands, the feet, and all the rest of the members for service, the head providing for the body, and containing all feeling in itself. Nothing can be better than this union. . . . Hence he places the one in subjection, and the other in authority that there may be peace; for where there is equality of ranks there can never be peace; neither where a house in a democracy, nor where all are rulers; but the ruling power must of necessity be one. (Homily 20 on Ephesians)²⁶

You have seen the measure of obedience, hear also the measure of love. Would you have your wife obedient unto you, as the Church is to Christ? Take then the same provident care for her, as Christ takes for the Church. Yes, even if it shall be needful for you to give your life for her, yes, and to be cut into ten thousand pieces, yes, and to endure and undergo any suffering

whatever,—refuse it not. Though you should undergo all this, yet you will not, no, not even then, have done anything like Christ. . . . For there is nothing more absolute than these chains, and especially for husband and wife. A servant, indeed, one will be able, perhaps, to bind down by fear; nay not even him, for he will soon start away and be gone. But the partner of one's life, the mother of one's children, the foundation of all one's joy, one ought never to chain down by fear and menaces, but with love and good temper. For what sort of union is that, where the wife trembles at her husband? (Homily 20 on Ephesians)²⁷

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Chrysostom presents a clear picture of the husband-wife relationship in the family. Men and women were made by God for different tasks and spheres of responsibility. If this were not the case, there would be unhealthy competition between them and a tendency for the men to have contempt for the women. They were made to need one another. The wife serves as the manager of the household and as the second head. As Paul taught in his epistles, the husband is the first head, and the wife should subordinate herself to him. The wife should be subordinate, not in a servile way however, but willingly as an equal. The husband honors his wife and cares for her, relying upon her as part of himself. Because of her help he is able to care for his proper responsibility—the public sphere. Together, they form a little cell of the Christian community, for “a house is a little church” in which God is worshiped and served.²⁸

Augustine (d. 431) completes the picture of Christian family life in the fourth century church. He was the bishop of Hippo in North Africa, and was the most influential figure in Western Christian teaching in the ages that followed. Although his treatment of family life is not as extensive as Chrysostom's, there is enough material for an adequate picture:

For they are joined one to another side by side, who walk together, and look together where they walk. Then follows the connection of fellowship in children, which is the one alone worthy fruit, not of the union of male and female, but of the sexual intercourse. For it would be possible that there should exist in either sex, even without such intercourse, a certain friendly and true union of the one ruling, and the other obeying. (*De Bono Conjugali* 1.1)²⁹

You, O Mother Church, instruct us children in childish fashion. You teach youths with power and the aged in quietude, and you teach every one of these not only in accordance with the ripeness of his years but in accordance

with the ripeness of his understanding. You subject the wife to her husband in chaste and faithful obedience, not for the satisfaction of lust, but for the propagation of children and that the bond of the family may be preserved. You make the husband the head of the wife, not for the abuse of the more peaceful sex, but because this is the law of sincere love. You subject the children to the parents that they may freely serve them, and you give the parents a loving dominion over their children. (*De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* 1.30.63)³⁰

Augustine is a controversial teacher in this area because of his views on sex and because of the various later discussions about the effect of those views on Western Christian teaching. However, his view of family life is not particularly controversial, at least not in a way that differs significantly from the other Fathers, and it adds little new to the picture that has emerged so far. More than most of the Fathers, Augustine stresses the idea that woman was given to man as a helper for reproduction. But he does not hold that woman therefore has no purpose outside of marriage, since he believed that consecrated virginity provides a better opportunity for her. The most important feature of her life comes from what she is as a human being and a Christian. As a woman, however, she was created for childbearing, and her sphere of operation is within the family. She is to be subordinate to her husband, and he is to rule over her and care for her. Each has his or her own sphere of responsibility and his or her own tasks.

The teaching of the Fathers of the early church on family life is remarkably uniform. It could be viewed as an extension of and commentary on the scripture texts of the New Testament. Some of the Fathers are significantly clearer on the different spheres of responsibility that underlie the role differences, but those different spheres are also visible in scripture. The Fathers show us that the early Christians had a particular way of life which was especially visible in their family life. They were not like their pagan neighbors, and they did not expect to be.

In some ways patristic teaching is not particularly interesting when it discusses family life. It is more interesting when the Fathers attempt to state the differences between men and women and attempt to provide an understanding of the significance of those differences. It is also more interesting when the Fathers attempt to state the meaning of sex in the Christian life. But the patristic teaching on the roles of men and women in family life does not contain the same variety or tendency to further develop what is contained in scripture. The reason for this is not difficult to find. Many of the Fathers were educated men who thought seriously

about the reasons for the Christian approach to various areas, and they felt a need to defend Christianity against its critics. They therefore developed “theologies” of men-women differences and of sex. However, in their instructions on family life and the roles of men and women, the Fathers saw themselves more as pastors who were simply passing on a tradition received from the scriptures. This tradition was not controversial among Christians, even when it differed significantly from the approach of their pagan neighbors. Nor did it differ among Christians from country to country or culture to culture. In short, the teaching on the roles of men and women in family and household is one of the best examples available of a consistent, faithful passing on of Christian tradition.

Family Order
in Tradition

Post-Patristic Tradition

To continue to trace and illustrate Christian teaching on husband wife roles any further in history would go beyond the scope of this book and add little to the basic point. Up until the last century, there has been a continuous teaching about the equality of spiritual status in Christ of man and woman, about the husband being the head of the family, and about the husband and wife having different spheres of responsibility. Catholics, Orthodox, the major reformers, the Evangelical movement—all were agreed on this point.³¹ All Christians saw a clear teaching in scripture, unambiguously supported in the Fathers, and they were committed to a Christian approach to family life, even when they might not live out that commitment well.

In recent years, the Christian approach to family life has not so much been overturned as faded. In the early stages of this process, there were often vigorous protests by Christian leaders. The following quote from a modern church leader, in this case Pius XI, illustrates the kind of attempts that Christian leaders have made to reaffirm the Christian approach to family life in the midst of the social currents of the modern world:

This order includes both the primacy of the husband with regard to the wife and children, and the ready submission of the wife and her willing obedience, which the Apostle commands in these words: “Let women be submissive to their husbands as to the Lord, because the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the Church” (Eph 5:23).

This submission, however, does not deny or take away the liberty which fully belongs to the woman both in view of her dignity as a human person, and in view of her most noble office as wife and mother and companion;

nor does it bid her obey her husband's every request if not in harmony with right reason or with the dignity due to the wife; nor in fine, does it imply that the wife should be put on a level with those persons who in law are called minors, to whom it is not customary to allow free exercise of their rights on account of their lack of mature judgment, or of their ignorance of human affairs. But it forbids that exaggerated liberty which cares not for the good of the family; it forbids that in this body which is the family, the heart be separated from the head to the great detriment of the whole body and the proximate danger of ruin. For if the man is the head, the woman is the heart, and as he occupies the chief place in ruling, so she may and ought to claim for herself the chief place in love.

Again, this submission of wife to husband in its degree and manner may vary according to the different conditions of persons, place, and time. In fact, if the husband neglect his duty, it falls to the wife to take his place in directing the family. But the structure of the family and its fundamental law, established and confirmed by God, must always and everywhere be maintained intact.

With great wisdom Our predecessor, Leo XIII, of happy memory, in the Encyclical on Christian marriage which We have already mentioned, speaking of this order to be maintained between man and wife, teaches: "The husband is the chief of the family, and the head of the wife. The woman, because she is flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone, must be subject to her husband and obey him, not indeed, as a servant, but as a companion, so that her obedience shall be wanting in neither honour nor dignity. Since the husband represents Christ, and since the wife represents the Church, let there always be, both in him who commands and in her who obeys, a heavenborn love guiding both in their respective duties."³²

This quotation is paralleled by similar statements from leaders of every Christian tradition.

Later in this book we will consider the reasons why the social currents of the modern world work against the approach to family life taught in the scriptures and handed on by the Fathers. At this point, it is enough to observe that there are few instances where it is clearer that a change in the approach of Christians is an abandonment of Christian tradition, and not only of tradition, but of every source of authoritative teaching that can lay claim on a Christian.

CHRISTIAN TRADITION ▶
GOVERNMENT OF THE COMMUNITY

THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER was a simple presentation of patristic teaching on the roles of men and women in family life. It demonstrated how Christian tradition confirms the teaching in the New Testament on this subject. The presentation was simple primarily because the subject was not at all controversial in the teaching of the early Christians. However, the issue in this chapter—the government of the community—is a somewhat different matter. Government of the community was a matter of some controversy in the time of the Fathers. No orthodox Father ever advocated that women be among the governors of the Christian community (elder or bishop), but some heterodox sects did hold that position. Furthermore, there was some unclarity concerning the place of the deaconess in the overall leadership of the Christian community. Even more significant, however, is the current controversy over this issue. Today, the ordination of women has become a major concern in various churches, and the controversy, sometimes furious, often makes extensive use of patristic and other traditional material. This is an important area, therefore, in which many issues connected with tradition and with what might be considered an argument from tradition have to be considered.

The concern of this chapter is specific. It does not attempt an overall presentation of the approach of the patristic age to women's service and leadership in the Christian community. Chapter Five drew heavily upon patristic sources in describing the early Christian approach to this area, and that material will not be repeated here. This chapter simply investigates the conviction of the early Christian teachers that the choosing of the governors of the Christian community (elders/presbyters, priests, bishops)

from among the men was a practice founded in Christian teaching and tradition, with its source in the teaching of Christ and the apostles. Such a presentation runs the risk of making the Fathers sound negative toward the service and leadership of women in the Christian community. The opposite view is, in fact, true. The patristic age was a great period of active service by women in the Christian community. The widow and the deaconess, and later many women in the monastic movement, took an active part both in community service and in the service of caring for people—more so in this period than in many that followed. Nonetheless, women did not assume a role in the overall government of the Christian people because of a conscious, theological understanding of what was proper for women and proper for men.

The Evidence for Governing Positions

THE primary evidence for the view that women were not the elders or heads of the Christian community is the positive presentation in the historical sources of the roles that men and women did take. The elders were men, and all the patristic literature on elders implies, when it does not explicitly state, that only men held this position. Women's leadership is described, but when that leadership is expressed through recognized positions in the community, the positions are those of deaconess or widow with special responsibilities. Their "ecclesiastical rank" is that of deaconess or widow, and they do not exercise a governing role over the whole community or even over sub-groupings of the community (unless, as in the case of monastic women superiors, it is over sub-groupings which are all women). The patristic literature contains a fair amount of material on the roles of elders, deaconesses, and widows, and that material clearly establishes different roles for men and women in the leadership of the Christian community. This was brought out fully in Chapter Five.

The second most important type of evidence for the view that women were not governors of the Christian community is the lack of any certain instance until the nineteenth century of a woman holding such a position in an orthodox Christian community. Not only do the descriptions indicate that the leadership positions in the community were structured according to sex differences (with those who held the governmental positions being chosen from among the men), but the historical record provides no established instance of a woman holding a governmental position. Some

rare instances occur in which the literary evidence could be interpreted as admitting the possibility of women elders, but the possibility is always dubious, and the cases are so rare that together they do not add up to a serious argument for a possible phenomenon. They are simply the kind of instances of ambiguity in the literary sources that one would expect. The absence of any single clearly attested instance is a weighty consideration, since it would not be totally unreasonable to find an exception to the rule; yet no exception can be clearly demonstrated. There apparently were women presbyters and bishops in some sects which were considered schismatic or heretical. There were also problems in understanding the responsibilities and functions of deaconesses and, later on, certain abbesses. The variations among the sects and the questions concerning the functions of deaconesses and abbesses make this area more complex than the discussion of the roles of men and women in the family. Nonetheless, there is no instance of an orthodox Christian woman elder or bishop.

The Evidence
for Governing
Positions

There is, further, a third type of evidence which confirms the first two and underlines the fact that the absence of women elders and bishops was not accidental. A significant number of statements are recorded which teach that women may not be elders in the Christian community. The Fathers, with some consistency, taught this position for reasons grounded in Christian teaching. The literature containing canonical legislation also contains a number of explicit rulings against allowing women to serve as elders. This third type of evidence will be the concern of this chapter. This material lends greater authority to the view that the positive presentation of the roles of elder and deaconess, as given in Chapter Five, was not merely an accident, but was founded in the view of the roles of men and women held by the early Christian church and by those who taught with authority in the church.

The concern of this chapter is with government in the Christian community. The discussion can be complicated, though, by the significant change in the terminology used for describing elders which occurred between the New Testament era and the close of the patristic age. Toward the end of the second century, bishops began to be called "priests," and subsequently this term was extended to include the elders or presbyters.¹ The shift seemed to have corresponded to a greater concern for ritual and ceremonial matters, but the reasons for the shift are not relevant to this discussion. Partly due to the change in terminology, however, many Christians today understand the leadership of their church as being primarily a ritual matter. As a result, they do not equate "the priesthood" with a

governing function among the Christian people. In fact, in some churches there are priests who perform ritual functions only and do not normally take an active part in the government of the Christians whom they serve ritually or sacramentally. For our purposes, however, it is important to understand that in the patristic period, even when the terminology began to change, there was not the same distinction between sacramental ministry and pastoral or governmental ministry that one sometimes finds today. The church in the patristic period viewed the head (bishop) or heads (presbyters) of the Christian community as the proper people to preside at functions that were the official acts of the community, functions such as the community assembly in which the eucharist was celebrated, the reception of new members, and the penitential discipline. In other words, the priest was either the presbyter or the bishop, and the canons and teaching about the priesthood concern those who are the elders or heads of the Christian community.

Writings of the Fathers

The first category of material which clearly teaches that women ought not exercise governmental functions in the Christian community comes from the writings of the Fathers. The earliest writers who deal with this topic are Tertullian and Origen. Tertullian, both in his Catholic and in his semi-Montanist period, excludes women from governmental functions in the Christian community:

We wish to consider whether the prescriptions on church discipline for the woman also hold for virgins. It is not permitted to the woman to speak in church, not to teach, to baptize, to present [the offering], nor to pretend to any kind of function reserved to man, to say nothing of the sacerdotal office (*sacerdotalis officii sortem sibi vindicare*). We wish to inquire however whether something of the above may be permitted to virgins. The answer is clear: Of course not! (*De Virginibus Velandis* 9.1)²

Origen likewise speaks against the permissibility of women teaching in church:

The widows have earned ecclesiastical honor for they wash the feet of the saints through the word of spiritual teaching—not however, the feet of holy men, but of holy women. For it is not permitted that women teach

or rule over man. He desires that the woman teach good by training young women, but not young men, to purity; for it is improper that a woman be the teacher of a man. (*Homilies on Isaiah* 6.3)³

Firmilian (d. 268), the bishop of Cappadocian Caesarea, who was famous and authoritative in his century, likewise objects to woman presiding at the eucharist and baptism.⁴

Writings of
the Fathers

The most significant material comes from the fourth century, which was the age of the great Fathers and also the period after the persecutions, when Christian writings are more abundant than they had been earlier. The *Panarion*, a work of Epiphanius, bishop of Salamis (d. 403), is a classification of all the heresies known to the author and his arguments against them.⁵ It contains material on early Christian sects which would otherwise be unknown. Two categories of these heresies are relevant to this discussion. The first is the forty-ninth heresy, a collection of sects that seem to have had a Montanist lineage (Quintillians, Priscillianists, Cataphrygians). According to Epiphanius, they had women bishops and priests and claimed Galatians 3:28 (!) as their justification. For Epiphanius this was unacceptable, as for Augustine and John Damascene after him, both of whom seem to have derived their information about these sects from Epiphanius. His discussion of the Collyridians (heresy seventy-nine) is even more interesting. The Collyridians seem to have been a sect which paid divine honor to Mary, and in which women seem to have been important in overall leadership. It was a sect which, in various ways, seems to have distorted the roles of men and women, a distortion which was reflected both in the approach to Mary and in the approach to community leadership. In arguing against this sect, Epiphanius states the following in regard to women leadership of the Christian community:

But as we come to the New Testament, if the priesthood is said to be a commission for women, or should there be a particular canon which would allow women to preside in the church, to no one else than Mary should the office of priest be committed. But, from her so great an honor was withheld, though from her womb and her bosom she took the King of all men, the Heavenly God, the Son of God. Her womb had been prepared by the singular kindness of God for the great mystery, as a temple or a dwelling place for the Incarnation of the Divine Word. (*Panarion* 79.3.14)⁶

In another passage, Epiphanius discusses deaconesses. He found it

necessary to make clear that the deaconess was not to be equated with the presbyter. Her position in the community was different; her role was the care of women:

... in the church there is an order of deaconess. It was not, however, instituted for the function of the priesthood, or for any administration of this sort. But, in order that care might be taken for the respectability of the female sex, whether at the time of baptism, or when a woman was sick, she [the deaconess] would look after her. (*Panarion* 79.3.6–4.1)⁷

Christian
Tradition ▸
Government of
the Community

Contemporary with Epiphanius were two other Fathers who support the view that women should not teach publicly in the Christian community (a function of eldership): Didymus (d. 395)⁸ and Jerome (d. 420).⁹

Of even greater interest is the writing of John Chrysostom, who treated the role of women in the Christian community in some depth, much as he treated the role of women in the Christian family. Some of the strongest passages are in his work *On the Priesthood* where he states:

The things I have just mentioned [fasting, sleeping on the ground, vigils, defense of the oppressed, orphans, and widows] can be performed by many of the faithful; not only men, but also women. But when it is a question of the government of the church and of direction of so many souls, let the whole female sex withdraw from such a task—and likewise the majority of men. (2.2)¹⁰

In another passage which appears to be directed against the Empress Eudoxia, with whom Chrysostom (who was the Archbishop of Constantinople) had had several conflicts, he argues that women should not rule over men or teach.¹¹

In three other places, Chrysostom takes up the question of what Paul means when he forbids women to teach (1 Tim 2:12):

But how is it, then, that writing to Timothy, he says, “I permit no woman to teach or to raise herself above man.” This refers to the case where the man is pious, professes the same faith, practices the same wisdom, but when it is the case of a man who is a nonbeliever, who is error’s plaything, Paul does not forbid the woman’s superiority here, even if it includes teaching. Writing to the Corinthians, he says: “Does any woman have a husband who is not a believer? Then let her not turn him away. For she may be the

cause of her husband's salvation." Now how can the woman who believes save her husband who does not believe? By instructing him, obviously, by teaching, and by trying to bring him to the faith as Priscilla did for Apollos. It concerns another matter entirely when he says, "I permit no woman to teach." This concerns teachings given from the tribunal, speeches made in public, which is a priestly function. But he does not particularly forbid exhorting or counselling. Indeed, if this were forbidden, he would not have spoken in praise of this woman, who behaved in that way. (Homily 1 on Priscilla and Aquila, sec. 3)¹²

[Concerning Mary of Romans 16:6:] For he says, "who bestowed much labor on us," that is, not on herself only, nor upon her own advancement, (for this many women of the present day do, by fasting, and sleeping on the floor,) but upon theirs also, so carrying on the race Apostles and Evangelists ran. In what sense then does he say, "I suffer not a woman to teach." What he is forbidding is for her to take the presiding seats at an assembly and the high seat of the tribunal, but he is not forbidding her from the word of teaching. Since if this were the case, how would he have said to the woman that had an unbelieving husband, "How knowest thou, O woman, if thou shalt save thy husband," or how came he to suffer her to admonish children, when he says, "but she shall be saved by childbearing, if they continue in faith, and charity, and holiness, with sobriety." (Homily 31 on Romans)¹³

[On Titus 2:3-4:] "Teachers of good things." And yet thou forbiddest a woman to teach; how dost thou command it here, when elsewhere thou sayest, "I suffer not a woman to teach." But mark what he has added, "Nor to usurp authority over man." For at the beginning it was permitted to man to teach both men and women. But to women it is allowed to instruct by discourse at home. But they are no where permitted to preside, nor to extend their speech to great length, wherefore he adds, "Nor to usurp authority over the man." (Homily 4 on Titus)¹⁴

Thus, Chrysostom understands that Paul, in 1 Timothy 2:12, does not forbid a woman all teaching. Paul is only prohibiting the headship of women in the Christian community. Chrysostom, with all his respect for women and his friendship with a number of holy women, understood the Christian role of a woman to be different from that of a man. He taught clearly that the presbyterate was not for a woman.¹⁵

Two more Fathers, both associated with John Chrysostom at Antioch,

provide helpful material. In his commentary on 1 Timothy, Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. 428) takes an approach similar to that of Chrysostom in explaining the prohibition of a woman's teaching:

It is plain that the text "I do not permit women to teach" refers to public situations; women must not teach in the assembly. For Paul certainly did not forbear to legislate their way of life at home, and he did not forbid women either to educate their unbelieving husbands in piety, or to guide those who shirk their responsibilities into virtuous works. (Commentary on 1 Tm 2)¹⁶

Theodoret of Cyrus (d. 458), a pupil of Chrysostom and Theodore, makes the same point. Certain men have the responsibility for teaching in the Christian community; for a woman to take that role is usurpation:

"But I want you to know that Christ is the head of every man, and the head of a woman is her husband." This is said to subordinate women to their husbands, and to teach that it is not fitting for women to undertake the service of teaching, which God from heaven set out as man's right to perform. (Commentary on 1 Cor 14)¹⁷

"Likewise also the women." For grace has only one nature. But he also says the things that are fitting for them, "in modest apparel" [*or* in honorable conduct]. And by making this circuitous statement he informs of the reverent attitude of their lives, "to adorn [*or* order] themselves with modesty and self-control." For this is a true adornment [order]. "Not with braided work, or with gold or pearls or extravagant piety through her works." Piety, he says, you have displayed in your works, with virtue. Therefore, let everything else be yoked together to reach this goal.

"Let a woman have a quiet spirit, in all subordination. And I do not permit a woman to teach, or to rule over a man, but to keep a quiet spirit." Since women also exercise the prophetic gift, he must legislate about this. He does not send off women as teachers to men who need teaching, as the writings to the Corinthians plainly teach: "For what do you know, woman, that you might not save your husband?" Then what he is teaching is good order, which also comes from nature itself. (Commentary on 1 Tm 2)¹⁸

In summary,¹⁹ Epiphanius of Salamis and John Chrysostom are the two Fathers who treat the question of women elders most explicitly. Both

clearly reject it as impossible for the Christian people. Other Fathers ruled that the exercise of public governmental functions, especially teaching, was not allowed for women. These questions are not among those most frequently addressed in patristic literature, but they are present and the viewpoint given about them is consistent.

Church Orders

The Evidence
for Governing
Positions

The second category of material to be considered are the church orders and canonical sources, that is, the sources which stem from authoritative decisions on church order made by councils, synods, and occasionally by individual bishops. The church orders, treatises written to help church leaders, especially bishops, to order the life of a Christian community, contain considerable material on the leadership position of women in the Christian community. Church orders seem to have been used most extensively in Syrian and Egyptian churches. Many Christian churches seem to have regarded them as authoritative, although their authority was not as clear as that of a recognized council. Most of the material in the church order which bears on the leadership of women concerns the role of widows and deaconesses. The church orders, in fact, contain much of the most concrete and helpful material on what deaconesses actually did.

The earliest church order that speaks explicitly about women not fulfilling a function reserved to the bishop (or elders) is the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, which probably came from Syria in about 245. The following passage occurs in a section about widows and their authorization to teach:

It is neither appropriate nor necessary for women to teach, especially regarding the name of Christ and the Redemption by His Passion. For you women, and especially you widows, have not been installed to teach, but to pray and entreat the Lord God. Indeed, the Lord Jesus Christ our Master has sent us, the Twelve, to instruct the people and the nations; there were female disciples with us—Mary Magdalen, Mary the daughter of James, and the other Mary, but He did not send them with us to teach the people. If it were necessary for women to teach, our Lord would have commanded them to teach with us. (*Didascalia* 3.6.1–2)²⁰

This passage is directed especially to widows and does not mention the position of deaconess. However, it also addresses in general the issue of woman in teaching positions. While the *Didascalia* contains some practical

reasons for not allowing women to teach, reasons which had to do either with the social position or the education of women, this passage founds its approach on scriptural example, especially the example of Christ.

The next earliest extant church order is the *Apostolic Church Order* (ca. 325), which also prohibits women from presiding at the Christian assembly.²¹ Another church order containing useful material is the *Apostolic Constitutions*, written about 380. The *Apostolic Constitutions* clearly and fully reserves public teaching, presidency, and authority functions in the church to men:

Indeed, if “the head of a woman is man,” and if it is man who was designated for the priesthood, it is not lawful to upset the created order, and to abandon the head in order to go to one of the extremities of the body. For woman is the body of man, taken from his side and submitted to him, from whom she has been separated for the purpose of producing children. It is he, we are told, who will be her master. It is man who rules over woman, since he is her “head.” If in the preceding, we do not permit women to teach, how could we, in contempt of nature, assign to women the right to exercise the priesthood? It is the impious ignorance of the Greeks which leads them to ordain priestesses for their female gods; there is no question about this according to Christ’s ruling. If it were necessary to be baptized by women, our Lord himself would have undoubtedly been baptized by his own mother instead of by John. And when he sent us to baptize, he would have sent women with us for that purpose. But in fact, he never commanded that, no more than he ever had such an order written; he knew very well what is consistent with nature and what is suitable in this regard, since he is both nature’s creator and the author of this legislation. (*Apostolic Constitutions* 3,9,1–4)²²

In summary, the church orders provide a consistent picture of the difference in leadership role between men and women in the life of the Christian people. Much of what they say is founded on the prescriptions of the passages of scripture that were studied in earlier chapters.

Canonical Literature

Next to be considered is the material contained in the canonical literature, that is, collections of canons from synods and councils which have been

received as orthodox and authoritative. A number of canons concern deaconesses, but three synods deal more explicitly with the question of women as priests or presbyters. The first is the Council of Laodicea in Asia Minor (late fourth century), whose eleventh and forty-fifth canons read:

Canon 11: That women must not be installed as “elders” or “presiding judges” in the Church.²³

Canonical
Literature

Canon 45: That women must not enter the sanctuary.²⁴

The second is the Council of Saragossa (379–381) in Spain, which dealt with the Priscillianists, a mystical sect originating in Spain in the late fourth century. While the council’s primary concern was to prohibit attendance at Priscillianist instructions, some of which were given by women, one canon bases the prohibition in part on 1 Timothy 2:12:

It is prescribed to women who are faithful to the Church to take no part in meetings with strange men; neither let them join within order either to instruct themselves, or women who give lectures in order to teach, for such is the command given by the Apostle.²⁵

Lastly, the first Council of Toledo in Spain (400) prohibits widows and possibly deaconesses—that is recognized women leaders—from acting in the place of a priest or bishop:

A virgin dedicated to God or a widow, may not, in the absence of the bishop, sing the Antiphons at home in company with her servants or a confessor.²⁶

A further authoritative source, especially for Catholics, is the Decree of Pope Gelasius I in 494, sent to the bishops of Lucania, Brutii, and Sicily. In this decree the bishop of Rome states the position of the Christian people as follows:

Nevertheless impatiently we hear so great a number of divine things had suffered contempt, that women are taken to minister at holy altars, and the sex to whom it does not pertain exhibits all things which are only deputed to the society of men. Seen that every injury of all the delicts which we

noted one by one and the crime concerns those priests who either commit those things or show that they favor depraved excesses by no means making public who commits [them]; if, however, they are still to be called by the word “priests,” who are so perverse to prostitute the office of religion delegated to them that inclined to everything perverse and profane without any regard for the Christian rule run after deadly ruin. Since it is written: “who despises the least things, little by little withers away” (Eccli. 19:1), what is to be thought of those who taken up with immense and multiple masses of grave things brought forth by many movements great ruin which is seen not only to bury them but to inflict disaster on the churches. Let them not be uncertain who dared to do these things, but also who kept silent about those things already known that they lie under the loss of their own honor if they do not hurry with as much speed as possible to cure the lethal wounds with proper medication. For by what right may they hold the rights of bishops who dissimulated those things enjoined by pontifical duties that they do things contrary to the house of God over which they preside? (*Letters* 9.26)²⁷

Christian
Tradition ▸
Government of
the Community

A comparable decree, somewhat later than the period under consideration but of similar authority for the Eastern church, is that of Photius of Constantinople in *Nomocanon* 1.37:

About deaconesses, and that a woman may not become an elder (*presbyter*): Canon 19 of the Council of Nicaea; Canon 11 of the Council of Laodicea; Canon 15 of the Council of Chalcedon; Canon 14 of the Sixth Council.²⁸

The Ascetic Movement

Another body of material which is relevant to this study comes from the early ascetic movement and its approach to the roles of men and women. Celibacy produces a very important change in the basic life patterns of men and women. In particular, there is no family structure in which one woman is linked with one man who cares for her and has authority over her. Thus it would seem quite possible that celibacy might lead to the abolition of social role differences between men and women. It is, in fact, among celibates that the possible exceptions to the approach of scripture and tradition are found (see pp. 316–318). During the patristic period, however, and almost without exception until the nineteenth century, the

basic pattern for celibates is one in which role differences for men and women were carefully respected.

The two basic patterns of celibate life for women during the patristic period were the order of virgins and the monastery. The order of virgins appears to have developed at an early date. It seems that the order of virgins was established for women without a corresponding order for men primarily because of the social order requirement that every woman should have a male head who was either her husband, father, or next of kin. The order of virgins provided a way for the woman to pass out of the authority of a family member. But the virgin did not become completely independent. Instead, at an early date in church history, she came under the authority of the bishop (or elders).²⁹ The community as a whole, through its heads, took responsibility for her.

With the growth of the ascetic movement, women grouped themselves into monastic communities of their own. The governors within those communities were women. However, the celibate women in such communities were under the jurisdiction of a male elder, either a man from a monastery of celibate men that was linked with the monastery of women, or someone designated by the bishop.³⁰ The woman governor was limited in what she was allowed to do in terms of governing the sisters, and a man always took responsibility for the monastery as an elder of the Christian community. In summary, a special element was introduced by celibacy, but it by no means led to a breakdown of roles for men and women. Rather, the female headship over women functioned in subordination to male headship, drawn from either a related male community or the Christian community as a whole.

Certain other materials from the patristic period could also be brought into the discussion. The question of the ordination of deaconesses, for instance, relates to the leadership status of women in the Christian community. However, neither the Fathers who seem to have accepted the ordination of deaconesses nor those who do not seem to have accepted it show any difference on the basic point of concern for this chapter. If deaconesses were in fact ordained, that did not give them a governing or presidential function within the community as a whole.

To sum up, there is ample material from authoritative Fathers and from canonical literature of the early church to demonstrate that the tradition of the early church recognized only men as the heads of the Christian people. The church held this position as a matter of principle because the early Christians understood that principle to have been authoritatively

enjoined by the apostles. No orthodox voice from the first centuries held a contrary position. If one accepts an argument or even a confirming voice from tradition, the consensus of the early church on this issue is clear.

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Abbesses

While the tradition from the first several centuries is consistent and clear, some people see a particular development during the Middle Ages as weakening the force of the argument from tradition—namely, the position held by certain medieval abbesses. Because the significance of the position of these abbesses has been misunderstood and misrepresented in recent years, a brief discussion of them and their role would be useful.³¹

Beginning in the early Middle Ages with the church of the British Isles, and in some isolated cases continuing even as late as the eighteenth century, certain abbesses exercised considerable authority over men. This authority has been described as “quasi-episcopal” in that the abbesses exercised some functions that were normally proper to bishops (such as participating in church councils, assigning priests to parishes, and receiving tithes), and in some rare cases were permitted to wear episcopal insignia (as were certain abbots as well). The fact that this occurred is clear, although the extent of the phenomenon is somewhat limited. And although it has long been known, the phenomenon has only recently, in certain feminist books, been considered as evidence that tradition is not consistent or clear in its teaching that women should not hold governmental authority over the Christian community as a whole.

It is important to see these abbesses in their own medieval context in order to understand the particular set of privileges and responsibilities they held. Some observations will help to explain the origin and significance of their position. The first observation concerns the authority structure in the church.

A real analogy existed between the position of an abbess in a monastery and the position of a bishop in the Christian community. Abbesses governed monastic communities of women, communities which did not take part in a daily, ongoing way in the life of a wider group of Christians. The abbess was therefore the overseer or supervisor of her nuns and, in this sense, the leader of a Christian community. The strength of this analogy could allow some “quasi-episcopal” functions and expressions without violating the basic pattern of the roles of men and women.³²

The two positions were only analogous, however, for the abbess’s posi-

tion was by no means the same as that of the bishop. What made an abbes an abbes—that is, what gave her claim to a Christian position—was her position as head of a community of women, and nothing more. She held no position of headship over the wider Christian community, for such overall positions were reserved to the presbyters (priests). The abbes was responsible only for a monastic community of Christian women that was subordinate to the larger community of the Christian people. Certain abesses exercised special religious and secular powers, but they were not given such powers because they were heads of the wider Christian community.

Abesses

Why then did these abesses exercise special powers? This question leads to a second important observation, this one about the feudal system. Although the analogy given above between an abbes and a bishop is valid and significant, the role of these abesses is explained primarily by the social structure of feudal Europe rather than by the structure of the Christian church. During the Middle Ages, communities of nuns, like those of monks, became feudal proprietors. They owned domains, and on those domains they had extensive authority. An abbes's position was secular as well as religious and, like the secular lay lords, she exercised authority over church matters within her domains. Within her sphere of power she both supported and ruled over church life. It was, then, as the head of a community of women which held secular power—and with it, power in church life—that an abbes exercised her special privileges. All such privileges disappeared as the feudal system disappeared.

A final observation can help show how the position of these abesses was understood within the context of the medieval social system. Within that system, abesses were understood to possess a limited authority which did not permit their assuming the role or performing the functions of eldership in the Christian community as a whole. Whenever an issue arose as to whether the abbes might exercise a wider spiritual power or any sacramental power, the bishops or popes would quickly make clear that such an exercise was entirely out of place. Perhaps the most notable and authoritative example was Innocent III's prohibition to Cistercian abesses of Burgos and Palencia. These abesses blessed their nuns, heard confession of their sins, and presumed to teach publicly when reading the gospel. He judged it wrong for an abbes to perform any of these activities.³³

In some way, the position of these abesses can be considered an exception in the area of women exercising headship functions in the Christian community. Yet the exception did not occur in the exercise

of Christian (spiritual, religious) governing authority over the whole Christian community. When abbesses attempted that sort of exercise, they were curtailed. Thus, evaluation of their exceptional role does not concern Christian tradition on women in the presbyterate (priesthood). The issue of the priesthood always remained clear: Women were not to be priests/elders, nor were they to exercise the functions of eldership over the Christian community. Evaluation of the role of the medieval abbess rests more upon an evaluation of feudalism and its ramifications in ecclesiastical life, for it was primarily the feudal system which accounted for the abbess's special position of privilege and authority. One might wish to reinstitute the quasi-episcopal jurisdiction of abbesses, but in order to make sense of it one would also have to reinstitute the feudal system and give convents of women secular power over the neighboring domains (and the religious life of those domains). If the state or national legislatures could be persuaded to take such action, it might not be too difficult to persuade bishops to reinstitute mitred abbesses in such monasteries.

The position of the abbess with quasi-episcopal jurisdiction is the only significant data from Christian tradition before the nineteenth century that should be examined as possibly weakening the force of the argument, but is rather an illustration of how social structures in a particular society (in this case, feudal society) can affect the life of the Christian people without (at least in this case) causing them to abandon basic scriptural principles.

Objections to Tradition

Despite the absence of further significant data in possible contradiction to the argument from tradition, other points are also brought in by some writers in an attempt to weaken the force of that argument. Most of these points are "arguments from culture" and are identical with those made about scripture—namely, that with tradition, one is dealing with teaching that was heavily influenced by the surrounding culture (Greco-Roman society) or that was determined by a reaction against the surrounding society and was therefore an attempt to protect Christians from accepting pagan ways. The treatment of these views in relation to the scripture (especially in Chapter Eleven) applies to the area of early tradition as well. There is little evidence for such views. When the Fathers teach on why the governors of the Christian community should be chosen from among the men, they rarely give "cultural reasons."

One new feature emerges in this discussion of possible objections to

tradition: the view that the patristic writers were reacting against heretical sects and that in doing so they were attempting to keep orthodox Christians from accepting heretical doctrines by forbidding practices associated with sects. Once again, there is no evidence for such a view. When the Fathers argue against the heretical sects that have women presbyters, they do not say that Christians should avoid the practices of those sects in order to avoid contamination with their doctrine. In fact, their argument is precisely the other way around. They argue that the practices of those sects, so much at variance with the scriptures, are another proof of how wrong they are.

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to Tradition

If anything, the existence of sects that followed a different pattern in regard to the position of women in the government of the church points in another direction than that which the proposed objection would indicate. It points to the fact that there was a real alternative, culturally speaking, open to the Christian Fathers. The world of their time knew of women in positions of power and leadership. There is even, in fact, some evidence for the view that the increased number of texts on the question of women's role in the fourth and fifth centuries is related to a social disorganization in the Roman Empire and a tendency for women to take governmental roles in society. The Christian bishops had to cope with women, like John Chrysostom's opponent Eudoxia, who attempted to direct matters in the Christian church. The Fathers were firm and clear in holding a position that was based on the scriptural position. Like the New Testament writers, they could have done differently if they had judged it right to do so.

Tradition and the New Testament

Deeply grounded as it is in the New Testament, the teaching of the Fathers and of the early tradition of the church adds little to the scriptural teaching that those who govern the Christian people as a whole should be chosen from among the men. Rather, it underlines the main points found in scripture. There are, however, some significant points of development in the writings of the Fathers. In fact, the most significant characteristics of the teaching of the Fathers in the area of the roles of men and women which distinguishes them from the New Testament writers is simply the fact that their great appeal is to the New Testament itself. They approach the area as people with a clearly canonical, authoritative norm by which they intend to abide.

The primary point of further development is undoubtedly the sketch which early tradition provides of the role of the deaconess and the

possibility of a publicly recognized and honored position of women's leadership in the church complementary to that of men. This sketch provides an understanding of something, probably referred to in the scripture, but not described. In addition, Christian tradition adds greater authority to the understanding of 1 Timothy 2:12 as an apostolic regulation of great weight which represents an impediment to the functioning of women as presbyters (elders) or bishops. To a lesser extent, 1 Corinthians 14:33-36 is similarly understood. In the writings of the Fathers and in the canonical literature containing the early canons, there is a consistent appeal to these two passages, especially the former, as the grounds for the teaching, on role differences in the choice of the governors of the community.³⁴ To set aside these passages as having no relevance to the issue, and with them to set aside scriptural authority, would also be to set aside all patristic authority in the realm of scriptural interpretation.

A final point of development is early church tradition's greater use of the idea of women's "weakness" in establishing why it would not make sense for women to function as elders in the Christian community. Patristic writers state that women are weaker than men as though this were a commonly accepted fact which required no arguing.³⁵ They do not generally make this point as an observation on what scripture teaches, but as their own observation on women. They probably have in mind women's comparative physical weakness and some of men's qualities of greater aggressiveness and "toughness" (see Chapter Sixteen). Some writers seem also to feel that men are more virtuous than women, although this is not clearly included in the idea of weakness, and many patristic writers expressly declare men and women to be equal in virtue. Perhaps the most that can be said in way of a summary of patristic consensus in this area is that they believe men to have more of the strength needed for strong leadership that includes discipline and government of people.

This patristic view of women's weakness must be kept in context. First, it is normally not the primary reason which early writers give for their position that only men should be elders. The primary reason is almost always scriptural teaching. Secondly, the idea of women's weakness can in some way be found in scripture (see Chapter Eight). Finally, the acceptance of "women's weakness" in patristic writing did not mean that the Fathers expected women to be what we might term "weak people." The early church very clearly recognized and celebrated the full share taken by its women in undergoing persecution and martyrdom as Christians. The Fathers commonly note that Christian women, although not as physically strong as the men, underwent torture and death with equal zeal, faith,

and endurance. Basil of Caesarea (d. 379), in his homily on the martyr Julitta, said:

Still, she told the women surrounding her not to shudder weakly in the face of suffering for the faith, not to hide behind the frailty of their nature. “We are,” she said, “of the same stuff as men. Like them, we are created according to the image of God. The female sex is made receptive to virtue by the Creator, just as the male is. How? Are we not related to men in all things? It was not merely flesh that was taken from him for the creation of woman, but also bone of his bone. For this reason we owe the Lord as much constancy, robust courage, and patience as do the men.”³⁶

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Such instances testify to the great strength of character of the women in the early church. Far from being the weak, dependent, “mindless” people that many predict must result from such a family and community social structure, the early Christian women demonstrated tremendous personal strength, heroic faith and endurance, and great holiness. It is important to recognize this perception of women’s strength, which operates throughout patristic writing, in order to reach a balanced understanding of the patristic notion of “women’s weakness.”

Yet even when this notion has been put in its context, one notes in some patristic writers certain culturally formed ideas on the capacities of women that are simply not true. While such misconceptions are at times present (for reasons that will be considered later in the chapter), they are not of primary importance in forming the patristic understanding of the role of women or of “women’s weakness.” For our purpose at this point, it is enough to observe that the Fathers sometimes founded their position not only upon scriptural and apostolic authority, but also upon an observation about woman’s nature that (probably) is also found in scripture, but not with the same development.

To sum up this discussion, while tradition in some significant ways does develop the scriptural teaching that women should not be elders in the Christian community, it serves primarily to provide very strong confirmation of that teaching. The witness of tradition is consistent in teaching both that women should not be elders and that the reasons for this are Christian rather than cultural. The patristic writers approach the matter as one of obedience to God’s directives for his people. The tradition is quite consistent for seventeen hundred years. And, in fact, there are very few areas in all of Christian teaching that have as clear a consensus. If this teaching can be dispensed with considering its backing in scripture and

tradition, then there is no prescription of the government of the Christian people that cannot likewise be put aside. If such teaching in the area of order and government can be dismissed despite the fact that tradition considers it to be so binding, then only an arbitrary delimitation of the authority of tradition (or scripture) to doctrinal belief and moral norms can keep the rest of Christian teaching from being dismissed in the same manner. If this teaching can be changed by Christians, there is very little that cannot be changed.

The Strength of Tradition

THE evidence from tradition on the roles of men and women is clear and strong, but certain arguments have been advanced against viewing it as authoritative. Two such arguments are important for consideration here. The first argument states that since early church tradition contains so many bad or unacceptable views on women, one cannot accept anything it says as authoritative. The second argument suggests that since there is a lack of unanimity in early church tradition concerning many points of the woman's role, the tradition as a whole has no authority; text can be set against text.³⁷ Both of these views are worth considering, more because of what they highlight about tradition in the area under discussion than because of their own intrinsic force.

In order to properly evaluate these two objections, however, the nature of an argument from tradition must be understood. There are two ways of drawing upon tradition in the area of the roles of men and women. The first could be termed an overall evaluation of the teaching tradition on the subject. One could approach the Fathers, for instance, as great Christian teachers standing in the succession of Christian teachers and attempt to learn from their instruction. One could determine whether their teaching has the coherence, insight, and fidelity to Christian revelation that would give it weight, and if there is some consensus among the Christian teachers on the subject.

On the other hand, there is a second approach—the one that has been taken in this chapter. In this approach, one is simply looking for a witness from early Christian teachers as to what had been handed on to the early church from Christ and the apostles. The concern is not with a Father's personal greatness as a Christian teacher, but with the reliability of his writing as a witness to tradition. One therefore makes some attempt to distinguish between those points at which the Father seems to be giving

evidence of the Christian tradition he has received, and those points at which he is adding his own thought as a theologian or apologist. If, in the process, a discrepancy is discovered between what one has discerned in scripture and what one finds in tradition, there are two choices: either reconsider one's interpretation of the scripture passages involved, or conclude that the early church lost sight of the scriptural teaching. The method of this chapter has been simply to ask whether the early Christian writings confirm the view that the apostles taught that only men could be chosen as Christian elders. The concern, therefore, is not primarily to evaluate the teaching of the Fathers, but rather to discover whether there is evidence that the early Christians held a tradition handed on from the apostles, and to see at what point there is a sufficient consensus to indicate a universal tradition.

Writings from the early Fathers contain a great deal of teaching on men and women and not all of it is the clear handing on of a tradition going back to Christ and the apostles. Much of the Fathers' teaching on men and women concerns the nature of men and women and the nature and role of sex in the Christian life, points which have drawn much interest in recent years. They are also the points which were most influenced by Greek thought, precisely because the questions posed were not so easily answered from scripture and universal tradition alone. The concern of this book, however, is with social roles, and the concern of this chapter is to determine whether a tradition existed among the early Christians about Christian teaching in a particular area of social roles, namely, whether or not women could be chosen as elders. The broader questions of patristic teaching on men and women are to be taken up insofar as they bear on this issue.

The purpose of the preceding discussion has been to clarify the nature of the argument from tradition on this subject, and to recognize that the argument's strength is based primarily on the role of the Fathers as witnesses to a tradition received from Christ and the apostles. This clarification can help in understanding and evaluating the two objections to the authority of tradition mentioned above.

Unacceptable Views of Women

The first of these objections holds that Christian tradition contains a great deal that is bad or unacceptable concerning women and which should simply be dismissed. One has to begin anew, either by using only scripture or, more commonly, by using only selected portions of scripture that

are deemed acceptable. Books can be cited which highlight quotations from Christian tradition that contemporary people would find offensive.³⁸ Those quotations normally reflect views that woman is inferior or defective in relation to man or views which seem to express misogyny (hatred or dislike of woman). If Christian tradition is permeated with such bad and unacceptable material, it is argued, how can it be acceptable in any way, at least in this area?

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It cannot be denied that some elements of Christian tradition concerning women are unfortunate and this fact must be understood and approached in the right way. It should be noted, however, that the case constructed by many authors is seriously overdone. Much of the case is founded upon quotations which state that women are inferior to men.³⁹ However, as was seen earlier (pp. 43–45), that statement can mean many things. For the contemporary mind, it normally means some kind of inferiority in value, worth, or dignity. Yet in most of Christian tradition, as in the scripture, it had no such meaning, but referred to position within a social structure. To say that the women were “inferior” in some situation, or in society in general, meant that they were in a subordinate position. Most (perhaps all) of the statements about women’s inferiority are simply referring to social position and not to worth.

Many of the offending quotations refer to some defect in women, but these too are often misunderstood. For example a commonly quoted statement of this kind is that of Aquinas (which he borrowed from Aristotle) where he says that a woman is a misbegotten male.⁴⁰ Some writers have gone so far as to found their analysis of Aquinas’s whole view of the roles of men and women upon this statement. To a modern mind, the quotation sounds outrageous and misogynistic. However, it merely refers to a view of human generation which held that female babies are born by intervention in the normal process of generation, which otherwise produces males. To say that a woman is a misbegotten male is simply to say that a female is produced instead of a male in the process of generation when something is absent from the normal process. The theory is actually fairly close to the modern understanding of the generation of males. Male characteristics are produced in a fetus when the normal sequence of producing a female fetus is interrupted by the secretion of male hormones. To use Aristotelian terminology, according to modern science, the male is a misbegotten female. Aquinas, while admitting a generally accepted scientific theory of his day (the current scientific theories often produce difficulties for orthodox theologians), was quick to point out the misleading nature of the phrase “misbegotten male.” His own conclusion on the subject was that it would

be a major mistake to understand the phrase to mean that woman was not created according to the express purpose of God.

This is not to suggest that there are no statements in the Fathers which assert defects in women in comparison to men. There are such statements. Some of them are explainable solely on the basis of the comparative lack of education which women received. Some of them are interesting in that they reverse what our contemporary culture seems to manifest (for instance, the patristic view that women are more inclined to sexual activity than are men).⁴¹ Some statements undoubtedly reveal prejudice. Yet prejudice, though present, is not as common as some modern writers would have one believe. In short, it seems possible that some of the defects noted in women had an empirical basis at the time (such as less education for women), and statements that clearly exhibit genuine prejudice against women are not common.

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However, even after the above clarifications, one might label some statements from the Fathers as misogynistic in a certain sense of the term. But to move from finding some misogynistic statements in a certain Father to the conclusion that the Father is misogynistic should not be lightly done. The following two passages from Tertullian illustrate something of the difficulty of this transition:

You give birth, O woman, in sorrows and anxieties; and your turning is to your husband, and he will rule over you. And do you not know that you are Eve? God's judgment over this sex continues in this generation; its guilt must also continue. You are the gate of the devil, the traitor of the tree, the first deserter of divine law; you are she who enticed the one whom the devil would not approach; you shattered so easily the image of God, man; on account of the death you deserved, even the Son of God had to die; and is it in your mind to adorn yourself over your enticing tunics? (*De Cultu Feminarum* 1.1)⁴²

Handmaids of the living God, my fellow-slaves and my sisters, by whatever right I am sent to you—ultimately by my right of fellow slavehood and brotherhood—I dare to speak with you indeed in affection but acting with affection as your advocate in the matter of your salvation. This salvation—not only for woman but also for man—has been decreed to consist namely in charity. (*De Cultu Feminarum* 2.1)⁴³

One could label the first statement “clearly misogynistic.” It would make a great quotation for a pamphlet entitled “Can you trust such men?”

However, the author of the second quotation could hardly be called a misogynist. Here, one must distinguish between a “misogynist” (who actually holds women in contempt or dislike) and a writer who makes unfortunate, even “misogynistic,” statements for other reasons. The origins of most such statements in the Fathers are not to be found in their fundamental attitudes toward women, but in a number of other sources. For instance, the first quotation from Tertullian is explained somewhat by its literary context, which was a discussion of a fault in the women of his congregation—a tendency toward overadornment—which he was vigorously trying to correct. It is even better explained by its cultural context. The Fathers in general, and Tertullian in particular, were often not as measured or balanced in their exhortations as people today would find acceptable. Their denunciations, in other words, are often not necessarily to be taken as being their measured statement on a subject. Furthermore, Tertullian’s (and most of the Fathers’) treatment of women is merely incidental, most of it having been designed primarily to address another topic. Such passages from the Fathers do not consider the whole subject of woman, nor do they present a balanced picture.

There are two other sources of “misogynist passages” in the Fathers. One is the tendency for the Fathers to work within a typological and symbolic mode of thought which at times leads them to use a woman as a symbol of weakness or, sometimes, as a symbol of the body in relation to the soul.⁴⁴ The second source is an occasional tendency among the Fathers to think about or discuss women predominantly in terms of sexual temptation (to men, which the Fathers were). In some circumstances, it is legitimate for men to approach relating to women as primarily a matter of relating to that which is the source of sexual temptation. In short, there are statements in the Fathers which are misogynistic according to our standards, but it is a mistake to interpret most of these statements as misogynistic according to standards appropriate to the Fathers’ own milieu. It is an even greater mistake to conclude from certain apparently misogynistic statements that some or all of the Fathers were misogynists. Thus far, no balanced, unpolemical study has appeared which would indicate that any Father was a misogynist.

The above discussion is not intended to deny the fact that there is unfortunate material in the Fathers on men and women. The discussion, however, is intended to put that material into its proper context. Most of it is more attributable to a very different cultural approach than it is to a genuinely bad view. Yet even when all this is clarified and cultural aspects are

given their proper context, there still remain some teachings and views that few authors today would wish to explain or defend. It is especially at this point that the first objection to the argument from tradition arises: How can one accept a church Father's authority on the issue of, for example, the ordination of women to the presbyterate, if (two pages further on, or even in the same sentence) he goes on to say something which not only fails to

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represent authoritative Christian teaching, but is actually wrong and bad? The correct response to this objection requires that one recall the important distinction made above (pp. 322–323) between acknowledging a Father as a witness of tradition and acknowledging him as a theologian or apologist in his own right. To affirm that a Father is a witness of tradition is to declare that there is evidence in his writings which indicates the belief among the early Christians that a practice to which they held had been passed on to them from Christ and the apostles, that is, from the highest authorities. On the other hand, to state that a Father is a theologian or an apologist is to state that he reflected upon what he had received, and that what he taught included his own understanding and his own arguments to defend the traditions he was passing on. This distinction is extremely important, because the reasons and reflections which a Father offers do not bear as much authority as the actual practice to which he witnesses.

Any evaluation of the Fathers as Christian teachers who are witnesses of tradition is complicated, however, by the fact that there are very few (if any) patristic writings which were simply intended to be statements of the tradition of the early Christian church as received from Christ and the apostles. Practically all the patristic writings which have been preserved were composed for a particular purpose, and contain authentic Christian tradition inextricably mingled with the Fathers' own thought. Only occasionally does a Father explicitly indicate that a given point was handed down to him rather than being his own idea. Fortunately, for the topic at hand it is not necessary to attempt a complete analysis of each of the Fathers' writings in order to ascertain what practices had been received by the church of the patristic age as genuine and authoritative tradition. When one discovers that no patristic writer or canon ever denies or in any way opposes the view that the father should be the head of the family and that the elders of the Christian community should be men, and when one finds that many Fathers hold these views explicitly and use the example of Christ and the teaching of the apostles as a basis for holding these views, one has an argument which uses the Fathers as witnesses of tradition. Even if a statement of the view that women are not to be ordained presbyters

were to be found in the same sentence as an erroneous teaching on women, that statement would still qualify as a valid witness to tradition because it represents another positive instance of the fact that early Christians considered the view that the presbyterate was only for men to be authoritative teaching handed down to them.

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Beyond his authority as a witness of tradition, a Father may bear a certain authority as a Christian teacher, this is, in fact, one of the things it means to call him a "Father." Therefore, in his teaching, in which are mingled the authentic tradition he is passing on and his own theological reflections and justifications, one may encounter various erroneous statements and unacceptable views. Yet a great Christian teacher may be allowed certain unacceptable views without denying or calling into question his basic worth as a teacher. Furthermore, despite some unfortunate comments and reasoning, few of the Fathers rely so heavily on cultural notions which are not scriptural that one would want to reject their teaching on men and women in its main outlines.

Taking all of the preceding considerations into account, one can say in summary that the first objection to the argument from tradition noted above is answered by distinguishing between the Fathers' authority as teachers in their own right and their authority as witnesses of tradition. While certain questions and problems may arise in evaluating their attempts at theological reflection on men and women, their witness to tradition is clear, consistent, and unquestionable. It is upon the authority of this witness that the argument from tradition is founded.

A Lack of Unanimity in Tradition

The second objection to the argument from tradition states that within the Fathers and canonical tradition there is a lack of unanimity on various points concerning women and their role in the church; therefore one cannot accept their authority as firmly established about anything in this area. This view is put forward by van der Meer, who, in the following quotation, argues against the authority of tradition as a basis for the Catholic position on the ordination of women:

In any case one thing is clear: there was not much accord either in the Patristic period itself or later on. The Fathers, for example, in their battle against the Montanists rejected several notions which we today hold as justified and which even in their own day had long existed legitimately

elsewhere in the church. And that refers not only to certain customs concerning woman, but also to ideas on woman. Thus even on that there was no unanimity.

We must confront the various opinions with one another in a fairly explicit manner, in order to show that it can scarcely be said that there was moral “unanimity” among the Fathers on the questions of what a woman is, what she may do in the Church, and what her essence is. And on some points on which a moral unanimity seemed to exist among the Fathers, their concepts were abandoned in later times.

Of course there was one point on which there has been unanimity through all times and in all places: a woman should not be a priest.⁴⁵

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Several observations about this position are in order. First, there need not be a moral unanimity among the Fathers on all questions of what a woman is and what her essence is in order to establish a valid, authoritative tradition on the roles of men and women. Theologians may prefer to base the teaching concerning the roles of men and women on the nature of man and woman, but this complete theoretical foundation has not been part of the witness from tradition. This issue is not the only one in which Christian tradition (and scripture) does not provide the theoretical completeness that many desire. The absence of such theory, however, does not invalidate or diminish the authority of the witness from tradition. Second, if Christians looked for a theological consensus on the essence of human beings as a necessary condition for accepting any teaching on how human beings should live, they would have to abandon most Christian teaching, both in scripture and tradition, as unfounded. It is revealing to observe precisely where the lack of unanimity exists on questions concerning what a woman may do in the church. The lack of unanimity proves to be in such matters as whether a woman may ever baptize, whether she may approach the altar, whether she may sing in choir, and in more recent centuries, what kind of teaching she may do. No lack of unanimity exists (at least none did before a century or two ago) on the position that men should be heads of the family, or on the position that the elders of the Christian community should be drawn from among the men. In other words, to use a distinction made earlier in this book, differences among the Fathers can be found in their views on the expression of social roles, but no differences occur in their teaching on the basic provisions of social structure.

This distinction is a key to understanding many of the current discussions about ministry and ordination for women. One can note certain

differences throughout Christian tradition concerning which functions should be reserved to the head of a Christian community. An earlier example from this book is applicable here. Some forms of teaching are the sort which only a head should do, while other forms may be done by others without usurping the role of headship. Some kinds of teaching, for example, teaching catechism, may be considered differently in one age than in another. Again, questions about who should preside over the eucharist, penitential discipline, and rites of initiation (baptism, etc.) are of significance in many contexts primarily because these functions are understood to be related to the role of authority over the people of the Christian community.

To state the point in terms of the distinction mentioned above between the expression of social roles and the basic provisions of social structure, these practices function as expressions of the basic social role of headship in the community. The understanding that men should be the heads in the family and the community is a matter of basic social structure, and this understanding did not change or vary with time and place. On the other hand, questions about who should perform various teaching and liturgical functions in the community are in the realm of the expression of social roles, and the answers to these questions varied with time and place depending upon how each practice was viewed in relation to the position of headship in the community. If a practice was understood to be an expression of headship over the community, women were not permitted to perform it. If, in another locality, the same practice was not considered to be an expression of headship, men and women other than the elders might perform it. The primary reason why women in the early church did not do certain kinds of teaching, or preside at the eucharist, or baptize was not incompetence to perform these functions, but the fact that these functions were reserved for the head of the Christian community (the presbyter or bishop), and women were not chosen to be the heads of the community. In many churches recently, as the link which joined both sacramental and teaching activities with the headship of the community has been weakened, the question of whether women might perform these functions without also governing the lives of the people has been raised.⁴⁶ More often than not, the solution to such a question depends upon a judgment about the particular activity and its relationship to governmental functions (an issue of expression) more than it does upon a judgment about the basic structure of the roles of men and women.

There is, then, more to understanding what a practice signifies about

the roles of men and women than simply observing whether that practice is reserved to men or to women. The mere fact that something may be forbidden to women at one time and permitted at another does not necessarily indicate that the understanding of the roles of men and women has changed. Rather, it often indicates that the understanding of the particular activity has changed. For instance, the following is a list of medieval canons which no longer apply in any contemporary Western church:*

A Lack of
Unanimity
in Tradition

The touching of holy vessels and blessed cultic linens, entrance into the sacarium during sacred service, removal of the altar linens for laundering outside the service, presenting the priestly vestment—all of this is now permitted without objection.⁴⁷

Something has changed. Some would view the understanding of the role of women as having changed. However, it is not the role of men and women that has changed as much as it is the understanding of how Christians should approach ritual situations. At one time in the Western church there were very strict rules about touching items used in liturgy, and one had to be specially consecrated to approach them. That set of rules has changed. The above canons on women reflect an understanding of liturgical items from a period that was strict in enforcing ritual separation and such practices were often forbidden also to the laymen. The canons have been changed, however, not because of a change in the understanding of the role of women, but because of a change in understanding of the liturgy.

The “lack of unanimity” objection does not bear up under closer scrutiny. Any argument from tradition is going to be somewhat uneven. While some clear lines of unanimity can be traced in the orthodox Fathers, there is also a fair degree of divergence. For example, John Henry Newman, in the introduction to *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, presents an excellent sketch of the difficulty encountered in arguing from the Fathers on so central a doctrine as the Trinity.⁴⁸ The existence of disagreements among the Fathers, then, is no indication that an argument from the early church teachers cannot be made on a particular point. Even were there lack of unanimity in any area, that lack would not automatically indicate the lack of a witness from tradition. Furthermore, the lack of unanimity on certain points of canonical tradition and patristic teaching is not an argument against valuing those points on which there is unanimity.

* Eastern churches in Western countries would have to be considered Eastern.

Christian
Tradition ▸
Government of
the Community

In fact, precisely the opposite is the case. The more one encounters a lack of unanimity among the Fathers on particular questions relating to men and women, the more impressive is their basic unwavering understanding of men's and women's roles. Their unanimity on this point demonstrates the Fathers' role as witnesses to a clear tradition which had come to them from the apostles. As has been noted previously, few teachings are as solidly established in scripture and tradition as those of the headship of the husband in the family and the elders of the Christian community being chosen from among the men.

"Tradition" is not popular nowadays. It is seen as the enemy of progress, and, indisputably, it can be. It is also possible that "tradition" can be the tradition of men that makes void the commandments of God. But tradition can also be both a witness of God's faithfulness to his people in preserving his Word among them, and a witness of his people's faithfulness in guarding his Word. In reading the documents of the early church on the roles of men and women, one can certainly perceive many worldly and cultural currents at work among the early Christians. But one can also perceive a fidelity to a pattern of relationships that was sketched out in the scripture. Tradition adds little that is new to what scripture teaches in this area. But, insofar as tradition reveals the steady conviction of the first generations of Christians that the scriptural teaching is indeed the apostolic directive for the life of the Christian people, it offers a strong confirmation of that teaching.

THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

CHRIStIANS THROUGH THE CENTURIES have viewed the scriptures as a unique book (or collection of books). They have believed that the scriptures come from God in a way that no other book has. They have said that God is the author of scripture and that scripture is his word which he has spoken through human beings. If these statements are true, or even if they contain some truth, a person's approach to the scriptures cannot be merely detached or scholarly. Each person is approaching a book which is intended to address him or her personally; in fact, it is a book in which God is addressing him or her personally.¹ Scripture is not simply interesting data or thought. By its very nature, it calls for a response. Therefore, the way a person talks and thinks about scripture is itself a religious response. The approach people take to the scripture is an important part of the way they approach God. This fact may be disguised behind phrases like "Contemporary Theories of Inspiration," "The New Hermeneutics," "A Realistic Interpretation of the Scripture," "Biblicism and Fundamentalism." But it is nonetheless true that the way people read the scripture involves their response to God. From the Christian point of view, the question of the authority of the scripture is a question about how to approach God himself.

Few would deny that the scriptures teach about the roles of men and women. The question remains, however, how a person will respond to that teaching. Many people in secular society will catalog the views of scripture on this subject under such headings as "First-Century Thought" or "Approaches of Pre-Industrial Cultures" or "Ideas from Great Religions." They will, in other words, file them away as interesting specimens of human

thought, or even as possible examples of significant human wisdom—products, perhaps, of religious genius.² However, such people will not decide that something is true on the basis that it is taught in the New Testament.

Others, who consider themselves to be Christians, will take a similar approach. They will catalog the scriptural views under headings like “Paul’s Opinion” or “Primitive Christian Thought.” These people will, in other words, respect the scriptures as worthy of great attention, as important sources or data from which their opinions will be formed, as opinions which they would not want to blatantly contradict; yet they too will not hold a viewpoint or adopt an approach on the basis that it is taught in the New Testament. All of these people might give the scriptures weight, authority in the sense of something to which one should pay attention and be influenced by, but they will not give them authority in the sense of being the highest norm for their minds and lives. The position of scripture, once ascertained, will not be automatically decisive for them.

The question of authority is concerned with scripture as a norm or criterion for the beliefs and way of life of Christians. The scriptural teaching on the roles of men and women has a normative aspect. It involves questions of fact, but it is primarily the presentation of instructions for how Christians should conduct themselves. Even where possible facts such as God’s creation of the human race as male and female for his own purposes come into the teaching on men and women, their acceptance as facts rests upon the authority of scripture for determining the beliefs of Christians. The issue, then, is whether the scripture *ought to* determine the way people think and act in the area of the roles of men and women.

The question of authority not only differs from the question of content—that is, what the scripture teaches—but it also differs from the question of application. The scripture could, for instance, teach a consistent approach to the roles of men and women with the highest authority, and its teaching still might turn out to be inapplicable to all peoples subsequent to the industrial revolution. It might not even be addressing the situation of modern people. Part Three of this book will treat questions of applicability. The question of authority, however, is distinct from the question of applicability. The question of authority concerns personal response.*

* This chapter focuses on the question of scriptural authority. Many of the same observations might be made about the authority of Christian tradition or church authority depending on the view of the normativeness of tradition or of church bodies that one holds. The issue of Christian teaching authority, however, can be adequately discussed in terms of the authority of scripture, and will be the focus of this chapter.

The Nature of Scriptural Authority

THE traditional Christian view has been that the scripture (both Old and New Testaments) has highest authority for the beliefs and life of Christians.³ This means that Christians ought to change if they discover that their beliefs contradict those presented for acceptance by scripture or if they discover that their way of life does not conform with that directed by scripture.* The word “authority” is not a traditional word to describe the scripture.⁴ It is, however, commonly used in modern theological discussions of the nature of scripture.⁵ To say that the scripture has the highest “authority” in this case does not necessarily mean that there are no other authorities or that there is nothing else which also has highest authority. Some would hold, for instance, that tradition, reason, or personal revelation likewise have highest authority. In the sense used here, highest authority means that there is nothing which should cause Christians to contradict or otherwise set themselves at odds with scripture.⁶

A more traditional word for describing the claim scripture has upon the Christian is “canonical.” The word “canon” means “rule” in the sense of a “yardstick” or “ruler.”⁷ Something which is canonical is a standard for measuring or judging something else. In this sense, the canonical scripture is the standard against which all other opinions can be measured. If something is at odds with scripture, it is not Christian and therefore for a Christian not true.

The authority of scripture, in the traditional approach, is grounded in its origin. The scripture is composed of writings which come from God.⁸ They contain the highest revelation of God and of his intentions for the human race. The scriptures are not merely human books or collections of human opinion, although they are also these things. They are books which contain God’s revelation of himself. When people deal with scripture, they deal with God himself—the creator of the universe, the one who has all power in heaven and earth, and who knows all things. They are dealing with the one whose opinions count, whose word is automatically truth

* A discussion of the normative nature of the scripture raises a number of questions, among them the question of the kind of authority the Old Testament has. The range of this book does not allow for a treatment of the various issues involved. It is enough here to observe that the New Testament books present themselves as a unity with the Old. The submission of Christians, however, is preeminently to the New Testament. They submit to the Old Testament as it is interpreted by the New Testament and by Christian tradition. For this reason, the principles discussed in this book will apply most readily and directly to the New Testament.

because he knows everything, and because he does not lie. God himself is a rock, and his words are faithful and true. Therefore, anyone who does not approach the scripture with fear of the Lord either does not know what the scriptures are or does not know who the Lord is.

The Authority
of Scripture

There are two words which have been commonly used to describe the origin of the scripture as from God: inspired and apostolic. The New Testament books, the part of the scriptures with which we are primarily concerned in this book, were written by inspiration with apostolic authority and are therefore accepted as canonical for the Christian faith.

“Inspired” means that the New Testament writings are given by God.* They are the product of the Holy Spirit, inspiring the human authors to write these books. To make this basic point, the different approaches to scriptural inspiration do not need to be discussed.⁹ Here it is sufficient to say that the collection of books called scripture are writings which have been described as inspired by God (cf. 2 Tm 3:16), meaning that they were given through the work of the Holy Spirit and can be counted on to give truths from God. Human beings actually wrote the scriptures, and the scriptures bear many marks of the human personalities of their authors, but these works were nonetheless written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and this inspiration guarantees their truthfulness.

“Apostolic” is a second word that is important for understanding the New Testament’s origin in God. In this case it designates the way his inspiration is mediated through authoritative human beings. The New Testament has been handed down as a collection of apostolic writings. Whether this means that the writings of the New Testament were actually penned or dictated by one of the apostles is a question that is not crucial for our concerns. It suffices here to say that the term “apostolic” at least indicates that the work in question comes to us under apostolic authority; that is, it comes to us as the teaching of one of the apostles. The apostles are the foundational authorities of the Christian church (Rv 21:14), and the foun-

* Two other terms are also commonly used for referring to scripture’s origin from God: (1) revelation, (2) the Word of God. The scripture contains revelation, but not all of it originally came to man through revelation (much of what is related in scripture could have been known through experience, e.g., the historical narrative); therefore, the term “inspiration” is better than “revelation” for characterizing in an overall way how scripture comes from God. The result of inspiration is that the scripture is the Word of God, but there is some ambiguity here, in that certain parts of scripture could be said to contain the Word of God in a more direct sense. Prophecy or the gospel message, for instance, are sometimes described in scripture as the Word of God, while genealogies and annals never seem to be. Hence, “inspiration” is the word used here for an overall characterization of scripture, but the other two words are acceptable. The above comments should not be confused with the view that the scripture contains the Word of God or revelation but is not the Word of God or revelation.

dational authorities of Christian teaching.¹⁰ They have a unique authority, the highest authority after Christ. They were delegated by Christ to do whatever was needed to establish the Christian people after his resurrection and ascension, and that role included teaching (Mt 28:19–20). They therefore exercised Christ’s authority and did not hesitate to speak with his authority (2 Tm 3:6–15; 1 Th 4:1–2). Clement of Rome, a contemporary of the apostles and a man taught by them, summed up their position in this way: “The gospel was given to the apostles for us by the Lord Jesus Christ; and Jesus the Christ was sent from God. That is to say, Christ received his commission from God, and the apostles theirs from Christ.”¹¹

The Nature
of Scriptural
Authority

Reading some contemporary scholarship on scripture leads to approaching the apostles as though they were merely early Christian thinkers, limited men like all other men. Most scholars discuss Paul as a theological thinker, or evaluate John’s opinions, or reflect on the origin of Matthew’s views, and so forth. To do so is unavoidable, both because scripture scholarship is a secular discipline, and because the human authors of scripture did stand in human history under historical influence, and they were limited men of a particular age in history. It is sometimes helpful for a Christian to look at them in that way. But if this view dominates, one loses the Christian perspective on the apostles—namely, that they were given the foundational authority to establish the Christian people and they were delegated the authority of Christ to teach, and were often equipped with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to do so. A collection of the books that represent the apostolic teaching has therefore become the canon for the Christian people.

“Inspired” and “apostolic” have been chosen here to describe the scripture insofar as it originates in God. They have been chosen because they are two of the most common terms used in Christian tradition for this aspect of the scripture. Of the two, “inspired by God” is the more important term. It should, however, also be observed that the books of the scripture were probably not received as canonical simply because their inspiration was discerned or their apostolicity was well attested. Very commonly books were eliminated because they did not teach unquestioned orthodoxy. They were discerned, in other words, on the basis of their content. That too was seen as a sign of their origin from God. The fundamental point, however, is simply that scripture has been given the authority it has because it has been understood to be from God and to be reliable as an expression of his mind.

Sometimes this understanding of the nature of scripture is attributed to Protestantism, while Catholicism is often said to substitute the church for the scriptures. However, Catholic teaching on this point is no different

than most Protestant teaching that holds to the authority of scripture.¹² Both Catholics and Protestants stand on the same ground in approaching the scripture as authoritative truth from God. The Second Vatican Council, in its Constitution on Divine Revelation (sec. 11), makes this point very clear:

The Authority
of Scripture

The divinely revealed realities, which are contained and presented in the text of sacred Scripture, have been written down under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For Holy Mother Church, relying on the faith of the apostolic age, accepts as sacred and canonical the books of the Old and New Testaments, whole and entire, with all their parts, on the grounds that, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (cf. Jn 20:31; 2 Tm 3:16; 2 Pt 1:19–21; 3:15–16), they have God as their author, and have been handed on as such to the Church herself. To compose the sacred books, God chose certain men who, all the while he employed them in this task, made full use of their powers and faculties so that, though he acted in them and by them, it was as true authors that they consigned to writing whatever he wanted written, and no more.

Since, therefore, all that the inspired authors, or sacred writers, affirm should be regarded as affirmed by the Holy Spirit, we must acknowledge that the books of Scripture, firmly, faithfully and without error, teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the sacred Scriptures. Thus “all Scripture is inspired by God, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tm 3:16–17, Gk. text).¹³

In Catholic teaching as well as in Protestant teaching, nothing can overrule or contradict scripture—not pope, council, inspired prophet, or great theologian.

There are many questions connected with the authority or canonical status of scripture, not the least of them why these twenty-seven books and only these twenty-seven books are contained in our canon and should be regarded as having highest authority.¹⁴ Christian theologians have traditionally answered these questions in various ways. The fundamental point, however, is that we do have a canon, and the books in that canon have the highest authority for a Christian because they have been given by God through the Holy Spirit. This is a faith position (like all faith in Christ or in his word). Christianity is based upon the recognition of God speaking

in the words of men. The acceptance of the canon is also a first principle. It determines to a great extent what someone will claim that Christianity is. If someone does not accept the New Testament as canonical, or only accepts something in the New Testament as canonical, that person will come up with a different religion. That religion may preserve some faith in Christ, and it may be properly termed “Christian” by historians or sociologists, but it will be different from traditional Christianity. The New Testament as a whole is foundational for faith in Christ.

Submission to Scripture

IF the New Testament is a collection of inspired apostolic writings that are the canon, then it has the highest authority in the life of a Christian. It presents words from God, the Lord of all, and it must be believed and obeyed. To use a term from the New Testament (2 Cor 11:4), Christians must “submit” themselves to it.¹⁵ They must submit their minds, indeed their whole lives, to it. That submission includes both believing it where the scripture proclaims a fact about the Christian faith, and obeying it where the scripture indicates the Lord’s desires. Christians must respond to scripture as something with authority in their lives, in such a way that it is enough for them to know that scripture has taught something in order to accept it and follow it. Scriptural teaching is not merely one of many opinions, viewpoints, or theologies. It is the standard against which all other opinions must be measured. If other views do not correspond, they must be rejected.

The concern here is not primarily with an intellectual position, but a question of how people should orient their lives. One can easily begin to approach scripture as a source of opinion or a justification for different propositions, taking a stance in regard to it as a thinker who makes use of scripture. While Christians must think about scripture, they may not stand over it, using it for their purposes. Approaching scripture is approaching the Lord himself. It should be received as a message from the Lord. The appropriate attitude is one of submission—the submission that should mark any relationship with the Lord. Righteousness demands submission to the Lord.

Contemporary society, however, does not value personal submission. Rather, it teaches that the ideal, the highest position a human being can attain, is that of personal autonomy. The human being who decides for

himself, who is creative, that is, who devises novel opinions or viewpoints, the human being who is “adult,” taking the responsibility to make his own decisions—this is the human being who is valued.¹⁶ By contrast the ideal for a Christian is to submit totally to God, to be molded and formed by him, to desire first and foremost to be what God wants. The Christian is the servant (*doulos*—slave) of Jesus Christ; perhaps a voluntary servant, but a servant nonetheless (Rom 6:16–23).¹⁷ He is the person whose life does not belong to himself, but who has given it completely, his mind included, to another—his Lord.

Many modern Christians have lost not only the sense of the dignity of submission to the Lord but also an understanding of how to submit. They no longer have an instinctual understanding of the importance of obedience as an aspect of personal loyalty to God, and of how obedience grows out of personal devotion to him. Jesus said, “If you love me, keep my commandments.” Obedience and love go together. But loving obedience is not content merely to keep the explicit commandments that are solemnly enjoined. Loving obedience also means eagerness to follow his preferences as well and to be formed by all of his desires. Christians who show loving obedience want their lives to be formed by the Lord’s desire, so that it is pleasing to him even in the smallest respects. Moreover, loving obedience is active obedience. It does not wait for the Lord to make his will known but seeks out the Lord’s will. It is eager to discover where the Lord has a preference, and to follow it. Concretely, obedience means comparing one’s mind and one’s thinking with the Lord’s mind and thinking as found in scripture. Obedience means changing one’s mind when it is not in harmony with the scriptures and changing one’s life when it is not shaped by God’s desires as revealed in the scriptures. This attitude does not deny that God can reveal his will in other ways, but it does emphasize that he *has* revealed his will in scripture, and that one must at least be eager to follow what is stated there.

Christians are often tempted by a selective submission. Some scriptural teaching is very attractive to them, and they find in themselves an admiration and a willingness to submit to it. Modern Christians usually find it easier to feel enthusiastic about Christian teaching about God’s fatherhood or about love of others. Some scriptural teaching, however, contradicts their desires. Some may even repulse them. To be sure, often the difficulty is genuine uncertainty about how to respond to some part of scripture. Often a person may know that the scripture is saying something on a given subject, but can be uncertain how to understand or apply what is

said. Despite some uncertainties, for most Christians there remains much scriptural teaching that is sufficiently clear, or could seemingly become sufficiently clear with more investigation, but which they find themselves unwilling to submit to. The genuineness of submission is tested precisely at these points. They prove that their submission is genuine, and not a mere pretense, when they submit to the Lord in something which is personally difficult and which may lose them the respect of the world around him. A Christian may be uncertain about how to submit, but should not be selective about submission.

Submission
to Scripture

Freedom and Rights

Some people today would dispute the notion that submission is the ideal for the Christian. They claim that such an ideal is opposed to the Christian freedom proclaimed in the scriptures. Yet the submission being described here is closely related to true Christian freedom. Paul is the great apostle of Christian freedom, but the Christian freedom taught by Paul is not the same as the freedom extolled by modern man. For the modern mentality, freedom is the ability to set one's own standards, to submit to no person, to chart one's own course. The freedom Paul teaches about comes in Christ and through faith in him.¹⁸ It is a freedom defined primarily in relationship to the Mosaic law. The two great epistles of Christian freedom, Galatians and Romans, are concerned with questions about the need for Gentile Christians to conform to the Mosaic law, especially in its ritual provisions. Christian freedom as taught by Paul, then, is first of all a freedom from the ritual provisions of the Mosaic law, at least for the Gentiles. But it is also a freedom from the (Mosaic) law in its entirety as the way to enter into the full relationship with God and the full status as his people. Behind this change is an understanding that the purpose of law is not to give life but to reveal sin (Rom 7:7–12). Life, relationship with God, power to live the Christian call, come through faith in Christ and through the Spirit of God given to us.

The freedom that Paul teaches is not, however, a freedom to disobey the ethical prescriptions taught in Old and New Testament alike, much less a freedom to set our standards and to submit to no one.¹⁹ There was a temptation to abuse Paul's teaching in that way, but Paul understood that temptation as providing an opportunity for the flesh, that is, an opportunity to follow our own will and desires (Gal 5:13). Paul expected freedom to operate in precisely the opposite way. It should produce an ability and

a desire to live the kind of life which not only fulfills the commands of the law but which proceeds to an even more complete and demanding love. It is a freedom to submit to God and to do his will with a more perfect submission than had existed under the law, when the commands of God were written on tablets of stone and not on the heart (2 Cor 3:3). It is freedom from the law, but a freedom that is meant to put us into a direct relationship of obedience to our Father as his sons and daughters (Gal 3:23–4:7). In fact, the same Paul who insisted so strongly on freedom could also insist strongly on obedience, and could act as a disciplinarian, commanding respect for his own authority because his authority and discipline were spiritual, conferred on him by the Lord Jesus under the New Covenant (1 Cor 4:18–21). Freedom is another area in which contemporary man is ready to find contradictions in Paul, contradictions that never existed in Paul's mind. Here again, the contradictions are not in scriptural teaching. Rather, they arise when the scriptural texts are interpreted using a modern understanding of freedom alien to the scriptural mentality.

Submission, then, does not conflict with “freedom” in the scriptural sense. It can be undercut, however, by an approach to freedom which leads Christians to understand their lives in terms of their own rights. The discussion of the roles of men and women is often framed in a way which stresses the need to give women their rights and which urges them to claim or defend their own rights. At first, such an approach was used to claim for women basic legal protections and constitutional guarantees. Presently, it is often used to orient people toward seeking a kind of personal independence and individualism which conflict with the spirit of Christian teaching. We can often hear, for instance, that basic human rights include making one's own decisions, being independent upon reaching adulthood, expressing one's own opinions, developing one's full potential, having as much opportunity to do a particular job as anyone else. Moreover, we are sometimes told that these rights are violated not only when the government takes them away by force, but even when a group of people freely decide to establish their common life on different principles.

The term “rights” is a legal term, indicating something which gives us a claim in court. “Rights” in this sense is an ancient term, and can be found in scripture. The broader idea of basic human rights, or of the rights of man, was formulated later in human history as a way of developing certain principles for framing the constitutions of modern states.²⁰ The origin of this approach will be discussed in Chapter Nineteen. This broader concept has much utility, especially as a protection for individuals in a pluralistic state which cannot presuppose a shared view of fundamental social and

ethical questions. The term “the rights of women” is certainly appropriate in discussions about how legal protection should be given to women in contemporary society. However, when that legal rights framework is brought into a Christian discussion, it normally orients the whole discussion in a direction that is alien to the basic Christian context. It leads to a frame of mind in which people become oriented primarily to their own welfare, it leads them to even make demands on the Lord himself. In short, the legal rights framework used as a basis for a Christian discussion leads away from an attitude of submission, of eagerness to find out what the Lord is saying, and of readiness to accept and obey his will.

Freedom
and Rights

Legal rights, then, is not the proper basic framework for issues concerning the people of God. The “constitution” of Israel, and that of the Christian people, rests on an entirely different basis than those of modern states. The scripture does not speak about “the rights of man.” From the scriptural point of view, we have no intrinsic and inalienable rights.* Women have no rights, but men have no rights either. Human beings are God’s creatures, totally at his disposal. In the book of Isaiah, the Lord says,

“Woe to him who strives with his Maker,
 an earthen vessel with the potter!
 Does the clay say to him who fashions it, ‘What are you making?’
 or ‘Your work has no handles?’
 Woe to him who says to a father, ‘What are you begetting?’
 or to a woman, ‘With what are you in travail?’”
 Thus says the LORD,
 the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker:
 “Will you question me about my children,
 or command me concerning the work of my hands?
 I made the earth,
 and created man upon it;
 it was my hands that stretched out the heavens,
 and I commanded all their host.”

(Is 45:9–12)

* In relation to God, we have no rights. This is not meant to deny, however, that many speak about human rights in a way consonant with scriptural teaching. God did create the human race according to his purposes, and even sovereign states are not free to treat human beings in whatever way they wish. This fact can be expressed in terms of “rights.” The discussion in this chapter is elaborated in the context of the authority of scripture, not in the context of constitutional rights and modern states. To import terms from the latter discussion into discussions about the life of the Christian people leads to a subtle attitude of unsubmitiveness, and leads to calling God or the scripture to account.

The “constitution” of Israel was based upon a covenant relationship between God and man, a covenant which God gave and men accepted.²¹ The basic framework is not one of rights but of promises and commandments: the promises of God as to what he would do for his people if they were faithful to the covenant, and the commandments of God as to how his people should relate together and to others. The protection of “strangers” (that is, of resident aliens), for instance, was not based on “the rights of the strangers.” Rather, it was based upon God’s commandment to his people: “Thou shalt not oppress the stranger among you.” God is a sovereign creator. His commandments are not based on rights that he must recognize, but on his own nature (including his goodness) and his purpose. His commandments express his plan for his people as an unfolding of his purpose in creating the human race. This is not to deny that often his purposes and his commandments can be understood by considering the way he created the human race. It is to deny, however, that a discussion with God can properly be conducted in terms of rights, or that a Christian’s basic understanding of the roles of men and women can be. To think in those terms puts human beings in a false position, and induces them to call God to account for how he respects the rights of his creatures. The framework of a Christian discussion should simply be: What does God want for the human race? What does God want of men and women? Those who approach him in that way will be in a much better position to hear his word.

To speak so strongly of submission is not to ignore all the various problems in attempting to submit to scripture. Scripture can be difficult to understand. It can require some effort to grasp the meaning of what the scripture teaches about the roles of men and women. It can also take work to grasp scripture’s intention in a particular passage. For instance, someone who approaches an instruction meant only for one situation as though it were meant for all of life would be making a significant mistake, as did the child who turned out the lights on his parents because he misunderstood the command “always turn out the lights when you leave the room.” It is by no means true that someone who disagrees with the approach taken in this book must be rebellious toward God. Many good Christians differ simply because they understand the scripture differently. Nor is it always easy to apply the scripture once it has been understood. The New Testament was written in a very different situation than ours, and we often do not know how to do what it says. Nevertheless, if we approach the scripture submissively, with an eagerness to do everything that the Lord desires, we are in a much better position to solve these problems and to understand

God's way. The scripture is meant to be read in the fear of the Lord and in humility. As it says in Sirach:

Those who fear the Lord will not disobey his words,
and those who love him will keep his ways.

Those who fear the Lord will prepare their hearts
and will humble themselves before him.

(Sir 2:15, 17)

Submission
to Scripture

Understanding and Obeying

Submission to scripture should not be approached in a rigid or inflexible way. In the minds of many people, the term “submission to scripture” conjures up a picture of scripture as a huge law code, a set of commandments, in which everything is a directive. Not everything in scripture is a commandment. The scripture is a collection of many different types of writing. It contains commandments, but also teaching, maxims of wisdom, poetry, and what we might call disciplinary decrees.²² Some of scripture is based upon what could be called “implied social structure.” So far in this book, all these types of scriptural literature have been considered. All of scripture is to be approached with seriousness and submissiveness. All of it is there for shaping our lives. But not all of it is intended to shape our lives in the same manner. Major mistakes can be made in approaching a poem or an ironical or hyperbolic statement as though they were laws from the *Code Napoléon*. A few reflections on the different types of scriptural literature should make the point clearer.

1. *The commandments in scripture should be taken as commandments.* When the Lord says, “Thou shalt not steal,” people had better not steal. Moreover, they had better not redefine “stealing” in such a way that something can be judged as acceptable under our definition, but still falls under what the Lord forbids according to his definition.
2. *There are differences among commandments.* Some commandments concern basic righteousness and must be approached with tremendous seriousness. Others are commandments of right order, commandments designed to order life in a better way. These do not have the same weight (Mt 23:23). For example, the directives about man-woman subordination in scripture are not on the same level as

the Ten Commandments and cannot be treated with the same gravity. Yet recognizing different weight to different commandments does not mean that we need only obey some of them. All commandments are to be obeyed.

Some people apply a traditional distinction between faith and order to most of the New Testament teaching about the roles of men and women, holding that these roles are matters of order, and the Christian people can change matters of order whenever it chooses.* Some order can be changed, but in the New Testament, as in the better Christian teaching of all ages, matters of order or discipline can also be matters of obedience to the Lord if he is the originator of the order or if he simply stands behind the order. In fact, commandments such as that to honor one's parents could be considered as commandments of order, yet they are basic and inviolable.

3. *Commandments should be taken as they were intended.* Some commandments about the roles of men and women are clearly intended by the scripture to be universal for all Christians—not merely for Christians at a particular time, or in a particular situation. For instance, the directive for the wife to be subordinate to her husband and for the husband to care for his wife is a commandment for Christians as long as there is marriage. If anything in scripture should be approached as a commandment this should.
4. *Submission takes on a different character when its object is teaching, prophecy, poetry, or the other genres of scriptural writing that are not simply commands.* The submissive response to a command is obedience, but the submissive response to other forms of speech is not always obedience. If, for instance, a woman were to approach the portrait of the ideal wife in Proverbs 31 as a set of commands to be obeyed, she might end up with a physical collapse. Proverbs 31 is intended to serve as an ideal or model, not a point-by-point command. Similarly, the teaching in scripture about Adam and Eve and God's purposes in creation is, for the most part, not easily "obeyed." Nonetheless, it

* The patristic distinction was between *fides* (faith) and *mores* (sometimes translated "morals"). *Mores*, however, meant more than what recently has been covered in moral or ethical theology. *Mores* referred to a whole way of life and included matters of social structure and community order. The scripture and the Fathers understood Christian revelation to include all of those matters. In recent centuries, the term "discipline" has been used by some theological traditions to refer to those matters of church life which have not explicitly been made a matter of revelation, but which are subject to disciplinary regulation by Christian authorities. If such a distinction is used, all matters of order cannot automatically be classified as disciplinary. See Congar, *Tradition and the Traditions* (London: Burnes and Oates, 1966), 10, for a good discussion of this.

is supposed to mold Christians' minds, so that they can see the area with God's vision. These genres of scriptural writing can help form the lives of those who are submissive to them, and they can mold their lives as firmly as commandments; yet submission to them is expressed differently than submission to commandments.

A special type of submission to scripture should have a fuller consideration because of its relevance to this subject. This case concerns submission to New Testament patterns of church order. For centuries Christian theologians have studied the patterns of community or church order in the New Testament (and beyond the New Testament) to discern a pattern which they could view as authoritative for the following generations. Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and almost every group of Christians have used this method to justify the approach taken to order and government in their denominations. Even now, few Christian theologians would say that New Testament and early church patterns have no validity as standards for Christian life today. Moreover, the early Christians themselves believed that many of their patterns of community order came to them from the Lord and that they were obliged to follow them.²³ Indeed, for Christians who still respect scriptural and traditional patterns of order and who do not feel themselves free to order the life of the Christian people however seems good to them, one of the weightiest arguments against having women as elders or ministers or priests is the argument that Christ himself chose only men for this position.

Recently, however, there has been a stress on the variety of patterns and approaches to order in the New Testament.²⁴ Some have correctly pointed out that the approach to ordering the life of the Christian community taken in Jerusalem in 35 AD and the approach taken in Corinth in 60 AD appear to have been somewhat different. The approach to ordering community life that we see in the letters of Ignatius of Antioch and that which we see in the *Didache* are likewise different in important respects. The conclusion which some draw from this observation is that different Christian communities today can take different approaches, including different approaches to such questions as the ordination of women.

The recent approach of noting variety between New Testament churches has something to recommend it. This can help avoid a "blueprint" approach to following New Testament patterns.²⁵ The early churches may even have approached the roles of men and women somewhat differently. As was discussed in Chapter Five, some writers have held that there was

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a difference between the roles of men and women in Jewish Christian communities and those roles in Gentile Christian communities, although the evidence is far too weak to make such an assertion confidently. It is possible, then, that the early Christians did have two patterns of community order for women: one which included deaconesses and active service for women, and one without these features.

The evidence that some early Christian communities were free to order their church life somewhat differently does not lead to the conclusion that Christians today can take a fundamentally different approach to men's and women's roles. First, the stress on different patterns of community order was developed in the context of trying to deal with differences in forms of church government, for example, the Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Congregational approaches. The approach was developed, that is, for investigating an area in which few explicit scriptural directives are given, and in which Christian teachers for centuries have had to rely on tracing the pattern of how it was actually done and teaching the pattern they had traced as the correct form. Second, the observation about the existence of different patterns in the early church only applies to certain levels of a given question. Thus, there may be something to the view that some churches had one bishop presiding over the community and others had only a presbyterate, but there is no question that some men presided over a Christian community, and that the community was expected to be subordinate to them. While differences in approach existed, there were also uniformities.²⁶

Third, on the subject of the roles of men and women, one finds a basic uniformity of approach concerning both the husband being head of the family and the elders or heads of the community being chosen from among the men. There is no credible instance which is different or which would suggest that a different pattern might have been followed. Communities may have structured leadership roles of women differently. One community may have had an order of deaconesses, while another may have instead relied on some of the widows. One community may have had a chief deaconess, while another may not have had one. One community may have assigned a deaconess some teaching functions that another community may not have allowed. But on many points, especially the most fundamental ones, no variation can be shown. Paul can even appeal to the universal practice of the churches on the issue of headcoverings, a practice where one might expect a variety of approaches (1 Cor 11:16; 14:36). Finally, and very importantly, the basic uniformity of pattern is also accompanied by the explicit directives in the New Testament both about husband-wife

order and about the governors of the community being men, and the latter appears in the closest thing we have to an authoritative book of church order (1 Timothy). In short, in the area of the roles of men and women, submitting to the New Testament patterns of basic order for the roles of men and women does not entail a simplistic or over-rigid type of “blue-print ecclesiology.”²⁷

Submission
to Scripture

Avoiding Legalism

Submission to scripture, even obedience to clear commandments, should not happen legalistically. Thus, it is not enough merely to hear a command and put it into practice; rather, the intention behind the commandment must be understood. The hazard of failing to grasp the underlying intention of a command is well illustrated in the practice of a certain religious community, which had carefully observed an old rule in its constitution that community members were not permitted to eat chicken. At the time the constitution was written, chicken was a great delicacy; the rule was intended to help community members achieve simplicity of life. Until recently, the members of that community ate the most expensive meats in good conscience, while carefully avoiding chicken—often one of the cheapest meats in recent years. A further example of the need to grasp the intention of a rule concerns practices designed to observe the prohibition against braided hair in 1 Timothy 2:9 and 1 Peter 3:3. In some Christian groups, women never wear braided hair in any sense (not even pigtailed on the little girls), in order to obey that scriptural directive. Their desire to obey the Lord may be very commendable, but it does seem clear that the kind of braided hair that was being discussed in the passages was a luxurious style of headdress, not simply any manner of braiding hair. The intention of the passages is to prohibit luxurious adornment, not to eliminate what most people nowadays would understand by “hair braiding.”

Avoiding legalism also involves recognizing exceptions. At times, it might be right for a Christian to breach good order because circumstances make that the only reasonable course. If a husband and father has mental disabilities a wife might have to assume the role of head of the family, while a similar disability in a wife might require the husband to mother the children as well as to father them. The story of Deborah in the Old Testament is a canonized story of an exception from the normal order of the roles of men and women. Finally, avoiding legalism also means employing good judgment in determining the relative importance of different scriptural

prescriptions. Not everything is important enough to die for. It is worth dying rather than burn a pinch of incense in worship of an idol (Rv 14:9). But it is not necessarily worth irreparably damaging a marriage in order to preserve a correct scriptural pattern of roles for men and women in all respects.

The Authority
of Scripture

Avoiding legalism, however, does not mean following the “spirit” of the biblical teachings rather than the “letter,” in the sense sometimes given to those terms.²⁸ When Paul talked about following the spirit rather than the letter of the law (2 Cor 3), he meant Christians following the law written on their hearts by the Holy Spirit rather than simply following the external code. Sometimes, however, the phrase “following the spirit of the biblical teachings” is used to refer to a process by which one does not really follow the biblical teachings at all. Rather, one finds certain values or principles in those teachings which one follows in one’s own way. Someone operating in this vein “follows the spirit of the biblical teachings” on the roles of men and women, for instance, by valuing both men and women and by seeing the mutual responsibility in relationships which involve men and women. It is then suggested that as long as one is trying to follow the spirit of the teachings, one can avoid being literalistic about actually having the husband be the head of the family. By the same principle, one can also (as some have suggested) follow the spirit of the commandment against adultery by not having sexual intercourse with any married people whom one did not love.²⁹ “Following the spirit of the biblical teachings,” then, can be a phrase which ultimately means not following the biblical teachings at all, but merely selecting aspects of them and obeying only what one thinks is important. It can be a way of avoiding submission to the Lord’s word.

Neither does avoiding legalism mean disobeying directives in the scripture in order to avoid turning the gospel into law. Some currents of theology would want to make the gospel the key interpretative principle of the New Testament, seeing everything else as secondary.* These theologians

* The formulation here sounds much like Lutheran theology. This is somewhat unavoidable in that Lutheran theology has been the origin of much of the modern theological concern to avoid legalism and to avoid turning the gospel into law. However, traditional Lutheranism and the best in modern Lutheran theology have by no means fallen into lawlessness or the neglect of obedience. The traditional Lutheran concept of the “third use” of the law, the use which instructs us how to live in a godly way as distinguished from the use of the law in civil society and the use of the law to accuse and lead to grace, would be the locus of concern for this paragraph. To summarize the point in terms of the traditional Lutheran distinction, avoiding legalism does not mean eliminating the third use of the law. On the other hand, there are clearly currents in modern Lutheranism which would follow precisely the pattern of thought referred to in this section. However, their approach is only superficially Lutheran. Rather than representing a traditional Lutheran approach, or Luther’s approach, they instead are representing in Lutheran

stress the gospel as freeing us from the law, and they resist any efforts to approach the New Testament as law. In many respects, these currents emphasize important elements of the New Testament. They attempt to synthesize New Testament teaching in a way which preserves Paul's teaching on grace and faith. But the gospel certainly involves the lordship of Jesus, and the gospel is received in repentance and a commitment to obedience to the Lord. Our righteousness may not save us, but that does not mean that obedience can be eliminated from the Christian life. The scripture also talks about "lawlessness" (*anomia*). In fact, 2 Peter 3:15–17 sees this lawlessness as often expressing itself in scriptural interpretation and as leading to ruin:

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So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, speaking of this as he does in all his letters. There are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other scriptures. You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, beware lest you be carried away with the error of lawless men and lose your own stability.

The very difficulties of scriptural interpretation can sometimes undercut submissiveness to the Lord in scripture.³⁰ Often Christians feel (with good reason) that they do not know what the passages mean, how they were intended, or how they can be applied in a responsible way. In this area, as in others in the Christian life, eagerness to obey can make someone scrupulous or confused, and there is the possibility of committing a foolish mistake in an effort to obey. Such a possibility should not lead to replacing eager obedience with a cautious skepticism. It should rather produce a desire to balance eagerness with wisdom. The Lord is probably more pleased with someone who makes a foolish mistake in attempting to obey scripture than with someone who requires that everything be proved beyond a shadow of a doubt before considering obedience. At the same time, submission to scripture does not mean trying to compile a distinguished

guise a modern desire to find freedom from standards other than self-chosen ones. Moreover, this phraseology is not limited to Lutherans. For an example from Catholic and Anglican writing, see S. Brown and R. Corney, "Responsible Use of the Scriptures," in *Pro and Con on the Ordination of Women* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), 48–49. The debate within Lutheranism is exemplified in the exchange between Theodore R. Jungkuntz and William H. Lazareth on the "Third Use of the Law" in *Confession and Congregation* (Valparaiso: Valparaiso University Press, 1978), 12–15, 48–56, 57–59. Further clarification is found in an exposition of the Lutheran confessional position by Jungkuntz entitled "The 'Third Use of the Law': Looking for Light on the Heat" in *Lutheran Forum* 12, no. 4 (Advent 1978): 10–12.

record of foolish mistakes. No one will probably ever be flawless in obedience, but the Lord is asking for a relationship with him which involves desiring to do his will, doing it as it is understood, asking for his light, and actively seeking to grow in wisdom and the understanding of his will. An attitude of submissiveness to God's word can easily become legalism and a burden, but it does not have to be. It can be a loving, trusting desire to do the will of the Lord, who for our sake died and was raised that we might live no longer for ourselves but for him (2 Cor 5:15).

Is This Fundamentalism?

THE approach taken in this book runs the risk of being labeled "Fundamentalist." A brief discussion, therefore, would be helpful for understanding the meaning of the term "Fundamentalist," and for evaluating the validity of applying that label to the approach taken here.

The term "Fundamentalism" was coined in the course of the anti-Modernism struggle in the early part of the twentieth century. It arose among American Protestants who, for the most part, had been influenced by the broad movement termed "Evangelicalism." The Evangelical Movement had arisen in the eighteenth century, and was characterized by a stress on the gospel and on calling people to a conversion to Jesus Christ. Closely linked to these stresses was an emphasis on the scripture as both the authoritative word of God, and the main instrument for Christian conversion and growth. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the Evangelical Movement had influenced significant segments of most of the main Protestant denominations in the United States and Great Britain.

In the course of the nineteenth century, biblical criticism, the study of comparative religions, and evolutionary theories began to challenge many of the traditional views about the scripture and about the authority of biblical revelation. As a result, the movement which is sometimes called "Protestant Liberalism" or "Modernism" arose as a way of altering Christian doctrinal and moral tenets to better accommodate them to what Modernism understood to be scientific evidence. Fundamentalism arose as a countermovement to Modernism.³¹ In an attempt to secure the basis of the Christian faith, Fundamentalists laid down what they considered to be the "fundamentals" of the Christian faith, and attempted to defend them. While fundamentals varied somewhat in their formulation, they generally included doctrines such as the inspiration, inerrancy, and supreme

authority of scripture, the Trinity, Jesus Christ as true God and true man, the Fall, the atonement through the death and resurrection of Jesus, the second coming, the new birth in the Holy Spirit, the resurrection of the dead, and heaven and hell.³² Fundamentalism grew directly out of an Evangelical environment and background, and formulated the fundamentals in the way an Evangelical Protestant would (rather than the way a Catholic or an Orthodox or even a traditional Lutheran would). Yet, in order to maintain a proper perspective, it is helpful to realize that Catholic Church leaders were fighting much the same battle against Modernism–Protestant Liberalism at the same time.³³ Pius X, the pope most identified with the anti-Modernist struggle, would have accepted the main points of the Fundamentalists, even if he would have formulated those points differently.

As Fundamentalism developed, the more conservative spokesmen assumed prominence and added to their defense of the fundamentals a vehement attack on evolutionary theories. Partly because of the growth of the more conservative wing of Fundamentalism, and partly because of the bad press given Fundamentalism, many Evangelicals and other conservative Protestants who believed in all the fundamentals distanced themselves from the name “Fundamentalism” and from those who claimed it. The “Fundamentalists” gradually received a reputation for being anti-intellectual, politically conservative, belligerent, and legalistic. They also became identified with their opposition to “critical” methods of scriptural interpretation. How far this reputation is justified is not relevant to this discussion. The point is that the term “Fundamentalism” became a symbol of a certain approach, especially in scriptural interpretation, much as the term “the Vatican” symbolizes for many a religious bureaucracy and ecclesiastical power politics.³⁴

Thus, the term “Fundamentalism” could be used in a variety of ways. First, it could be used in the technical sense as referring to an early-twentieth-century anti-Modernist movement within Evangelical Protestantism (and to those who identify with that movement today). Secondly, it could be used in a symbolic way, referring to all those who are opposed to biblical criticism, or, relatedly, to all who approach the scripture in a somewhat “uncritical” way. Or it could be used in yet a third way: as a term of abuse for someone whom one considers to be more conservative than oneself. In this third sense, “Fundamentalist” is applied somewhat freely to categorize a great variety of opinions that people do not like. Briefly examining each of these senses of the term can aid in clarifying some of the issues involved.

First, it is important to recognize that there is, in fact, a technical sense

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of the term—there was an actual historical movement called Fundamentalism, and there are still many people who identify with that movement. Many churches today can properly be termed “Fundamentalist” in this technical sense (or “Fundamental,” as many of them tend to prefer). Most Classical Pentecostals, for instance, are Fundamentalists in this sense. A failure to recognize the existence of this technical sense of “Fundamentalism” can lead to a great deal of confusion in the use of the term. For instance, believing that scripture teaches that there should be differences in the roles of men and women can easily earn one the label “Fundamentalist.” However, historically speaking this would, in fact, be a particularly inapt label. Many of those who were historically Fundamentalists (anti-Modernist, conservative Evangelicals) were, paradoxically, among the first to ordain women and to argue for a less traditional role for women.³⁵

More common than this first meaning, however, is the second use of “Fundamentalist”—as a way of referring to certain approaches to the interpretation of scripture. Someone can be called a “Fundamentalist” because someone else regards his approach to interpreting the scripture as too conservative or uncritical. The following are approaches which seem to provoke being called a Fundamentalist:³⁶

1. Those who do not seem to fully accept or fully use modern methods of scriptural criticism will often be termed Fundamentalists by someone who considers them too uncritical either in their overall approach or in a given exegesis. Among the things which will commonly elicit such a label are approaches which seem to interpret the scripture without an adequate sense of literary form (such as interpreting the book of Jonah as a historical narrative), or which seem to fail to adequately ascertain the author’s intention (for instance, by holding that women should not wear braided hair on the basis of 1 Tm 2:19 and 1 Pt 3:3). Here it is helpful to observe that people can be called Fundamentalists because they have rejected certain critical methods or principles after a great deal of thought and scholarship or because they are not too educated in scriptural interpretation and simply take passages out of context or use facile proof-text approaches.³⁷
2. Those who hold what could be called a conservative view of the historical facticity of narrative sections of the Bible or of the inerrancy of the Bible in its statement of fact (scientific and historical as well) are often termed Fundamentalists. Those who hold that creation actually happened in six days, that a whale did swallow Jonah, that every

discrepancy between accounts has to somehow be harmonized, will often be considered Fundamentalists for holding such views. Those who call them Fundamentalists will sometimes view the problem as a failure to adopt proper methods of biblical criticism (not understanding the literary form of Jonah, for instance, and thinking that it is a historical narrative). Sometimes they will view the problem as simple traditionalism.

3. Those who hold that the scripture should be obeyed when it gives a command without considering questions of applicability will often be termed Fundamentalists. The label can be applied not only to those who forbid women to wear braided hair but likewise to those who object to homosexual relationships on the basis of scriptural commands. On the other hand, it is not likely to be applied to someone who is a pacifist out of obedience to their understanding of scripture—thus showing that the term is normally used for those who are adopting what would be viewed as a conservative position.

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One person, of course, could take all of these approaches or only some of them. Frequently, one or all of these approaches will be described as “reading or interpreting the scriptures literally.”*

There is a historical reason for calling these three approaches “Fundamentalist.” In the anti-Modernist controversy, the Fundamentalists opposed many of the critical methods and positions, considering them an expression of Liberal Protestantism or Modernism. It should be pointed

* The phrase “reading/interpreting the scriptures literally” is an unfortunate one, however, as it is beset with unclarity. It could be understood to refer to those who favor interpreting scripture solely in the literal sense, as contrasted with the spiritual senses or “fuller senses” (*sensus pleniores*) of theological exegesis, or perhaps as contrasted with accommodation. Yet those who are against “Fundamentalism” (and who define a Fundamentalist as one who interprets the scripture literally) are themselves generally in favor of interpreting the scriptures in the literal sense (as contrasted with the other senses mentioned above). More commonly “reading the scriptures literally” seems to be a more shorthand way of defining Fundamentalists as those who take some of the above approaches to the interpretation of scripture (see, e.g., Gregory Baum, in “The Bible as Norm,” in *New Horizons* [New York: Paulist, 1972], 36, for such a definition). Historically, however, this definition is also somewhat inaccurate, since Catholic, Orthodox, and Liberal writers can also often take passages out of context, ignore the intention of the author, and manifest other critical failings. In fact, one of the most widespread incidences of disregard in exegesis for the intention of the author is to be found among those who practice “liberationist” exegesis. The term “interpret the scriptures literally” is also very inexact and confusing as a description between Fundamentalists and others. James Barr takes issue well with the “literalist” stereotype in *The Bible*, 171ff., and *Fundamentalism* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 40ff., observing that real Fundamentalists frequently do not “take scripture literally,” especially in comparison with biblical critics. Moreover, many are ready to find spiritual meanings in the text and move beyond the literal sense.

out, however, that other opponents of Modernism (for example, the Catholic Church) took the same positions. The above three approaches to scriptural interpretation were as characteristic of the dominant Catholic method of scripture interpretation before the Second Vatican Council (or at least before Pius XII) as they are characteristic of the Fundamentalists. Hence, it is historically somewhat unfair to label all opposition to biblical criticism as “Fundamentalist.” Nonetheless, such labeling is common.

The above three approaches do not characterize the argument of this book. One of them concerns matters which are not central to the discussion of the book: the issue of historical facticity and inerrancy. The remaining two, however, are central to the discussion of the book. It is, however, possible to hold that scripture teaches a difference in the roles of men and women without disregarding questions of literary form, or ignoring the intention of the author, or neglecting principles of sound biblical scholarship. As the Note on Method on exegesis pointed out, this would be as obvious now as it was twenty years ago if it were not for the amount of politicization that has entered the discussion in recent years. It is also possible to hold that the scripture should be followed in its teaching without ignoring questions of applicability. The following chapters raise the issues in the area of applicability (see especially Chapter Twenty).

The approach taken in this book is not “Fundamentalist” in either the technical/historical sense of the term, nor in its approach to the interpretation of scripture. There remains, however, a fourth use of the term by which the approach taken in this book could be labeled “Fundamentalist.” That is, the term could be used in a derogatory way as an epithet for certain opinions regarded as being conservative or even reactionary.

There are at least two reasons why the term has become a frequent although inaccurate slogan. One reason is simple ignorance. Many people know little or nothing about Fundamentalists and have not really thought through the issues, but they know that the term “Fundamentalist” can be used to describe someone that seems more conservative than they are. They may inaptly label a book such as this one “Fundamentalist” because they disagree with its conclusion, e.g., “anyone who can come up with such a conclusion must be a Fundamentalist.” There is a second and more important reason for this use of the term, however. Many who use the term in an inaccurate, derogatory way have come under the very strong influence of secular humanism (Liberal Protestantism, Modernism). They use the word as a term of abuse to discredit their more orthodox opponents. These people interpret scripture as a book which does not have God as

its author in any significant sense, and as a book without real authority. Their approach to interpretation comes out of a line of thought which has compromised the fundamentals of the faith (including the articles of the creed and the commandments), and that seeks to interpret scripture in a way that allows that compromise. Often, they will label the approach taken in this chapter to the authority of scripture as “Fundamentalist.” However, if this approach is Fundamentalist, almost all of Christian tradition—Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant alike—is Fundamentalist.

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Simply accepting the need to submit to scripture should not be enough to qualify one as a Fundamentalist. The question of the authority of scripture, however, is a particularly difficult and controversial one today. As has been seen, there are many ways in which the authority of scripture is disregarded without seeming to be. The following chapter will continue the discussion on the authority of scripture, and will treat more fully the ways in which that issue enters into the contemporary discussion of the roles of men and women.

► 15

BYPASSING SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY

THE SCRIPTURES come to a Christian believer as writings that come from God and that hold authority over the life of the Christian people. Many people today have been unwilling to accept a role difference for men and women in contemporary Christian life. Some have disputed such a role difference on the basis of exegesis, holding that the scripture does not actually teach such a role difference or does not teach it consistently. Some have done so on the basis of applicability, holding that scripture was teaching for circumstances so different from ours that the scriptural teaching no longer applies. Still others, however, have disputed such a role difference while simply bypassing the authority of scripture. “Bypassing the authority of scripture” is a more accurate description of what these people do than “disputing the authority of scripture,” because many contemporary Christian authors treat scripture in a way that calls its authority into question, but does not explicitly reject that authority, or even directly confront the issue. Discussions of the roles of men and women are, in fact, one subject where Christian authors most commonly attempt to bypass the authority of scripture.

Modern Bypasses

Modern bypasses of the authority of scripture can be subtle and difficult to pick out. The clearest bypasses are those which directly challenge a teaching of scripture, either by preferring a different opinion, or by openly disagreeing with the scriptural approach. A less easily detected set of bypasses are

those which label certain parts of scripture as bearing no authority. A still less easily detected set of bypasses are those which operate by stressing difficulties to force a choice of one scripture passage over another. What follows in this chapter is a discussion of some of the more common bypasses which appear in writings concerning the roles of men and women.

A. *Scripture must be in accord with my view of what is ethical, or I will have to reject it.*

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This view is stated in a strong form in the following quote:

Either religion promotes human development and well being or it is destructive and cannot be representative of the true God. This must be kept in mind when we insist that the life, human development and well being we are talking about is that of women as well as men. Then we can say with a clear conviction and without fear or guilt that if Jesus was not a feminist, he was not of God.¹

This writer—and those who take a similar approach—is coming to scripture with an ethical conviction to which scripture (and Jesus) must measure up. In this case, the ethical conviction is embodied in the author’s feminist ideology. Scripture is not the judge; rather, the scripture is on trial. Jesus and the scripture could easily be rejected. The writer is placing herself and her ideology over the scripture and over the teachings of Jesus. And if the scripture is the inspired word of God, she is placing herself in a position of telling God whether his morality is acceptable to her.²

B. *The apostle cannot interpret scripture/the gospel correctly.*

This view is very common. It is expressed in the following quotes:

1 Timothy 2:13–14: “Let a woman keep silent with all submissiveness, for Adam was first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived.” The writer not only displayed poor logic but poor theology and misinterpretation of scripture. Eve alone is blamed for the mutual sin in the garden . . .³

Thirdly, St. Paul’s method of hermeneutics, that is, interpreting scripture, is not a method which would be acceptable in the twentieth century. Indeed,

to accept his method would be to fall into anti-intellectualism. . . . St. Paul takes what we might call a fundamentalist interpretation of the Genesis narrative.⁴

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1 Corinthians 11:2–16 is illuminating for us not because it contributes useful ethical practice for us in our time, except for the most rigid literalist, but precisely because it reveals what happens to a man, even a great theologian, when the gospel hits him in his “blind side.” It shows Paul’s inability to deal with the gospel and, as such, may be useful to us when we ourselves, blind to its intrusion, are blindsided by the gospel.⁵

These quotes are not good descriptions of Paul’s interpretation of the scriptures or the gospel. They are much better as illustrations of the authors’ misinterpretations of Paul. However, they illustrate a principle which is commonly employed: Paul (or some other scriptural writer) either does not understand certain elements of the Old Testament correctly, or he does not understand certain aspects of the teachings of Jesus. Hence, we do not have to submit to his teachings. At best, his writings on these points provide an object lesson of how someone can make mistakes in interpreting scripture. There are, to be sure, many difficulties in understanding how Paul interprets the Old Testament, and in understanding how some of Paul’s teaching relates to some of Jesus’ teaching. Yet, to resolve those difficulties by saying that Paul does not know how to interpret scripture or the gospel properly, and that therefore there is no need to follow what he says in a particular respect, is to disagree with canonical scripture. It may be acceptable for one to personally prefer different approaches to scriptural interpretation than those which Paul used. However, to dismiss what Paul teaches on the basis of one’s not agreeing with his approach to scripture is to disagree with scripture itself.

c. Modern scholars understand scripture better than the apostle did.

This bypass is a variation on the previous one: The apostle cannot interpret the scripture correctly. However, it is a significant variation because it confers great authority on contemporary scholars (an authority often conferred by people who would consider themselves as being among those scholars). This view is demonstrated in the following quotes:

Then there is his biased statement which has been quoted with relish by preachers ever since: “For man was not made from woman, but woman

from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.” Modern scripture scholars do not, of course, agree with this interpretation of Genesis. Moreover, Paul himself evidently noticed that there was something wrong and corrected himself immediately afterward . . .⁶

In [1 Timothy] 2:13, Adam and Eve are regarded as archetypes of man and woman (cf. 1 Cor 11:8) and, according to ancient thinking, the older person, for example the first born son, was considered the better and the senior who should bear the authority. In this case, therefore, Adam is considered as the senior because he was formed first. This, as I have said, cannot be accepted according to the standards of modern Biblical scholarship. Scholars do not class the creation narratives in Genesis as history.⁷

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The latter quote is based upon a mistake discussed in Chapter One, pp. 5–9, in which the author proceeds from a view that the creation narratives are not history in the modern sense to the unfounded conclusion that they do not teach truth. The former quote illustrates another common approach when a New Testament writer, interpreting another passage from scripture, disagrees with what contemporary scriptural scholarship understands to be the intent of the original author. The conclusion is then made that the New Testament writer has misunderstood the passage. This approach is dubious, in that it rests on the assumption that the meaning of the passage lies in the conscious intent of the human author, regardless of any intent that the divine author may have. The concern here, however, is primarily in the authority such quotes give to “contemporary scholarship.” “Contemporary scholarship” turns out to be more authoritative than the apostle in understanding scripture. It therefore is a source of opinion which might allow us to bypass, if not dismiss, teaching in scripture. Even an excellent scholar should not have higher authority for a Christian than the writers of scripture.

D. *The arguments given in scripture are not sufficiently cogent for us to accept them.*

This is likewise a fairly common approach to dealing with scriptural teaching. The following quote expresses it well:

The bulk of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 is a defense of religion of the most feckless, proof-texty sort. . . . By the same dismal argument, Paul might have used the creation story to prove differences in race and class, declaring just as

logically that these also were decreed by God. . . . As a consequence, because at bottom he knew he was wrong, he became angry, argued from propriety, nature and proof texts which did not prove. We are saying that he was not ignorant of the gospel here. Rather, he knew it and could not face it.⁸

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Underlying this quote is a supposition that we can examine the arguments of the scripture writer, observe their quality, and then dismiss what his teaching is if the arguments appear inadequate. This writer not only dismisses Paul's teaching, but dismisses it with contempt, placing himself in the position of judging how well the apostle Paul's opinions measure up to "the gospel." However, this line of thought rests upon an approach to arguments in general, and to argument in the scripture in particular, which is itself inadequate.

Arguments are a means of asserting a point to others; hence, their content depends upon the premises accepted by the people being addressed. Arguments for a peasant and a professor, for a German and a Malay, will often have to be framed differently, even though the basic assertions may be the same, and even though the person arguing draws from the same understanding in each case. An argument which convinces one person may not convince another whose circumstances are foreign to those of the argument. Many scriptural arguments will not appear convincing to us because they are not intended to address people from the modern thought-world. The scripture writer was primarily addressing those who accepted his own thought-world. The author of the above passage simply demonstrates that he is not in the category of people to whom Paul was addressing his arguments, not only by pronouncing the arguments inadequate, but also by his consistent failure to understand the meaning and significance of the arguments.

Yet, merely because these arguments were not aimed at the modern mind does not mean that the teaching in the passages in which those arguments occur need not be accepted. The authority of the teaching is established by the status of the passage as canonical scripture. It does not depend on the actual weight of the argument, much less on how weighty the argument happens to appear to a modern reader. Moreover, the scriptural argument itself can be instructive, even though it may not appear telling as an argument. For instance, Paul believes the Genesis account to be a very important grounding for his teaching on men and women, as well as his teaching in other areas. This reveals something about the authority of the Genesis account, and something about the way it should be approached by those seeking God's revelation. Once Christians accept

a scriptural argument as instructive even without finding it forceful or helpful, their understanding can be formed more fully. They will be able to understand the scripture more completely, and will be better able to perceive the force of the arguments in scripture instinctively. In short, the fact that someone does not find an argument from scripture convincing should not be a sign that the passage can be dismissed. Rather, it is a sign that there is something more to learn.

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- E. *I can dismiss certain elements of the scriptural teaching when they originate in an outside influence—such as rabbinic influence—rather than in the real Christian message.*

To be sure, some writers would dismiss all New Testament teaching on the basis that it is due more to outside influences, but most of these persons do not identify themselves as Christians. However, some who consider themselves Christians would like to reserve the option to dismiss some New Testament teaching on that basis. The following quote contains a careful presentation of this approach:

To the question of whether this attitude toward women should be determinative for us, the answer in this case is clear. Paul's regulations are to a certain extent a regression to rabbinic Judaism, which is so much the more comprehensible because the primitive community wished no revolution, at least not in the social area.⁹

Elsewhere this author uses the term “canonized rabbinism” to characterize those parts of the New Testament with which he does not agree. But for this writer and others like him, “rabbinism,” not “canonized,” is the more significant part of the phrase. According to this view, the fact that some element in the scriptural teaching is in accord with the rabbinic teaching, or was even drawn from it originally, provides ample grounds for rejecting it. The fact that this element is also “canonized”—that is, incorporated into the canonical word of God—does not carry as much weight. This position amounts to saying that “the rabbinism I agree with has authority, and the rabbinism I do not agree with does not have authority.” The key feature to notice is that the author feels able to judge with certainty where the scripture teaches truly and where it does not, and he can appeal to cultural influences as grounds for discounting the authority of portions of the New Testament. He assumes, in other words, an authority which allows him to judge the New Testament, to determine what within it is

true and what is to be rejected. In short, this writer does not relate to the entire New Testament as genuinely authoritative.

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This way of bypassing scriptural authority could be called “the genetic fallacy.” It is common in discussions of the roles of men and women. Someone slips into the genetic fallacy when they devote a great deal of attention to discovering the source of the teaching in scripture—not so as to better understand it, not even to better gauge its intent, but in order to evaluate its worth.¹⁰ They may decide, for instance, that some of Paul’s teaching about the roles of men and women is actually rabbinic teaching, that is, teaching which originated among the rabbis, was passed on to Paul in his rabbinic training, and was reproduced in his letters. They would then reason that, having discovered the origin of the teaching and having seen that it is rabbinic and stands in contrast with Paul’s new Christian inspiration, we can dismiss it in favor of the elements which, we have discerned, have their origin in new Christian insight.¹¹

This whole proceeding carries with it a number of problems, not the least of which is the tentativeness with which the origins of different teachings can be discerned. For our purposes here, the primary problem with the genetic fallacy is that it bypasses the canonicity of the passage in question. If Paul’s teaching on the roles of men and women is in the canon, it bears scriptural authority. It makes no difference if he first heard it from Rabbi Gamaliel, or if he received it inscribed upon a scroll during a vision he had in the third heaven. The inspiration of the scripture does not mean that all scripture had to come by direct revelation, with no human help. Rather, it means that the selection of what is taught as truth was made under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, regardless of how it first came to the mind of the human author. If such teaching is in scripture, it is authoritative, no matter what its origin or what parallels it may have.

The genetic fallacy is one among many attempts to bypass scriptural authority by focusing on other factors in evaluating a passage than whether or not it is truly part of scripture. For instance, in some discussions of the roles of men and women, considerable attention is given to the latest critical opinion about which letters Paul actually wrote. Modern authors will sometimes argue that if a given passage was not actually written by Paul, there is no need to take the material in it all that seriously. In a study of the life and thought of Paul, there are good reasons for attempting to determine which books of the New Testament were actually written by Paul. However, whether or not a given scripture passage was actually written by Paul does not determine its authority. In a study of New Testament teaching on the roles of men and women, that the book in question is actually

canonical (and perhaps that it comes to us under Pauline authority) is all that need be determined. If a book is canonical, various controversies over who wrote it are irrelevant for determining the truth of what it teaches.

F. *I can pick out what is truly important about scripture and judge the rest in terms of what is essential.*

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The quote on p. 360 is a good example of this attitude. The writer is convinced that he knows what “the gospel”—the important part of the New Testament teaching—truly is, and that he is able with some certainty to discard the scriptural teaching which is not in accord with “the gospel.” The following quote illustrates the same approach from a somewhat different angle:

The equal dignity and rights of all human beings as persons is of the essence of the Christian message. In the writings of Paul himself there are anticipations of a development toward realization of the full implications of this equality. We have seen that after the harshly androcentric text in 1 Corinthians he attempts to compensate somewhat:

Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. (1 Cor 11:11–12)

Moreover, the dichotomy of fixed classes as dominant-subservient is transcended:

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 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. (Gal 3:27–28)

As one theologian has pointed out:

This does not mean that the kingdom of heaven has to do with non-sexed beings. Paul is enumerating the relationships of domination; these are radically denounced by the Gospel, in the sense that man no more has the right to impose his will to power upon woman than does a class or a race upon another class or another race.

It is not surprising that Paul did not see the full implications of this transcendence. There is an unresolved tension between the personalist Christian message and the restrictions and compromises imposed by the

historical situation. It would be naive to think that Paul foresaw social evolution. For him, transcendence would come soon enough—in the next life. The inconsistency and ambivalence of his words concerning women could only be recognized at a later time, as a result of historical processes. Those who have benefitted from the insights of a later age have the task of distinguishing elements which are sociological in origin from the life-fostering, personalist elements which pertain essentially to the Christian message.¹²

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The author of this quote asserts her ability to distinguish the true Christian message from the rest of the material in the New Testament, and to hold to that true, essential message. What she picks out as the essence of the Christian message will probably fail to convince most Christians that she has a very good grasp on what the New Testament is saying. The quote is, in fact, an excellent example of the position which judges the New Testament with a standard derived from a non-scriptural source—in this case, modern personalist ethics. Holding this position leads to approving the New Testament where it agrees with the external standard, dismissing it as having no authority or value where it fails to agree. To claim an ability to choose what is the essential or valuable New Testament message is to set oneself over the New Testament as its judge and to evaluate the New Testament itself.

The last two ways of bypassing scriptural authority illustrate a common approach found in modern writings on the roles of men and women. Many modern writings on scripture are pervaded by a search for authority in Christian teaching. Many Christians, among them many scripture scholars, have lost their belief in the creed and the commandments, in Christianity as taught to us by the New Testament. They have not, however, lost all commitment to various elements of Christianity. Perhaps they have some commitment to Christ, or to the Christian symbol system, or to the church in which they hold office, or to teaching the discipline of Christian theology. Having lost a foundation in what formerly would have been understood as orthodoxy in all Christian churches, they are seeking criteria for calling something “Christian” or “authoritative,” or are seeking bases for holding views with other “Christians” and for acting together with them.¹³

This search for a new standard may take various forms. Some will look for the “unique or distinctive Christian message,” proceeding as if, once they had found those elements which have not been held in common with any previous people—whether rabbis, Greek philosophers, or anyone else—they would have the elements of the New Testament which truly

bear authority. Others will use a doctrinal view (that of Christian freedom, for instance) as a standard for determining what else in the New Testament is truly Christian. Still others will attempt to reconstruct the “authentic” teaching of Christ (or of Paul)—as if a modern scholar’s presentation of Christ’s teaching is likely to be purer or freer from a personal shaping of Christ’s message than that of an apostle who lived in the same milieu as Christ and was taught by him or by someone close to him.¹⁴ Such efforts can have a certain persuasiveness, and they are often illuminating. But it is not until we see that they are an attempt to establish a new authority, a new canon, replacing the one that has been handed down to us, that we can recognize them for what they are.¹⁵

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Some Christian writers hold firm to the principle that all scriptural teaching must be accepted as authoritative, yet, at times, the practice does not follow the theory. One of the more curious lapses in an active acceptance of the authority of scripture can be found among some modern Evangelicals who are very firm in their defense of the authority of scripture. They strongly defend what could be called the “doctrinal basics”; for example, the divinity of Jesus or the importance of the atonement. “Where the scripture teaches,” they would say, “there we must believe, because the authority of scripture is supreme.” Yet they will often neglect to apply this principle to scriptural teaching about personal relationships and Christian social structure. In these areas they feel content to supplant scriptural teaching with the norms of our society, often without seeing any need to justify what they are doing. These Evangelicals are committed to fight in defense of scripture in the places where it was being challenged vigorously fifty years ago, but they do not uphold scriptural authority in many of the places where it is being most vigorously challenged today.

G. I am trying to be led by the Spirit, and the Spirit has not led me to adopt the kind of position that scripture seems to teach.

This approach is not commonly represented in scholarly literature, but can be commonly heard among Christians at large. It is another way of denying the authority of scripture without seeming to do so. The above statement could actually be approached in two very different ways. The first of these ways (touched upon in the previous chapter in the discussion about submission to scripture) involves avoiding an overly legalistic approach to scripture. People need not always submit to scripture legalistically. Those who are seeking to follow the Lord and to submit their minds to his truth

can wait upon the Lord's assistance. They can accept a truth as the Lord teaches them the reality of the truth and a way of applying that truth in their own lives. In this sense, waiting for the leading of the Spirit is not a refusal to accept the authority of scripture. It is simply a confession of the need to have more than the bare written page of scripture in order to arrive at the truth—in this case, the need for some direct help from the Holy Spirit. To understand the meaning of scripture and how to apply it needs light from the Holy Spirit. A submissive person can wait for God's light before attempting to implement scriptural teaching.

There is, however, a second way of approaching the above statement, in which being "led by the Spirit" can be a way to bypass scriptural authority. This happens when someone makes the Spirit's leading the decisive factor in accepting anything as true. When such people say they are "waiting for the Spirit's leading," they are saying that they personally require direct revelation or inspiration in order to accept something as true. In a discussion of a topic like the roles of men and women, it can often mean that they have a suspicion or a conviction that the Spirit is leading Christians nowadays differently than he was leading the early Christians. It would be a mistake, they feel, to pattern our lives on the way he was leading a group of Christians two thousand years ago. Such a position does not deny outright the authority of scripture, but it does amount to such a denial in practice. If the scripture teaches "Thou shalt not steal," one should not need a personal revelation to ascertain whether the Spirit will lead one to steal or not. In fact, any "spirit" who leads someone to contradict the teaching of canonical scripture is exhibiting clear signs of not being the one Holy Spirit. One of the greatest values of possessing a canon of scripture is that it provides a means of discerning spirits. The scripture and other teachings were given in order that the minds of Christians could be formed so as to perceive spiritual influences in the right way. For a Christian to neglect the highest teaching authority in favor of individual or collective revelation or inspiration is a major spiritual mistake.

H. *There are contradictions in scripture. Or, at least some approaches in scripture are so much at variance with one another that we cannot hold both with intellectual integrity. Hence, we can only hold to some of scripture.*

Certain aspects of this position have been discussed in earlier chapters. Modern writers have asserted contradiction or variance in the scripture's teaching on the roles of men and women in two primary places: between

Jesus and Paul, and between Galatians 3:28 and much of the rest of Paul's teaching on men and women.¹⁶ In both these instances (as was treated in Chapters Six and Ten), the contradictions cited are more apparent than real. The actual contradiction is not between Jesus as the New Testament evidence shows him to be and Paul, or between Galatians 3:28 as Paul really meant it and the other key texts. Rather, it is between Jesus (or Gal 3:28) as understood or wished by certain modern writers and the rest of the New Testament teaching in our area. Such contradictions arise from the interpretations of modern writers, not from the scripture.

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The question remains, however, how people who approach the scripture as authoritative and from God should deal with the contradictions which they think they might be perceiving. Scripture scholarship in the last 150 years or so has made the question of contradictions in scripture an acute one for Christians. Hegelian thought patterns affected German Protestant scripture scholarship throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century. In turn, German Protestant scripture scholarship has been an important influence among academic scripture scholars in other countries and environments. Even when scripture scholars do not adopt actual Hegelian positions, the dominant Hegelian dialectical thought form often persists.¹⁷ Dialectical thinking leads a person to see historical development in terms of opposition and contradiction that need to be resolved. An instinctively dialectical temper, which scripture scholars possess because of their training, will tend to presume opposition and contradiction, or to perceive things in those terms, even when the evidence is not strong that such contradiction is present. Even where the dialectical temper among scripture scholars has been less prominent, an oppositional or contrasting rather than a synthetic style of thought is still valued, leading scholars to stress the differences between various New Testament "theologies," and "church orders."¹⁸

Moreover, where the historical approach prevails in New Testament scholarship, there is a tendency to place greater emphasis on the "genetic origins" of different opinions and approaches in the New Testament, and in so doing, to contrast different communities and authors, so that an evolutionary description can be traced. The results of this scholarly attempt to discern differences between authors and communities in the New Testament have been mixed. Some go beyond the available evidence and occasionally even fly right in the face of available evidence. Some have been of real value. Yet, however valuable it may be, this approach does produce a problem at times for Christians who are not as interested in an evolutionary description of biblical thought in an area as they are in what

the word of God is teaching them about how to live their lives. The two perspectives involved are different.

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How then does one seeking to learn from God's word approach a perceived contradiction? There are three main approaches. One approach is to use the contradiction as a means for eliminating one of the passages.* However, such an approach is a denial of the authority of scripture as a whole. Perhaps many who eliminate passages this way do so on the basis of a conviction that scripture as a whole cannot have authority because of such discrepancies. The second approach could be called the harmonizing approach. This approach smooths out seeming contradictions, and often differences as well, by maintaining that the authors are really asserting the same thing. Two passages on the same subject will be interpreted by each other with the understanding that they must be making the same point because they have the same author—the Holy Spirit. However, harmonizing has an important drawback: It often leads to passing over important differences between passages, books, authors, and communities.

The third approach could be called the synthetic approach. The synthetic approach is based upon the view that differences in the New Testament can often be combined into a stronger synthesis, a synthesis which can be richer once the differences have been understood. Ephesians 5:22–33 and 1 Peter 3:1–7, for instance, present many differences when compared with each another. Yet the stress in 1 Peter on the wife's respect for her husband can be combined with the stress in Ephesians on her subordination to provide a fuller picture of how the wife should relate to her husband. The passages can be synthesized even after recognizing that they are not saying exactly the same thing.

Some assert that there is not sufficient unity in the New Testament to make either a harmonizing or a synthesizing approach intellectually honest. This issue cannot be fully discussed at this point, although the previous chapters indicate that such a view is based more on presuppositions than on actual evidence. The concern of this chapter is not with the historical question of unity in the New Testament, but with the approach that a believing Christian should take to the New Testament canon.†

* As was noted above, the principle of understanding some parts of scripture by means of other parts of scripture is a good Christian principle. Traditional interpretation of the Old Testament, for instance, relies on interpreting it by means of the New Testament. However, it is unacceptable for Christians to eliminate the authority of one New Testament passage by pitting it against another.

† Throughout this book it has been necessary to stress the difference between two perspectives. The perspective of a Christian who believes the New Testament to be the inspired word of God

For such Christians, the question at this point is: What does the New Testament teach—that is, assert authoritatively*—and what do believers do when they think the New Testament might be asserting two contradictory or incompatible things? A complete answer cannot easily be given here, but two points are important for someone who approaches the scripture as the canonical word of God. First, a Christian cannot hold that scripture is actually teaching two contradictory things in areas where it is intending to teach. If the whole scripture is the canon, the measure of all else and of highest authority, then it cannot be teaching two irreconcilable statements. It is not possible to hold that the scripture is fully canonical and also contains contradictions. Secondly, Christians do not have to feel responsible for reconciling everything they see in scripture. They may see an apparent contradiction, but the right approach is frequently to acknowledge that they do not yet understand how the two statements go together, and to wait for some resolution compatible with submission to scripture. In such an approach, the final criterion is a faith criterion about the authority of scripture, rather than a criterion which makes one's own mind or modern scholarship the final arbiter. The lesson from the study of Galatians 3:28 in Chapter Six is that once an interpreter would let go of some of the pre-suppositions of contemporary society which have the strongest hold, the apparent contradiction in the scripture would disappear. At such times, scripture can be seen in a perspective which the reader has been unwilling to even consider. In other words, it is not intellectually dishonest for a Christian to hold that scripture does not contradict itself. Often, more complete understanding actually dissolves the seeming contradiction.

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is different from someone who does not believe this. Most scripture scholarship is written from the perspective of someone who is not a Christian, even when it is written by Christians. The criteria are different when using the two perspectives. The question of how to deal with what one perceives as discrepancies or contradictions is another example of a place where the two perspectives come in. When one is looking at the scripture from the perspective of someone who has no faith, or when one is arguing for the reliability of scripture to those who have no faith, it is impossible to begin with the principle of the unity of scripture or with the view that there cannot be contradictions. The substantial unity of scripture, or the harmony of scripture, is exactly what must be proved. On the other hand, that does not mean that someone arguing for the reliability of scripture has to actually handle all discrepancies or dismiss scripture. There is such a thing as making too good a case. From the apologetic point of view, it is enough to establish the substantial unity and harmony of scripture to establish its reliability. The demand to handle all difficulties is an unreasonable demand, especially in view of the incompleteness of historical evidence for the scriptural period.

* The concern of this discussion is with places where the New Testament intends to teach us. Other areas where contradictions or discrepancies may seem to arise—such as discrepancies of historical fact—are not included in this discussion.

To this point in the chapter, we have discussed eight of the major bypasses of scriptural authority. There is yet another way of calling into question the authority of scripture which cannot be listed as a bypass on its own, but which pervades much of the literature on the roles of men and women—namely, a disrespect for the scriptures or for one of the authors of scripture (Paul receives more than his share of this). We are told at times that “Paul confuses himself and us” or that “Paul was a typical male” or that “Paul knew the gospel and could not face it.” The authors of these lines demonstrate a freedom to express disrespect for Paul which clearly indicates that they have not submitted themselves to the writings of Paul (that is, to part of scripture) as to writings which bear an authority over them. They are holding themselves as the ones whose evaluation counts, and even Paul has to receive their approval. Such disrespect for an author of scripture, and thus toward scripture itself, is a manifestation of the underlying spiritual attitude with which they approach Christianity.

Summary ▸ *The Need to Submit to Scripture*

In summary, there is a variety of ways of bypassing the authority of scripture—that is, of dismissing what scripture says as having no authority without directly disputing scripture’s authority. Some of these bypasses are based upon preferring another authority to that of scripture, perhaps an ethical theory or a scholarly view which would dispute the teaching of scripture. In effect, preferring another authority to that of scripture is setting up a judge over scripture, a judge with higher authority than the scripture itself. Those who advance such views are submitting to something other than scripture rather than to scripture itself. Others of these bypasses proceed by dismissing the authority of certain parts of the New Testament in favor of other parts of it. Although these approaches are often stated with a reverence for scripture (parts of it), they in fact rely on something other than the scripture itself for sorting out scripture. Some theory of influences, some ethical judgment, some preference for a particular doctrine or interpretation of a particular doctrine, becomes the canon by which scripture is measured and by which parts of it are found wanting. This too is submitting oneself to something other than scripture itself and making oneself a judge of scripture.

The authority of scripture as a standard by which to measure all other teaching has been unquestioningly recognized by Christians until the last century or so. On this subject Catholics and Protestants have been at one.

Now, however, there is significant unclarity on the subject among those who call themselves Christians. The result of the unclarity has been to leave many Christians without the criteria which allow them to ascertain what the truth is. Christian thinking has consequently become increasingly subject to influences from the secular world. Teaching about roles of men and women is by no means the most important area of Christian teaching. It is, however, probably because it is not of first importance that it has felt the influence of some principles of Christian thinking that will eventually be used elsewhere. If someone can be a Christian and can disagree with the scripture in this area, putting his own judgment or the judgment of scholars or of modern thought over the scripture, he can do so in any other area.

Modern
Bypasses

The next area for the application of such principles is commonly that of homosexuality. Then follows the rest of Christian sexual morality, and then practically any area of Christian life. Once a principle for judging scripture is accepted, it can be validly applied to any subject matter. This does not mean that someone cannot disagree with this book's approach to the roles of men and women without automatically challenging the authority of scripture. People can disagree with what has been said in this book on other grounds. They can dispute the interpretation of the texts, or disagree with the judgment made about the intent of the scriptural writer in saying what he said in the texts, or reject the approach (to be set forth in the rest of this book) about how to apply the texts. But when people understand that something is actually taught in scripture, and then disagree with it, they are on spiritually dangerous grounds for a Christian, because they are disagreeing with the canonical word of God. For a Christian, this is rebellion. It is believing the serpent once again when he disagrees with what God has said (Gn 3:4).

The Real Challenge

THE first part of this book has been concerned with the scriptural teaching on the roles of men and women. The earlier chapters argued that scripture presents a unified teaching on the roles of men and women—one which is significant within scriptural teaching as a whole. Those chapters also maintained that this teaching was delivered as something valid for all Christians, and it was not merely designed to handle a special social or cultural situation. The last two chapters have dealt with questions concerning the authority of scriptural teaching. They have held the view that

any attempt to place another authority over the scripture is a fundamental mistake. To use an alternate authority to revise or nullify (rather than interpret) something in scripture denies in practice the supreme authority that Christians have always accorded to scripture.

Bypassing
Scriptural
Authority

One could get the impression from these last two chapters that it would not be difficult to simply follow the scriptural teaching today in much the same way that the early Christians did. The point of these chapters, however, is not to deny that real difficulties or objections regarding the application of the teaching exist. These chapters address only the issue of scriptural authority, not that of application. Their point is that Christians should not raise objections which ultimately call into question the authority of scriptural teaching. Many Christians, in attempting to cope with the real problems—both social and intellectual—of living as a Christian in the modern world can end up jettisoning Christian essentials and denying the authority of Christian revelation. Often, they do not do so in a clear, carefully considered way, but they do so nonetheless.

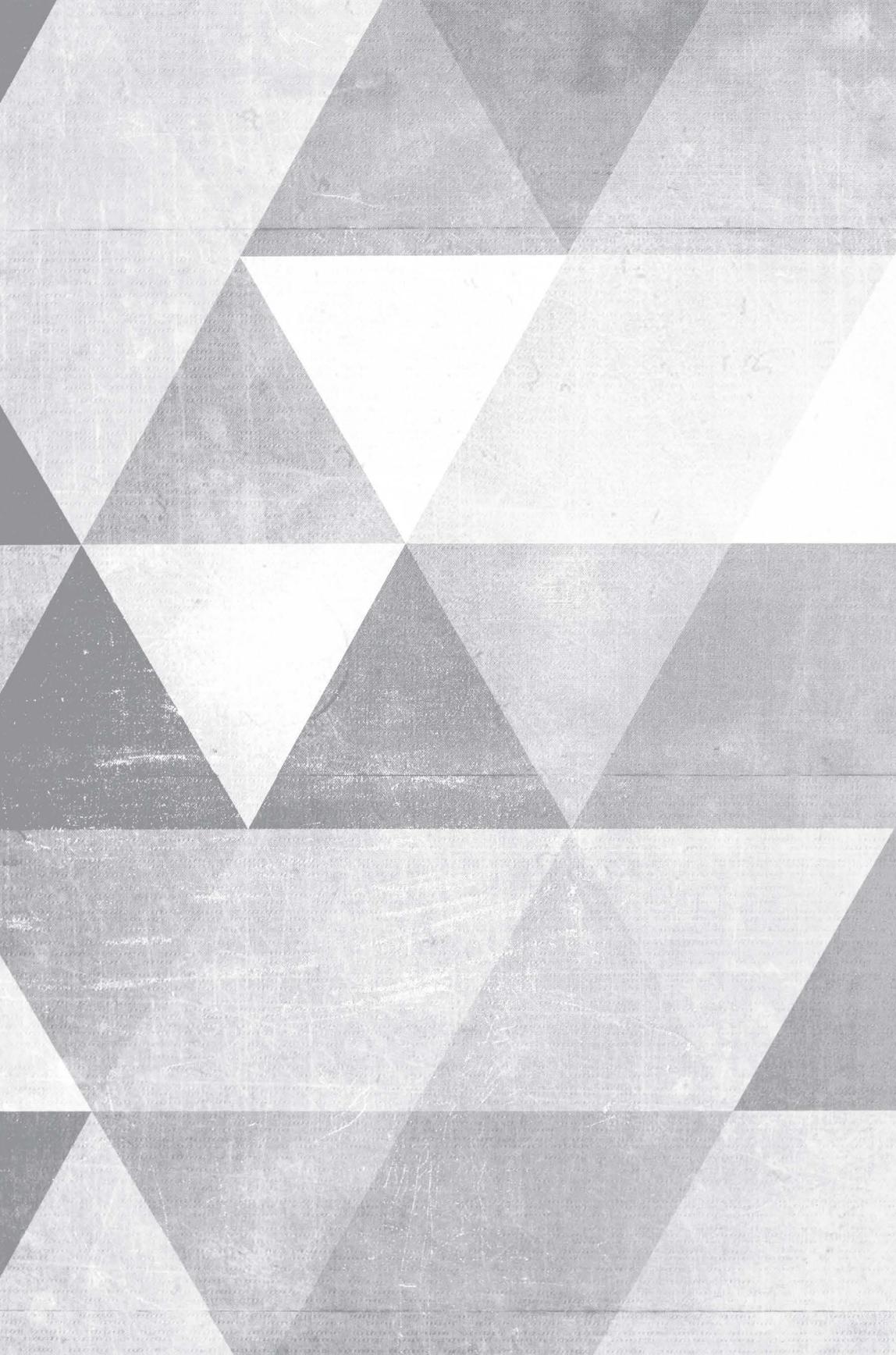
The more difficult question of applying the scripture remains. It is here that the most serious objection to applying the scriptural teaching on the roles of men and women is encountered. Behind many of the questions about culture, intent, and authority lie significant concerns or objections regarding the applicability of the scriptural teaching on men and women. The differences between the world of the scripture and our own world seem to call into doubt the possibility of applying the scripture's teaching today. Human society has changed so drastically since the times of Jesus, especially in the last few centuries, that it is very difficult to conceive of following scriptural teaching on almost anything related to social structure. What is more, most Christians cannot even find a context within which they could follow the scriptural teaching on the roles of men and women without causing major offense. Their own homes are the only possible opportunity, but for many even the home is not a real possibility because the family members are no more open to such an approach than is the rest of society. For instance, many women might be eager to assume the kind of role for wives which they read about in scripture, but they often have husbands whom they do not feel they can trust, or, even more, who are unwilling to be heads in the scriptural sense.

Finally, there are many situations not covered by scriptural teaching—and they are often the situations which are most important. For instance, whether a woman should be a head of a Christian community is a minor question in most women's lives compared with the multitude of job and

education questions confronting her, questions such as whether a woman should be a doctor, a lawyer, a foreman, an airplane pilot, a major administrator, a senator, or a corporation executive. Similarly, the question of wearing headcoverings in worship services seems to be trivial when one is confronted with issues raised by unisex clothing styles. The world has changed so much that the scriptural teaching seems distant, if not positively inapplicable.

The Real
Challenge

This problem of applying scripture arises from the current situation in which we find ourselves. “We” here primarily means Christian people in a contemporary technological society which has been “Westernized” to some significant degree. The question is: How can Christians, in their current circumstances, reasonably interpret and apply what the scripture enjoined in some very different circumstances? In what way should they approach and receive the teaching in those authoritative texts? In order to provide more of a basis for answering these serious questions of interpretation and application, the third part of this book will examine data from the social sciences (especially psychology and anthropology) on men-women differences, and will then assess the current situation from the perspective of social history. In light of these investigations, the difficult question of application can then be more profitably addressed.



The Scriptural Teaching in Contemporary Society

3

► THE FIRST PART OF THIS BOOK STUDIED THE scriptural teaching on men's and women's roles and concluded that the scripture enjoins a role difference between men and women. The second part assessed the scriptural teaching and concluded that it is unified, authoritative, and clearly supported by Christian tradition. But times have changed, and people today face the problem of applying in the modern world a teaching that was originally given in very different circumstances. The third part of this book, then, will treat issues that affect the application of the scriptural teaching today.

In order to deal with the question of the applicability of the scriptural teaching, an assessment has to be made of the difference between the world of the New Testament and the modern world. Chapters Sixteen and Seventeen will take up the question of whether there is something about the sexual differentiation of the human race that has not changed with the passage of time. These chapters will primarily consist of a survey of the social scientific evidence for the differences between men and women. Chapters Eighteen and Nineteen will consider those aspects of society which have changed in the past two thousand years. They will examine the changes technological society has produced in both social circumstances and the way modern people think about social life. Finally, Chapter Twenty will discuss the principles that should be followed in applying the scriptural teaching to new circumstances. Part Four will then proceed to apply the scriptural teaching on men's and women's roles to Christian life in the modern world. ►

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MEN'S AND WOMEN'S DIFFERENCES ▶
INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

EVERY KNOWN SOCIETY acknowledges differences between men and women in its traditions and social structure. Many of these differences, such as muscular strength, vocal pitch, sexual function, and anatomy, are plainly visible to all peoples. However, most societies also place much weight on other types of differences between men and women—differences in personality, social relating, and aptitude. If differences such as these exist between men and women, as most societies assume, then the belief that men's and women's roles should not be structured in an identical fashion receives important support. For this reason, debate over the existence, extent, and significance of the differences between men and women has been a prominent feature of the current controversy concerning men's and women's roles.

This chapter and the one following will consider the data provided by modern science about the differences between men and women. This chapter will focus on individual characteristics—those studies which view men and women as individuals and which search for the differences between them. The next chapter will examine social structural characteristics—those studies of the patterns which emerge in social groupings. This chapter will rely primarily on the findings of modern psychology and the second chapter will rely primarily on anthropology, though each chapter will at times draw data from both disciplines.

These chapters have two concerns. The first is to determine whether weighty scientific evidence points to the existence of significant cross-cultural differences between men and women, and whether these differences correspond in any way to the pattern of men's and women's roles outlined

Men's and
Women's
Differences ▸
Individual
Characteristics

in the scripture. The second concern is to determine whether weighty scientific evidence indicates that the major differences between men and women might originate from sources other than socialization and cultural conditioning. Another way of phrasing this question is this: Does scientific data support the contention in this book that the purpose of God for men and women, as revealed in scripture, may have been “created into” the human race?

This second concern must be understood properly, because the way scientific questions are phrased is crucial in forming the answers received. Modern social science constantly confronts a basic issue: To what degree is human behavior determined by biological factors, and to what degree by environmental factors such as socialization and cultural conditioning? Some writers who study the differences between men and women organize their inquiry around the question: Do biological differences between men and women *compel* a certain approach to social roles? The answer, of course, is “no.” Biological differences do not *compel* any approach to the roles of men and women. The only constraint imposed by biology is the necessity of distinctly different roles for men and women in sexual intercourse, an act that must be performed to produce children and thus preserve the species. However, this form of the question—do biological differences *compel* social differences—eliminates the need to investigate the differences between men and women. The question can be answered easily because little of human behavior is actually compelled by biological factors. Human beings can ignore or overcome many apparent determinants of their behavior. A human being is not even compelled to eat—unless, of course, he chooses to survive.

There is a much more helpful way of phrasing the question: Does scientific data point to any biologically influenced characteristics in the human species that fit a pattern of role differences between men and women? Behind this way of phrasing the question is a presupposition. If some differences between men and women appear to exist apart from the influence of socialization and cultural conditioning, and if these differences appear consistent with a pattern of role differences, then human beings would

* Many different terms are used in discussing this controversial issue. The issue is phrased as a question of conflicting influence: nature versus nurture, genetic versus environmental, innate versus acquired, instinctive versus learned, biological versus psychological, see J. Money and A. Ehrhardt, *Man and Woman, Boy and Girl* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1972), 1. Each of these terms has a specific and distinctive meaning among social scientists, but they are popularly used as more general categories. This chapter and the one following will use the terms “socialization” and “cultural conditioning” to describe the processes operating generally on the nurture/environmental/acquired/learned/psychological side of the influence balance sheet and the term “biological” to describe the opposite side.

be wise to pattern human society so that these differences are used constructively rather than repressed and stifled. Of course, men and women could decide to pattern human societies in a way that took little account of the human biological makeup. But we could also decide to take the characteristics of the race into account and build with them rather than against them. To use an analogy, the nature of a building material (steel, concrete, wood, or brick) will influence the way a competent architect designs a building—without determining everything about the building's design. In the same way, the characteristics of the human species should influence the shaping of its social patterns. If human beings adopt this principle of "working with the grain," then the differences between men and women point toward a way of structuring men's and women's roles. Therefore, the underlying question about biological factors should be framed in a particular way: Is there significant evidence for differences between men and women that do not stem primarily from socialization and cultural conditioning? Might these differences also have some practical consequences for patterning human social roles?

To be sure, the characteristics of the human species are only one of several factors which will influence every intelligent approach to structuring society. Human beings should also take into account the economic, political, and social conditions of the contemporary world. They must understand their current circumstances before formulating an adequate design for the future. Men and women should also pattern their social life according to some vision of the ideal human society. Such visions are usually based on a particular set of ethical principles. These last two factors—social conditions and ethical vision—will be considered in later chapters of this book. Here they are mentioned as part of the context for examining the psychological and anthropological evidence. The characteristics of the human material are important for society. They do not compel human beings to form a society in a particular way, but they are factors which humans must recognize and take into account.

Solid evidence shows that men and women do differ in social relating, aptitude, and personality. Much of the evidence also indicates that these differences are not simply a matter of socialization or cultural conditioning. First, modern psychology has established the existence of many differences between men and women and it promises to establish more in the future. Moreover, these are differences of the type one would expect if men and women were adapted for some differences in functions. Secondly, modern anthropology points to a cultural universal in the area of men's and women's role differences. Within the bewildering variety of forms of

cultural expression in human history, anthropologists can discern some important, fundamental similarities of pattern. In short, the psychological and anthropological data force us to realize that human beings have remained the same over the last two thousand years in some fundamental ways. Modern circumstances may differ substantially from the circumstances in Paul's time, but the human material is the same.

Two chapters in a book like this can only briefly review the main features of the evidence for the differences between men and women. The data will be drawn mainly from the fields of psychology and anthropology. Some supportive ethological data will also be reviewed. Data that is more sociological in nature will be presented in later chapters. Taken together, the material in these two chapters help in understanding the differences between men and women, as well as the factors that must be confronted in forming a healthy human society.

Understanding Men's and Women's Differences

MOST people have a common-sense notion of differences in personality, social relating, and aptitude between men and women. In recent years many people have come to believe that most of these differences are caused directly by socialization or cultural conditioning. Nonetheless, most people feel that men and women differ, and they act on this knowledge in their personal relationships. Ideas like the following are part of most people's common-sense view of men and women:

- ▶ Women are more affectionate, "warm," and personal.
- ▶ Women are more emotional.
- ▶ Women are more interested in children.
- ▶ Men get along together better than women do.
- ▶ Men find it harder to control their sex drive.
- ▶ Men are "tougher."

These statements are rooted in the simple perception of some important differences between men and women. However, such unqualified statements are also imprecise, and at times contribute to the formation of damaging stereotypes—the "Humphrey Bogart man," the "Victorian woman"¹—or are used as a way to disparage others. Thus considering these common-sense notions uncovers an important issue which must be dealt with before proceeding to the actual scientific data. The issue is how to

accurately conceptualize and describe the differences between men and women.

One can think about the differences between men and women with a minimum of distortion if the following principles are observed:

1. *The differences between men and women should be stated descriptively rather than evaluatively.* Too often, such statements are made to evaluate. For example, a group of men will talk about women's emotions or their lack of self-control in speech; a group of women will discuss men's irresponsibility or lack of sensitivity in sexual relations. Many statements that appear descriptive are actually evaluative. The statement "women are more emotional than men" looks as if it were descriptive, but normally it is spoken as an evaluative statement. The speaker, a man, usually means that women are more prone than men to lose control of their behavior and judgment under the influence of their emotions. The speaker usually deplors this tendency. Evaluative statements such as these do little to help one understand the differences between the sexes. It is far better to simply describe these differences.

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Moreover, any comparison of a male trait with a female trait which judges that one is intrinsically better than another is distorted because it presumes an identity of role or function. For example, to deplore women's "emotionalism" presumes that men and women are both "supposed to" express their emotions in an identical fashion. However, such a judgment is not possible if men and women are supposed to express their emotions differently, or if emotions are supposed to be expressed differently in different situations.

2. *The differences between men and women are not absolutes.* This principle applies especially to individual personality traits such as aggressiveness, emotional expressiveness, or nurturance. For example, as will be discussed in detail later, evidence indicates that men are more aggressive than women. However, this is a generalization. The actual results of testing a representative sample of men and women for aggressiveness looks something like an overlapping double bell-shaped curve on a graph (see the illustration below). The overall distribution of the curves shows men higher on aggression. Some women would be more aggressive than most of the men, but men appear in greater proportions at increasingly higher levels of aggression.

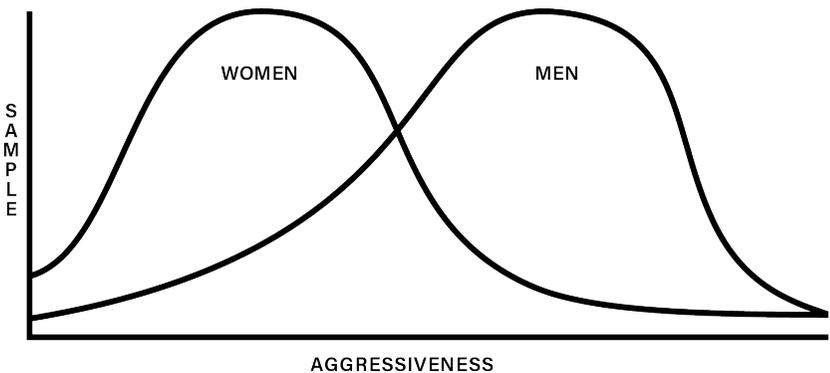
A statement like "men are more aggressive than women" is a generalization.² The bell-shaped curve is the curve of probability. The

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larger the sample of men and women being tested, the more accurate the results will be. The smaller the sample, the more unreliable the results. In other words, conclusions from psychological tests for trait differences are not absolutes. They are statements of probability.

This fact is important in any description of the differences between men and women. On the one hand, statements about trait differences tend to become unreliable in small samples—say, a comparison between one man and one woman. The fact that men tend to be more aggressive than women is less likely to be verified with a small sample than with a large one. On the other hand, the fact that some women are more aggressive than most men would not mean that no such trait difference exists. It does exist. It can be a useful generalization—if employed fairly and expressed properly. In short, statements about men and women in terms of trait differences must be made carefully, but these differences do exist and they are an essential aspect of the psychological makeup of the sexes.

3. *Both sexes possess every trait.* Men and women can be compared on the same tests because they have the same traits. Both men and women are aggressive and both men and women are nurturant. Except for biologically reproductive tasks like childbearing and nursing, there are no activities that both men and women cannot engage in. Both can fight and both can nurse the sick. The differences between men and women lie in the relative strengths of various traits and the personality structures underlying the individual traits.
4. *Many trait comparisons are not universal but hold only within the same social group or within the context of male-female relationships.* For example, men are taller than women, but an unwise cross-cultural comparison could show the opposite: Tutsi women are taller than Pygmy



men; thus, women are taller than men. The point is that most trait differences between men and women hold for members of a particular social group. It is also true that many trait differences tend to appear only within the context of male-female relationships. Men tend to be protective, but they will often act in a protective manner only when their own women and children are present. In other words, the presence of the opposite sex—and often only certain members of the opposite sex—will release or inhibit certain qualities.

5. *The most significant differences between men and women are in psychological structure and social behavior rather than in intelligence, skill, and ability.*³ Men and women will differ in their responses to the same social situation. For example, men and women will differ in the way they act in the same group. Also, a man will behave differently in a group of men than a woman will behave in a group of women. These differences are more important than differences between men and women in ability and competence.
6. *The differences between men and women should sometimes be controlled, not maximized.* The purpose in trying to understand the differences between men and women is not to say that men and women ought always to behave on the basis of those differences. For example, men may tend to be more aggressive than women, but this does not imply that men should be as aggressive as possible and that women should be passive. Perhaps men should moderate and channel that aggressiveness rather than maximize it. It could then be utilized more effectively as a source of strength.
7. *The differences between men and women do not determine men's and women's roles.* Differences are but one factor that must be taken into account. Other factors include one's ideal vision of human society, and the economic, political, and social conditions of the modern world. The differences between men and women are important factors, but they influence rather than determine men's and women's roles.

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Descriptive Social Science

THE available data on the individual characteristics of men and women have come from two different methods of scientific investigation. The first, called the descriptive method, uses description and conceptualization as its major tools. The descriptive method often relies on direct observation in

a professional setting such as a classroom, an anthropological field study, or a clinical examination. The second method relies primarily on experimentation and quantitative analysis. The conclusions drawn from this method are usually more limited than those drawn from the descriptive method, but they derive from tests which are controllable and repeatable.

Both the descriptive and experimental methodologies have yielded data which contributes substantially to an understanding of the differences between men and women. At the same time, both methods of research have their limitations. The task in this chapter is to assess the contributions of each approach, and to use the strength of each methodology to complement the limitations of the other.⁴

In a sense, the descriptive methodology has a certain priority: description precedes experimentation. An experimental investigator must define, conceptualize, and describe his problem before he can fruitfully apply experimental methods to it. If the phenomenon being studied is described inadequately, the experimental studies of that phenomenon are likely to be inadequate as well.⁵ Thus experimental investigators rely on descriptive methods—and often on previous descriptive studies—for the success of their work. Descriptive methods are particularly useful for conceptual precision and elaboration, and they can serve experimental investigators well.

However, descriptive methods are less able than experiments to yield findings which can be decisively substantiated and duplicated. Authors who work with descriptive techniques lack clear agreement on the elements of their scientific method. Agreement on scientific method provides a field of study with a standard that can determine when an observation or a theory is to be accepted as true or valuable. Therefore, descriptive authors are less apt than experimental scientists to attempt to substantiate, develop, or refine the conclusions of another author or body of authors. No one's work can be seen as fully authoritative in the field because of the field's lack of consensus regarding scientific method. This limitation of descriptive methods is partly responsible for the great variety of viewpoints found in the descriptive literature. Of course, experimental scientists also cluster in a wide variety of distinct schools of thought; still, the descriptive literature probably has an even greater number of competing schools and widely diverging theoretical perspectives. Because the findings of each author and school cannot be substantiated and duplicated according to a set of methods acceptable to all, the descriptive literature is often unable to provide a unified set of findings on a particular topic area.

Descriptive methods are also less able than experimental methods to

identify precisely the origins of human behavior. Descriptive authors sometimes claim to be describing phenomena that are basic or essential to human nature—phenomena that could be termed “biological” in origin. However, they do not usually try to state precisely either the mechanisms by which these phenomena develop and are manifested, or the nature of the interaction between biological and environmental factors. Experimental data is more relevant to these concerns. Experimental methods are more able to isolate underlying mechanisms and to help in estimating the relative contribution of biological and environmental factors in forming the different behavior patterns of men and women. The descriptive literature is not irrelevant on these questions, but it definitely has less to offer than the experimental literature.

Descriptive
Social Science

This does not mean that experimental studies are to be preferred over descriptive studies. Some social scientists do have a strong preference for experimental studies, viewing experimental data as “hard” and objective in contrast to “soft” and subjective descriptive data.⁶ This is an unfair characterization of descriptive social science. As mentioned, experiments depend on precise description. In fact, descriptive methods can be as exact and objective as any scientist would wish. For example, the science of biology rests largely on a foundation of exact description and classification. Descriptive methods in other disciplines have also been highly productive and useful.⁷

Moreover, experimental methods have limitations of their own. Experimental investigators are limited to behavior which can be precisely described *and* quantified for study in experimental settings. Quantifying human behavior for experimental study is a formidable methodological challenge, one which experimental psychologists have not entirely surmounted. The problems in quantifying behavioral differences between men and women are especially great. As a result, experimental studies of men’s and women’s differences are relatively undeveloped. Psychologists have only recently become interested in such studies, and they have not yet accumulated a body of substantial, consistent, and meaningful data.⁸ Experimental studies have yielded some highly relevant, important data, but, on the whole, it comprises a very tentative picture of men’s and women’s differences. Thus descriptive as well as experimental studies need to be considered in a review of the literature on men’s and women’s differences.

This chapter will first review descriptive data for the individual characteristic differences between men and women. It will then proceed to examine the experimental evidence. The procedure for reviewing the descriptive data will involve quoting extensively from phenomenologists,

psychologists, and anthropologists who have written on the differences between men and women. The writers who will be quoted are Edith Stein, Jean Guitton, F. J. J. Buytendijk, Dietrich von Hildebrand, Erik Erikson, Irene de Castillejo, Karl Stern, Helene Deutsch, Judith Bardwick, Sherry Ortner, and Margaret Mead.* These writers are prominent in their respective fields, and they have all written extensively on the topic of men's and women's differences. The quotes selected and the points made are chosen because they represent a significant convergence of opinion among the various writers.

This descriptive material will focus on the structures of male-female personality which underlie the individual trait differences such as aggression, nurturance, and dependency. These structural differences are probably more important than individual trait differences. As set forth in descriptive literature, these structures clarify trait differences, and help us understand larger differences in the male and female psychological makeup. These structures can be called "trait-patterns." In one sense, a trait-pattern is a trait in itself. However, it is a trait which finds expression not in one isolated and localized set of behaviors, but in a number of diverse characteristics which are all related to one another in a specific structure. This structure is the trait-pattern. The two major trait-patterns which emerge from the descriptive literature might be called patterns of integration/differentiation and goal orientation/personal need orientation.

Integration / Differentiation

The first trait-pattern concerns the relative integration or differentiation of individual characteristics in men and women. In many ways, this is the most significant trait-pattern difference. Many of the commonly ob-

* Of these writers, Erikson, Castillejo, Stern, and Deutsch are psychoanalysts; Stein, Buytendijk, and Hildebrand are phenomenologists; Ortner and Mead are anthropologists; and Bardwick is an experimental psychologist who regularly draws on personal observations. Psychoanalysis, phenomenology, and anthropology are all approaches that rely heavily on descriptive insight. The psychoanalytic material must be read with caution, for sometimes descriptive accounts are interwoven with attempts at explaining the behavior by reference to unconscious processes (unobserved constructs) and early childhood experience (correlations not based on descriptive observation). Nonetheless, much of the psychoanalytic literature contains descriptive observations. The phenomenological material is perhaps even more useful. Phenomenology is less well known in the United States and Britain than is psychoanalysis, but it is a significant intellectual movement on the European continent. Phenomenology is primarily a philosophical method, but it has direct application to psychology and the social sciences and has heavily influenced continental social science. For a helpful introduction to phenomenology and its application to psychology and sociology, see Roche.

served trait differences between men and women are part of this particular trait-pattern. Also, if we understand this integration/differentiation trait-pattern, we will have a better understanding of the other pattern—goal orientation/personal need orientation.

A clear initial statement of this important difference between men and women is provided by Hildebrand and Edith Stein:^{*}

Integration /
Differentiation

... the difference in the personality structure of man and woman remains an undeniable reality. If we try to delineate these specifically feminine and masculine features, we find in women a unity of personality by the fact that heart, intellect and temperament are much more interwoven; whereas in man there is a specific capacity to emancipate himself with his intellect from the affective sphere. (Hildebrand)⁹

I am convinced that the human species develops as a double species of “man” and “woman,” that the human essence in which no trait should be missing shows a twofold development, and that its whole structure has this specific character. There is a difference not only of bodily structure and of certain physiological functions, but the whole somatic life is different, as well as the relation of psyche and body; and within the psychological sphere there is a similar difference of the relationship between intellect and sensuality and between the various intellectual faculties. The female species is characterized by the unity and wholeness of the entire psycho-somatic personality and by the harmonious development of the faculties; the male species by the perfecting of individual capacities to obtain record achievements. (Stein)¹⁰

Both Hildebrand and Stein say that men and women differ in the way their minds, emotions, and bodies function together. A woman’s emotions, intellect, and body form a more integrated unity than those of a man. She confronts decisions, activities, and relationships as an entire person—a blend of emotions, intellect, and body. On the other hand, a man’s emotions, intellect, and body are more differentiated. He more easily compartmentalizes elements of his personality, treating them as aspects of his identity which he can at times temporarily ignore.

This integration/differentiation pattern clarifies the common obser-

* In the quotations that follow the integration/differentiation trait-pattern in its entirety is not always in the minds of the various authors. This chapter uses a conceptual framework to order observations of different social scientists that are pointing toward the same realities.

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vation that women think differently, express their emotions differently, and relate to their bodies differently than men. These differences are sometimes phrased in quantitative terms: Women are more emotional than men, men are more analytical than women, and so forth. However, one important implication of seeing many differences between men and women in terms of the integration/differentiation trait-pattern difference is that the intellectual and emotional differences between men and women have less to do with the relative strength of intellectual and emotional functions and more to do with the way these functions operate in relation to each other. To understand this difference more fully, we will investigate how it operates in the emotional, mental, and physical life of men and women.

Emotional Life > Buytendijk asserts strongly that the difference between the emotional life of men and women is not a quantitative one:

The difference between the emotional life of man and that of woman only seems to be a quantitative one. It may appear to be possible to measure and establish this difference as if it were merely quantitative . . . but in reality men and women differ in the very nature of their feelings, in their qualitative differentiation, in their depth, seriousness and authenticity, and also in their expression, control, and in the way they give meaning to the situation.¹¹

How does this difference originate, and how can it be described? A description of the emotional differences between men and women based on the integration/differentiation trait-pattern would include these observations: Men have more distance from their emotions, and a greater capacity to detach themselves from immediate reactions, whereas women respond to situations more immediately and spontaneously, and find it harder to distance themselves from the way they feel. Buytendijk notes this difference in a description of an experiment involving men and women reading and responding to a series of cartoons:

The women found the comic effect of cartoons diminished by the entry of any tendentious element. The more any cartoon served a tendency to make a direct appeal to the emotions, the less they found it to their taste. They felt too much involved, they sometimes identified themselves with the object being ridiculed, and so could not maintain the "emotional

distance” necessary to be able to give the situation an ambiguous and amusing structure . . .¹²

The same cartoons which distressed the women amused the men. Buy-tendijk concludes that men will more often distance themselves emotionally from an object of humor, whereas women respond more immediately, spontaneously, and as a whole person.

Erik Erikson makes a similar point when discussing the difference between boys and girls in the area of sensation/reaction:

It also makes sense that she is able earlier than boys to concentrate on details immediate in time and space, and has throughout a finer discrimination for things seen, touched, and heard. To these she reacts more vividly, more personally, and with greater compassion. More easily touched and touchable, however, she is said also to recover faster, ready to react again and elsewhere.¹³

Erikson’s observations along with the other material from the descriptive literature show a pattern of emotional differences between men and women which can be summarized this way. Women tend to perceive things more as an entire person—with mind, body, and emotions integrated. Their response is more immediate in time; they invest less time in a distanced analysis of a situation.¹⁴ Women also tend to respond more “totally”—in an integrated fashion with mind, body, and emotions functioning as one. On the other hand, men tend to respond with their personalities functioning in a more differentiated fashion. Their personalities tend to be more readily compartmentalized into intellectual, physical, and emotional components. Thus a man will more readily react to a situation with a response which is more purely mental or physical—detached in the sense that the response is detached from other elements of his psychological makeup.

It is important to note that these statements are general descriptions of a structural principle which *tends* to characterize the male and female personality. They are not absolutes. These psychological patterns may not characterize the responses of many men and women, and some men and women may deliberately seek to respond in other ways. In addition, these personality structures probably do not explain all emotional differences between men and women. Other trait differences, such as differences in levels of aggression and frustration, seem to play a role in emotional response. However, the descriptive literature does indicate an overall difference in

Integration /
Differentiation

the *patterns* of male and female response. At the basis of this difference seems to be a difference in psychological structure.

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Intellectual Life > Intellectual differences between men and women have received much attention. In particular considerable discussion surrounds the meaning of the term “intuition.” These quotes from the descriptive literature state the difference in trait-pattern.

The male mind discriminates, analyzes, separates, and refines. . . . The feminine mind knows relatedness, has an intuitive perception of feeling, has a tendency to unite rather than separate. (Bardwick)¹⁵

Instead of analyzing and synthesizing the object, she [woman] places herself at a central point, deciding the relationship which the object has to her own life. We express this by saying that she is intuitive. . . . On the contrary, man has compartments, sectors, and pigeon-holes in his mind; he likes things to be separate and each in its order. (Guitton)¹⁶

The descriptions of the intellectual differences between men and women emphasize that men tend to analyze, disassemble, classify, and synthesize, whereas women prefer to resort to intuition—a quality usually yoked to such terms as “relatedness,” “unity,” “fusion,” or “empathy.” Man is more ready to distance himself both from other aspects of his personality and from the object itself, whereas woman “places herself at the central point, deciding the relationship which the object has to her own life.” In other words, women tend not to think about situations (especially social situations) in a detached or distanced way, but instead relate more personally as whole individuals, that is, as individuals whose response is more integrated. This is in contrast to the impersonality which can characterize the differentiated male response.

The descriptive literature points out two central ways that woman's intuitive method of cognition differs from the man's abstract method. The first difference is the contrast between the male tendency to perceive and think of environments as composed of distinct elements that can be acted upon, and the female tendency to approach environments (especially social environments) as “living, concrete wholes.” The following remarks illustrate this difference:

Focused consciousness has emerged over thousands of years from the unconscious, and is still emerging. All our education is an attempt to produce

and sharpen it in order to give us power to look at things and analyze them into their component parts, in order to give us the ability to formulate ideas, and the capacity to change, invent, create. . . . It is however not the only kind of consciousness. Most children are born with, and many women retain, a diffuse awareness of the wholeness of nature, where everything is linked with everything else and they feel themselves to be part of an individual whole. (Castillejo)¹⁷

Integration /
Differentiation

Woman tends toward the living and personal: she wants the whole. . . . The dead thing, the “object,” interests her in the first place insofar as it serves the living and personal rather than for its own sake. This is connected with another feature: every kind of abstraction is foreign to her nature. The living and personal which is the object of her care, is a concrete whole and must be cared for and encouraged as a whole, not one part at the expense of the others, not the mind at the expense of the body or vice versa, neither one faculty of the psyche [soul] at the expense of the others. And to this practical attitude corresponds her theoretical endowment: her natural way of knowledge is not so much notional and analytical, but envisaging and sensing the concrete. (Stein)¹⁸

In other words, women display a greater sensitivity to the concrete and personal dimensions of their environments, whereas men show a greater tendency to abstraction and a sensitivity to structure. This difference seems to become most evident in the social sphere. The way men and women perceive and think about their environments directly reflects their different integration/differentiation trait-patterns.

The second central difference between the typical male and female styles of cognition is the contrast between the woman’s intuitive emphasis on “empathy” or “fusion” and the man’s emphasis on personal distancing. Women desire to know an object by drawing closer to it, whereas men tend to distance themselves from an object in order to understand and act in relation to it more effectively. Stern clearly articulates this point:

At first we are discouraged because there exists no one definition of the term “intuition.” A recent investigator distinguished at least seven meanings of the term, and it seems that such meanings as “hunch” and “extra-sensory perception” do not come into the issue under discussion. They are quite heterogeneous to other forms of intuitive knowledge, all of which have one thing in common: knowledge by union, contrary to knowledge by disassembly. . . . By intuition is meant the kind of intellectual sympathy by

which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible. Analysis, on the contrary, is the operation which reduces the object to elements already known, that is to elements common both to it and other objects.¹⁹

Men's and
Women's
Differences >
Individual
Characteristics

As in emotional life, the relevant terms in intellectual life are “distance” and “identification” (or “empathy”). The feminine mind, which is more intimately integrated into the entire feminine personality, characteristically desires knowledge through personal unity, identification, and empathy with the object of knowledge. The feminine mind tends to draw objects to a close proximity. By contrast, the male mind, which is differentiated from other elements of the male personality, characteristically distances objects so as to subject them to the tools of abstract thought.

Sherry Ortner summarizes this important point about intellectual differences between men and women:

It is important to specify what we see as the dominant and universal aspects of the feminine psyche. If we postulate emotionality or irrationality, we are confronted with those traditions in various parts of the world in which women functionally are, and are seen as, more practical, pragmatic, and this-worldly than men. One relevant dimension that does seem pan-culturally applicable is that of relative concreteness vs. relative abstractness: the feminine personality tends to be involved with concrete feelings, things, and people, rather than with abstract entities; it tends toward personalism and particularism. A second, closely related, dimension seems to be that of relative subjectivity vs. relative objectivity: Chodorow cites Carlson's study, which concludes that “males represent experiences of self, others, space, and time in individualistic, objective, and distant ways, while females represent experiences in relatively interpersonal, subjective, immediate ways.”²⁰

Ortner sees the differences between the male and female “psyche” in terms of two dimensions: concreteness/abstractness, and subjectivity/objectivity. This description fits well with the previous quotes describing the distinct male and female intellectual approaches. It also harmonizes well with the overall integration/differentiation trait-pattern.

The principles discussed earlier are relevant to these descriptive observations about intellectual differences between men and women. First, the literature is not saying that men think more effectively than women. Such a statement assumes that one form of thought (distanced analysis) is more effective than another (empathetic intuition). The literature is not mainly

positing an ability difference between men and women. The mental faculties in women are in themselves no less penetrating than those in men. The literature is describing only a difference in the pattern of cognitive styles. Again, no judgment is made that one pattern is more valuable than the other.

Secondly, though these structural differences may be more important and significant than the trait differences, they are probably not absolute differences. Social scientists who use this methodology are describing psychological structures which *tend* to characterize men and women. The descriptive methodology is limited in some respects. This approach is helpful in precisely describing and conceptualizing behavioral differences, but it says little about how these differences vary among large samples of a population of men and women. The descriptive methodology also says little about the origins of these differences. Experimental studies are somewhat helpful in these areas and this literature will be reviewed later in the chapter. The purpose here is simply to review and summarize the efforts of social scientists to describe and explain differences between men and women.

Integration /
Differentiation

Bodily Experience ▸ A difference in the integration/differentiation trait-pattern also appears in the way men and women experience their bodies. Many of the writers assert that women experience their bodies more as a firmly integrated part of their personality, whereas men experience their bodies more as tools to be cared for and used. This difference, which is consistent with past observations concerning mental and emotional life, is expressed in such areas as psychosomatic illness, athletic potential, sensitivity to physical appearance, and problems with overweight. The difference is perhaps most obvious in the area of sexuality.²¹

Buytendijk comments that women are generally more conscious of their bodies:

However, the body is the first—and the last—situation which every human being comes across in his existence and to which he gives meaning. It is clear that woman takes more notice of her own bodily nature and appearance than man of his, and in this measure she finds it the more difficult to forget her own body, and she becomes proportionately engrossed in the external world. Therefore, it is necessary for us to give attention to the relation of woman to her own body.²²

Bardwick makes a similar general statement:

Women experience their body boundaries more definitely than men do and have clearer criteria for conceptualizing their bodies as psychological objects. Their self-evaluation as women depends largely upon their physical attractiveness and their sexual and maternal behavior. Their awareness of internal sexual functions is reinforced by the menstrual cycle. Normal femininity includes the acceptance of menstruation, pregnancy, maternity as the normal and desired consequences of being a woman.²³

It appears, then, that differences between the way men and women experience their bodies is one of the most important differences in the literature. It is also one which is strongly related to the integration/differentiation trait-pattern observed earlier.

Most of the descriptive authors connect woman's heightened awareness of her body to the fact that her sexuality is more temporally and spatially diffuse, whereas a man's sexuality is more temporally and spatially specific. Woman's sexual experience is extended over time in a series of different phases—menstruation, intercourse, conception, pregnancy, childbirth, and lactation. By contrast, a man's sexual experience is simpler and more psychologically delimited—intercourse and pre-intercourse. In similar fashion, woman's sexuality is more extended in space—vagina, clitoris, breasts, and a generally more sensitive body. A man's sexuality is simpler and more localized in space—the phallic region, along with hands and lips. The sexual body thus comes to woman's consciousness in many forms and at many times, whereas the man's sexual body protrudes into his consciousness in a more consistent form and only at certain times. Deutsch asserts these points strongly:

In man, somatic satisfaction through the pleasurable discharge of the germ plasm and disposition of this plasm in a safe and fostering body are integral parts of a single act. The service to the species takes place at the same time as the sexual satisfaction and can subsequently be completely disregarded by him.

In woman, the goal of her germ plasm, that is to say, her service to the species, is realized only much later, after a certain fixed interval of time. Even the internal processes in the woman's body are subject to separation in time, for the maturation of the ovum and its fecundation are two temporally separated functions. . . . In woman, psychologic associative bridges lead from coitus to childbirth and vice versa from childbirth to coitus, and the two processes are to a large extent identified.²⁴

Margaret Mead also notes these differences in the way men and women relate to their bodies. She discusses spatial diffusion and spatial specificity in this way:

In those societies where children's sex membership is recognized by adults, in which men treat the little girls with flirtatious attention and women tease and challenge the small boys, the little girls respond by movements of the entire body, which undulates, and postures in delicious indulgence of feminine response. The small boy struts, sometimes with emphasis on his penis, more often carrying hatchet, knife, stick, pole, in upward positions as he marches, parries, performs. His behavior, however symbolic, is to the extent that it is male a concentrated phallic exaggeration, while his sister's is more diffuse and involves the whole body.²⁵

Integration /
Differentiation

At another point, Mead comments upon the issue of temporal sexual diffusion and specificity:

Male sexuality seems originally focused to no goal beyond immediate discharge. . . . In the female, however, we are confronted with something very different. The male sex act is immediately self-resolving and self-satisfying, but the female analogue is not the single copulatory experience, however self-resolving that may appear to be, but the whole cycle of pregnancy, birth, and lactation.²⁶

Thus some of the descriptive literature maintains that sexuality is more diffused in time and space for the woman. It is spread throughout her body and her life and is thus more fully a part of her personality, rather than being more of a distinct, localized sense datum specified in space and time, as it is for the man. A man tends to consider sexual activity as another element in his life, something he can more easily detach from himself and compartmentalize.

This differing pattern of men's and women's relationships to their bodies may perhaps explain a commonly observed difference between the way men and women enter into and experience sexual relationships.*

* See Bardwick, 54–58, for a study of female motives for entering sexual relationships. As with all the elements of the trait-patterns described in this chapter, no clear causal explanation is being offered here for the different sexual orientations of men and women. The point here is not that these different sexual orientations are formed primarily by either biological influences or by cultural and social influences. Instead, the point is that there probably exists some connection

Men tend to approach a sexual relationship as a pleasurable activity which they pursue regardless of the identity of their partner.

Men's and
Women's
Differences ▸
Individual
Characteristics

On the other hand, most women find it more difficult to participate in a sexual relationship without simultaneously developing an emotional attachment to their sexual partner. The partner's identity is more important, and physical pleasure in sexual activity is more contingent upon the nature of the personal relationship. Similarly, the type of initial stimulus which will arouse a man sexually is usually physical (sight or touch), whereas the initial stimulus for a woman is often some expression of personal attention. All of these observations fit the integration/differentiation trait-pattern difference: Men are more able to disengage themselves personally from their sexuality, while women are more personally and emotionally invested in their sexuality.

Thus, the integration/differentiation pattern of personality structure emerges in several areas of difference between men and women. This pattern is especially important because it does not consist merely of differences in individual capacities and traits. Rather, the integration/differentiation pattern helps clarify how these capacities and traits are organized within the individual. It fits observed differences in behavior into a pattern that is reasonably consistent, coherent, and highly relevant to the effort to understand the way men and women differ.

Goal Orientation / Personal Need Orientation

The second major trait-pattern difference between men and women which emerges from the descriptive literature is a difference between the orientation of men's and women's social behavior. Male social behavior is more goal oriented; and female social behavior is oriented more toward helping or caring for personal needs. According to this generalization, men are more purposeful in human situations, more inclined to formulate and pursue long-range goals, more invested in accomplishing a particular set of prescribed ends. On the other hand, women tend to be more concerned with immediate needs and with the way people relate to one another. This difference in the orientation of behavior appears to be not simply one trait, but a broad, significant, and consistent pattern embracing all types of social behaviors.*

between this difference in sexual orientation and certain other differences between men and women, i.e., those differences included in the integration/differentiation trait-pattern.

* The goal orientation/personal need orientation pattern could be stated in another way that might be conceptually helpful: In social situations men are more oriented to goals outside the

Extensive treatment of the goal/personal need trait-pattern difference is found in the writings of F. J. J. Buytendijk. The terms he selects to describe these patterns are “work” and “care”:

... the distinction and contrast of the sexes is revealed and can be known in the distinction of two acts: the act of work and the act of care. . . . Comparing and contrasting work and care, we notice that work means an activity that proceeds from an intentional act in which the consciousness is directed toward a proposed goal, this goal being independent with respect to the occupation or activity itself. In this kind of activity, the world is understood as a system of means provided for reaching the proposed goal. Work presupposes that the one who works directs himself toward a particular end, result or goal that itself lies outside of the work as such. . . . The world of care is a world of actual values encountered and of possible values educed and called forth by the presence and activity of the person who cares. . . . The object of care is above all the human reality, of whatever presents itself as human. . . . Work is masculine in character in that there is an accentuation of pauses in its procedure. The pauses are points of rest as preliminary goals within the process of work. Care, which is feminine in character, does not manifest a line of procedure. Within the act of care as such there is no directedness toward a goal to be achieved, for the act is intentionally directed toward the object of care as it is, in its own value.²⁷

Goal
Orientation /
Personal Need
Orientation

Here, Buytendijk stresses that “work” is primarily directed to a pre-set goal, while “care” is directed primarily to values and people.²⁸ The following comment from Buytendijk amplifies and expands his meaning of “care”:

In actual fact, the object of care, calling for care, is anything that is encountered, not as a means to an end nor as material to be given a new form, but as something unfulfilled because alone and at the same time unfulfilled because of the possibilities in it that could be brought to realization through the presence, the hand, the eye of someone who cares, even if the encounter is only for a brief moment. It is only through the fact of care that a few little flowers being arranged take on their high aesthetical value, and the same can be said of anything being arranged, placed, lighted, cleaned, etc. so that, “it will appear to advantage,” which means simply that its own value will be appreciated.²⁹

situation (what the situation can become), women to internal goals (relieving needs, giving comfort and pleasure).

Thus the object of “care” is not a dead material being acted upon, but a living substance whose potentialities are expressed through the agency of the one who cares. Buytendijk’s definition of “care” extends beyond the realm of human needs to include the gift of bringing forth the latent vitality or beauty of any situation. However, his discussion is primarily interested in the human objects of “care.”

Men’s and
Women’s
Differences ▶
Individual
Characteristics

The anthropologist Margaret Mead takes a considerably different approach to this subject, but her observations about this trait-pattern difference are highly illuminating. From her anthropological field work, she generalizes about the male orientation toward achievement and the female orientation toward the nurturing of children:

In every known human society, the male’s need for achievement can be recognized. . . . The recurrent problem of civilization is to define the male role satisfactorily enough—whether it be to build gardens or raise cattle, kill game or kill enemies, build bridges or handle bank-shares—so that the male may in the course of his life reach a solid sense of irreversible achievement, of which his childhood knowledge of the satisfactions of childbearing have given him a glimpse. In the case of women, it is only necessary that they be permitted by the given social arrangements to fulfill their biological role, to attain this sense of irreversible achievement. . . . Put very simply, men have to learn as children to want to beget and cherish children, and to maintain a society in which children are provided for as well as simply protected against enemies. Women, on the other hand, have to learn to want children only under socially prescribed conditions. The small male looks at his body and at the bodies of other males of all ages and realizes his potentialities to explore, to take apart, to put together, to construct the new, to penetrate the mysteries of the world, to fight, to make love. The small female looks at her body, and at the body of other females of all ages, and realizes her potentialities to make, to hold, to suckle, to care for, a child.³⁰

Mead adds two new assertions to our description of the goal orientation/personal need orientation pattern. First, she describes what we have called “the personal need trait-pattern” exclusively in terms of nurturing children. Though her presentation may be excessively limited, the idea that maternal care is the embodiment of the “personal need trait-pattern” finds confirmation elsewhere in the descriptive literature. Even Buytendijk, who visualizes “care” as a mode of relating to inanimate objects as well as hu-

man beings, devotes an entire chapter to “motherliness,” which he calls “the fulfillment of the activity of care.”³¹ Secondly, Mead views the male pattern of achievement-striving as a psychological compensation for the man’s inability to bear children. This hypothesis will be discussed briefly later in this chapter.

Edith Stein talks about the personal need trait-pattern in a way similar to Buytendijk. She also links it to the integration/differentiation trait-pattern:

Goal
Orientation /
Personal Need
Orientation

A sphere for genuinely feminine work exists wherever sensibility, intuition and adaptability are needed, and where the whole human being needs attention, whether it has to be nursed or educated or helped in any other way, perhaps by understanding it and assisting it to express itself.³²

Stein emphasizes the attention woman gives to the whole person. Men tend to help by analyzing a situation or a person and thus isolating the particular sphere of need. By contrast, the female mode of care meets the whole person and cares for the whole person. Woman thus brings her more integrated psychological structure to bear upon a situation which she perceives as a living whole.

We can now begin to see the relationship between the two trait-patterns: goal orientation/personal need orientation and integration/differentiation. Women—whose psychological makeup tends to be more of an integrated whole of faculties, abilities, emotions, mind, body—more naturally approach social situations in their totality, in terms of personal care rather than in terms of specific problems. Men—whose psychological makeup tends to be more distanced and differentiated—relate to social situations more in terms of specific aims or problems they are attempting to solve. (Of course, these aims and questions may involve personal care.) Integration/differentiation describes the internal pattern of the male-female psychological structure; its external reflection is the goal orientation/personal need orientation pattern—their characteristic modes of approaching social life.*

Two final remarks about the goal orientation/personal need orientation trait-pattern will prove helpful. First, trait-patterns do not imply an ability difference. The writers who assert trait-pattern differences do not

* Hildebrand illustrates the connection between these two patterns:

It would lead too far here to enumerate all the details of the spiritual particularities of the feminine and masculine person. The specific, organic meld of heart and mind, of the affective and intellective centers in woman, the unity of her entire nature . . . the precedence of Being as a personality over objective accomplishments—versus man’s specific ability to emancipate the mind from all his vitality . . . his specific suitability for efficacy and the accomplishment of objective works . . .³³

Men's and
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claim that men can achieve goals more effectively and that women can care for personal needs better than men. These ability differences may exist, but that is a separate question. The primary concern in the descriptive literature is with the characteristic ways that men and women relate to various life situations. These writers are asking which approaches appear most "natural" and which bring the greatest personal satisfaction. Women may have the capacity to set long-range goals and men may be able to care for the immediate personal needs of others, but the descriptive literature asserts that this is not their characteristic pattern of relating and is not the pattern which most naturally brings them satisfaction. This trait-pattern difference does not necessarily imply an ability difference.*

Secondly, this material from the descriptive literature should not be the basis for unfounded evaluations. For example, one could interpret this material as an attack on men for their "indifference" to immediate personal needs. The literature does not support this interpretation.† In fact, if properly understood and employed, the male goal orientation pattern will shape and strengthen the way men care for others' needs. A properly balanced goal orientation can actually improve the way a doctor, counselor, minister, or father cares for others' needs. An important implication of this trait-pattern difference is its complementarity: Women will bring their personal need orientation into the way they set goals; men will bring their goal orientation into the way they care for personal needs.

These two trait-patterns—the integration/differentiation pattern and the goal orientation/personal need orientation pattern—do not exhaust all of the relevant observations available in the literature of descriptive social science. However, they provide a summary of the most significant points of convergence in a form which is useful for the purposes of this book.

Experimental Psychology

Experimental psychology, the other major approach to psychological investigation, likewise contributes to the study of the differences between men and women. As discussed earlier, experimental methods can yield findings which are decisively substantiated, and can also more surely iden-

* The goal orientation/personal need orientation pattern may imply a parallel frustration pattern: Men may experience frustration primarily from encountering impediments to goals which they set, whereas women may experience frustration primarily from personal rejection.

† Of course, the literature is also not attacking women for their being less goal oriented.

tify the origins of behavior. This section will summarize the differences between men and women substantiated in the experimental literature. It will then discuss those efforts in experimental psychology to sort out the various biological and sociological sources of the differences between men and women. This section will conclude with some general reflections on the experimental data and the current limitations of experimental methods.³⁴

Experimental
Psychology

Though there is some disagreement over specific issues, the experimental data generally indicates the existence of several significant physical, emotional, social, and intellectual differences between men and women. Of course, the word “significant” is a relative term. For example, the differences between men and women would appear relatively insignificant in comparison to the differences between humans and apes. The differences affirmed by contemporary psychologists would also appear less significant than those asserted by Victorian physicians a hundred years ago.³⁵ However, the experimentally documented psychological variations between men and women appear significant indeed when compared to the expected range of variation among members of each sex. The data from experimental psychology supports the view that men and women are not interchangeable units, but are two different types of human being.

The experimental data will be examined in four categories: social, emotional, intellectual, and physical differences between men and women. While this review of the research cannot help but neglect much useful and relevant material, the broad outlines of the experimental data will emerge.

Social Differences

Chapter Seventeen will examine several social characteristics which men and women exhibit in different ways, depending largely on the type of group in which they are relating.³⁶ For example, dependency, conformity, and competitiveness are such characteristics. This section, however, will examine some social characteristics which the experimental literature says that men and women exhibit in a more consistent and uniform fashion. Two of these stand out as particularly significant. The first is aggression, and the second is nurturance.*

* In fact, the evidence indicates that even aggression and nurturance are influenced by social structural variables. However, these two characteristics find more consistent overall expression in the lives of men and women than some of the other traits discussed in Chapter Seventeen. See pp. 436–438.

Aggression > Researchers have not completely agreed on a definition of aggression. Some prefer a narrow definition, which defines aggression only as behavior which is directed to the harm of another individual.³⁷ Others define aggression more broadly as a quality integrally related to ambition, drive, and competitiveness.³⁸ To understand the data and develop a definition, one should view directly the type of behavior which most of the various experiments measure. These experiments, which are commonly conducted with primates or children, usually measure: (1) physically violent behavior, such as wrestling, kicking, or delivering simulated shocks; (2) verbally violent behavior, such as name-calling; and (3) apparently violent play behavior, known technically as "rough-and-tumble play."³⁹ Rough-and-tumble play differs from the first two types of behavior in that the participants may be on perfectly good terms and have no desire to cause harm to one another. However, rough-and-tumble play often appears so similar to malicious fighting that researchers usually view it as a manifestation of aggression.

The results of the many studies of aggression in men and women are strikingly consistent. In nearly all the studies, the male of the human species appears more aggressive than the female.⁴⁰ This conclusion is strongly supported by ethological studies of mammalian behavior, particularly primate behavior, and by the common observation that there are more men than women in armies, physically violent sports, and criminal penitentiaries.⁴¹ Cross-cultural experiments on children have demonstrated that boys are more aggressive than girls in both Western and non-Western, developed and developing cultures. The evidence could hardly be stronger that men are more aggressive than women. In fact, there is greater consensus among psychologists about this conclusion than about any other social, emotional, or intellectual difference between men and women. (There is no disagreement about many of the physical differences.)

Men are more aggressive than women according to most psychological tests for this trait, but researchers interpret these results in different ways. As mentioned earlier, psychologists differ in their definitions of aggression. Some define it as simple violent behavior, a desire to cause harm. Others define aggression in terms of frustration. According to this view, male aggressive behavior is motivated by the higher levels of frustration experienced by men. Finally, some researchers define aggression as a broader quality related to ambition, drive, and competitiveness.

These definitions vary according to the psychologist's judgment about the motives behind male behavior, and the degree to which these motives can then be extended to behavior which is not explicitly violent. The most

restrictive definition of aggression—aggression means a desire to cause physical harm to another—would make it difficult to apply the findings about aggression to many other types of human behavior. It may explain why men are more numerous in armies, prisons, and football teams, but it would not clarify the sources of many other observed behavior differences between men and women. However, many psychologists prefer a broader definition of aggression. Some relate aggression to dominance behavior—the desire to triumph over another, to defeat an opponent, and establish oneself in an ascendant position. If so, then aggression also lies behind general competitiveness in political, economic, and social life, and thus men may have a biologically based advantage in competitive achievement.⁴² Experiments to measure competitiveness in men and women have not yet yielded significant data, but there is some indication that this inference from the studies of aggression is justified.⁴³ Other investigators believe that aggression either motivates or is motivated by frustration. Some studies indicate that men experience more frustration than women.⁴⁴ Perhaps the studies of both aggression and frustration are studying a related phenomenon. At any rate, it appears to be a phenomenon with a strong biological basis.*

Social
Differences

Nurturance ▸ A second social difference between men and women appears in the area of nurturance. This term refers to behavior directed to those younger, weaker, or in a dependent position, with the purpose of offering aid and comfort. Most people think of women as the more nurturant sex, and in fact, in most if not all societies, women have assumed a social role which includes greater involvement in the care of the young,

* This question about the biological basis of aggressive behavior bears on a key issue which will be discussed in Chapter Seventeen. The debate is about the extent to which some important men's and women's differences can be attributed to biological sources. On the one hand, there is consistent, persuasive data showing that men are more aggressive than women, and that this higher level of aggression has a biological basis. On the other hand, there are also some observations which indicate that men more readily engage in various types of dominance behavior—struggling for position and prestige in a dominance hierarchy, trying to gain control over people and situations, and generally showing more readiness to compete. Is this learned behavior, or is it related to aggression—a difference between men and women which appears to have a biological basis?

It can be safely maintained that there is no reason to rule out the hypothesis that there is a biological component in the male domination of political, economic, and social activities that call for and reward competitive and aggressive behavior. This behavior is almost certainly to some extent learned—the product of socialization and cultural conditioning. But there is a likelihood that it is behavior that flows from a biological predisposition as well. The social and cultural processes that reinforce male competitiveness would arise from and reinforce a difference between men and women that is programmed into the sexes. This hypothesis is debated among social scientists. But there is little doubt that men and women differ in their levels of aggressiveness. The debate centers on the significance of this difference.

the sick, and the infirm. Though experimental data is not as conclusive as it is with aggression, the evidence at hand supports the assertion that women are more nurturant than men.

Men's and Women's Differences > Individual Characteristics

Some of the most significant data derives from the study of mammalian behavior. Humans do not always behave as other mammals do, but any behavior pattern which appears to be nearly universal among mammals must be taken seriously as strong evidence. Nurturant behavior appears to be such a nearly universal pattern. In almost all mammalian species, the female takes primary responsibility for the care of offspring.⁴⁵ The nurturant behavior of mammalian males varies widely from species to species, but they rarely respond as intensely to the needs of offspring as do the females.⁴⁶ In some species, males will actually respond aggressively to offspring, even to the point of killing and eating a litter. This ethological data concerning male and female nurturance must be supported by studies of humans in order to receive final confirmation, but such a nearly universal mammalian pattern provides initial support for the common human observation that women are more nurturant than men.

While many more studies of human nurturance need to be conducted, the data which exists does suggest that women are indeed more nurturant than men. One hormonal study, to be discussed more fully in a later section, indicates that male hormones likely inhibit nurturance.⁴⁷ Girls who had been exposed to abnormally large quantities of male hormone while in the fetus stage show less interest in dolls and children and less of a tendency to fantasize expectantly about marriage and family life. Another relevant study looked at "helping behavior" in children of various cultures.⁴⁸ This type of behavior is similar to nurturance because it includes giving comfort and encouragement to those in need. The study showed that girls between the ages of seven and eleven years were more helpful than boys of the same age. This difference was statistically significant, but the study yielded an even stronger difference when it focused specifically on the offering of emotional support. Girls aged seven to eleven gave more emotional support in all six of the cultures studied. Therefore, though the experimental data is still slim, it points in the direction of a difference between men and women in nurturant behavior.

Emotional Differences

Experiments designed to test the common observation that men and women differ in the way their emotions function have frequently encountered two major obstacles. The first obstacle arises when an experimenter

attempts to define and measure emotional states. Experimental psychologists like to measure behavior, but the link between behavior and emotional states is hard to define. For example, one type of behavior such as aggression can potentially be connected with a number of emotions such as fear, hostility, and frustration. Thus a psychologist studying emotions must usually rely on some form of subjective self-report by his subjects. This method is not always possible, as in infant studies, nor is it always reliable. A second obstacle is a problem of conceptualization. As noted earlier, the descriptive literature has contributed to the understanding of emotional differences between men and women by looking at larger psychological patterns instead of individual traits. Experimental psychology studies individual traits almost exclusively. It is not yet at the point of development where it is equipped to adequately cope with the complexities involved in testing hypotheses such as the ones suggested by the descriptive literature. Many experimental psychologists recognize this limitation, but it remains a limitation. Nevertheless, the experimental data does reveal two areas of possible emotional difference between men and women: anxiety and frustration.

Emotional
Differences

Numerous studies utilizing a self-report method have shown women to be more anxious and fearful than men.⁴⁹ These results have been interpreted in two ways: Either men are actually less fearful and anxious than women, or else they are less willing to expose their fears and anxieties to experimental psychologists. There is a good chance that both interpretations have a substantial basis. The results of such tests are strong and consistent: Women *do* report higher levels of anxiety and fearfulness. However, other studies show that men do tend to be more reserved on self-test studies of emotions. This qualifies the results of such tests, but does not nullify them. Another factor to consider is the likelihood that men and women respond differently to various fear-inducing situations. One psychologist suggests that women might respond with greater fear to physical danger, the dark, and other such threatening situations, whereas men might respond with greater fear to situations which directly challenge their "manhood," such as public humiliation, failure, and appearing cowardly.⁵⁰ In short, though the data is interpreted somewhat differently, some experimental evidence points to a difference between the way men and women experience and exhibit fear and anxiety.

The experimental data also points to a difference in the way men and women experience frustration.⁵¹ Males appear to respond more emotionally to frustrating situations. Their behavior when frustrated is often aggressive, sometimes involving a violent attack on an object or a person, though they

sometimes respond with a more generalized emotional upheaval. The tests which have yielded this data have primarily studied child behavior; they have found that this difference in frustration reactions may begin as early as eighteen months.

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In conclusion, experimental studies have shown that men and women differ in levels of anxiety and frustration. The obstacles to the experimental study of human emotions are considerable, and investigators are divided on the meaning and significance of the data. But the data does present a pattern of emotional differences between men and women.

Intellectual Differences

Two major differences in intellectual abilities between men and women emerge from the experimental literature. The first is verbal ability, and the second is spatial ability. Early studies tended to show that females had a consistent advantage in verbal ability from the age of first speech to adulthood.⁵² However, recent studies show males and females as generally equivalent in verbal abilities until the age of eleven or twelve, when females begin to surpass males in fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and spelling.⁵³ Females carry this advantage through adolescence and into adulthood. On the other hand, males seem to have an advantage in visual-spatial ability, one which follows a pattern similar to verbal differences. Men and women seem to have no differences in visual-spatial ability until early adolescence, when males begin to demonstrate a superior ability to visualize objects in space and to accurately perceive the relationships between various objects.⁵⁴ For example, men are generally more successful at perceiving a regular geometric form, such as a circle or a triangle, when it is camouflaged by random lines and curves. Corinne Hutt states that this gives men an advantage in such practical activities as aiming at a target, arranging objects according to a two-dimensional pattern, or having a good sense of direction.⁵⁵ Julia Sherman also suggests that "superior spatial skill may partly account for their [men's] known superior performance in aspects of geometry, mathematical problem solving, engineering, architecture, and the mathematical and physical sciences generally."⁵⁶

Physical Differences

The experimental literature is most consistent when discussing the physical differences between men and women. Differences in anatomical structure, physiological process, and physical ability are much easier to analyze and

study than the behavioral and emotional differences. Many physical differences are visible to even the untrained eye, and all are easily measured utilizing the sophisticated tools of modern medical technology.

Researchers have noted physical differences between men and women in six major areas. These areas and the types of differences observed in each area are as follows:

Physical
Differences

1. *Size and strength.* From birth on, males have more muscle and less fat than females. In any given population the average male height and weight will exceed the female average. The female metabolism is also lower than the male metabolism.⁵⁷
2. *Susceptibility to serious physical disorders.* The human male is more susceptible than the female to many diseases and birth defects. Females on the average live longer than males, and there is some evidence that suggests that this is not primarily a result of differential environmental stresses.⁵⁸
3. *Rate of maturation.* Males and females mature at different rates. Females mature earlier than males (e.g., female bones develop more quickly than male bones), while male growth continues to a later age than female growth. Researchers believe they have not yet discovered all of the differences in the male and female developmental patterns.⁵⁹
4. *Hormonal rhythm.* The female hormonal system operates on a more cyclical pattern than the male hormonal system. This cycle is also associated with a regular pattern of emotional fluctuation.⁶⁰
5. *Brain differences.* Though the functional differences are not always clear, several structural differences have been noted between male and female brains. The relation between the two brain hemispheres appears to be different. Male and female brains show some differences in external appearance. Also, differences have been discovered in electroencephalogram recordings of male and female brains.⁶¹
6. *Primary and secondary sex characteristics.* These are the most obvious differences between males and females. Males and female differ in primary characteristics such as sex organs, and in secondary characteristics such as body hair and vocal pitch.⁶²

The above list does not exhaust the physical differences between males and females asserted in the experimental literature. As Sherman puts it, "Sex differences exist for almost every physical variable, and they increase with maturation."⁶³

The relationship between men's and women's physical differences and

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their personality differences is not completely understood. Such a relationship clearly exists in some areas—the menstrual cycle affects emotional fluctuation, and some brain differences may affect levels of aggression. (Hormonal studies of this possibility will be reviewed later.) Other more subtle relationships may exist. For example there may be a connection among size, strength, and body rhythm, and self-concept. Though such relationships remain unclear, the existence of the physical differences themselves is strongly substantiated.

The Causes of the Differences between Men and Women

This review of the social, emotional, intellectual, and physical differences between men and women is helpful in itself. These differences appear to be consistent characteristics of men and women in the modern world, and an understanding of them allows us to talk about men and women with less distortion. However, few researchers or popular writers stop at this point. They usually go on to raise questions about the causes of these differences between men and women. How influential are biological factors in the development of these differences? To what extent do early childrearing practices form the characteristic male and female personality of the growing child? Do other socialization processes have an impact on the development of men's and women's differences? These questions will now be examined.

Not all of the experiments which examine the differences between men and women also reveal the causes of these differences. Some experimental designs are simply not suited to produce such data. However, several experimental techniques do yield significant data about the causes of the differences between men and women.⁶⁴ Six of these techniques, and some of the data which they have yielded, will now be examined.

Infant Behavior ▸ Many researchers study infant behavior to get beyond patterns of socialization because newly born infants are least influenced by a social environment.⁶⁵ If male and female infants behave differently, the differences can be attributed almost exclusively to biological factors. However, this method has one important disadvantage: The infant's range of behavior is very limited. In fact, that behavior in which researchers are most interested—aggression, nurturance, verbal ability, and so on—cannot be observed in infants. The categories of behavior which psychological researchers normally investigate do not appear until a child begins to

develop a distinctive personality. By this time, socialization and cultural conditioning are already well advanced. Nevertheless, a few behavioral differences between male and female infants have been found. Girls appear to have greater tactile sensitivity, and they display more types of oral behavior, such as reaching for the mouth with a hand, and reflex smiling. Boys probably have greater muscular strength than girls from birth, and they appear to startle more easily. More differences may be uncovered in the future as infant studies progress to a more advanced stage. However, at this point, no significant conclusion directly relevant to the concern of this book can be drawn from infant study data.

However, studies of older children (ages three to seven years) have produced more significant results. Differences in aggression appear early, as do certain types of differences in activity rates. Girls may surpass boys in early verbal behavior, though the data is inconsistent on this point. Other social structural differences appear which will be discussed in the following chapter. However, one cannot safely attribute these differences among older children solely to biological factors. Children of ages three to seven years have already received much formation from their social environment. Nevertheless, data obtained from these studies can reveal something about the influence of biological factors, especially when the data is consistent and cross-culturally based, as in the studies of aggression.

Cross-Cultural Studies

Some investigators have looked to cross-cultural studies for help in distinguishing between biological and environmental influences. If one trait or temperamental pattern appears in several diverse cultures, then the characteristic may be highly influenced by biological factors. On the other hand, a high degree of diversity in such traits from culture to culture may indicate a high level of environmental influence.* Cross-cultural studies have proven to be quite helpful in clarifying the causes of a few differences between men and women. In one study of aggression in seven cultures, young boys in all the cultures displayed more aggressive behavior than young girls.⁶⁶ Boys engaged in more rough-and-tumble play, exchanged

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* Though cross-cultural studies can reveal which differences between men and women have a high probability of resulting largely from biological influences, they cannot speak definitively. Other factors can underlie a recognized uniformity. Similarly, diversity of expression from culture to culture cannot ensure that a characteristic receives little biological input, though it does substantially raise the probability that such is the case.

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more verbal insults, and retaliated against aggression more readily than did girls. Another study of visual-spatial ability suggests that ability levels vary somewhat for men and women in different cultures depending on the level of autonomy a culture allows for children and women.⁶⁷ However, this suggestion of some cross-cultural variation must be reconciled with other studies which show some genetic factors at work in visual-spatial ability. Probably both influences are at work. Finally, cross-cultural studies show that women exhibit certain kinds of nurturant behaviors at a higher level than men.⁶⁸

This conclusion is supported by the cross-cultural anthropological work of Margaret Mead. In *Male and Female*, first published in 1949, Mead draws some conclusions about men and women based on her field experience among seven Pacific cultures and on other anthropological and psychological research concerned with men's and women's differences. She concludes that men and women differ in several areas of temperament, including aggression and nurturance, and that these differences are rooted in biological realities. In particular, she strongly states her conviction that females are biologically predisposed to desire to bear and raise children, while males are predisposed to a restless ambition and a desire for achievement. She acknowledges that these predispositions can be redirected by a society, but she nevertheless sees them as extremely significant.⁶⁹

Animal Studies ▸ The study of animals, especially primates, has yielded important data which can be applied to efforts to understand the causes of differences between men and women. A key issue in understanding these origins is distinguishing between learned and biologically based behavior. It is obvious that much human behavior is learned. One of the features which most strongly differentiates homo sapiens from other animal species is the human capacity for learning and strong reliance on learned social behavior. Other animal species rely on learned behavior as well, but biological factors are more dominant. Thus, when one observes strong similarities between human and animal behavior (especially primate behavior) then there is some likelihood that a biological factor is at work in the human behavior.*

* A connection between human biology and animal behavior can be made regardless of one's view of evolutionary theory. Many analogies between human and non-human animal behavior exist. It would be possible to explain such analogies by asserting that both groupings have learned the behavior, or that one grouping has learned the behavior which the other has developed largely through innate influences. However, it is far more likely that an analogy between human and non-human animal behavior reveals some innate biological influence in both groupings. The process of learning is less formative in non-human animals than in humans, and it makes little sense to see a behavior pattern shared by both groupings as stemming from utterly different sources. See Chapter Seventeen, pp. 437-439.

Scientists hotly debate the question of how directly we can compare animal behavior to analogous human behavior. However, most investigators, recognizing that humans are animals, agree that some valid comparisons can be made.

Some animal studies which show higher levels of aggression in males and higher levels of nurturant behavior in females in all mammalian species have already been mentioned. In addition, animal studies have clarified some of the biological roots of aggression and nurturance. Adult exposure to male or female hormones influences the mature display of aggressive or nurturant behaviors, but these behaviors are also influenced significantly by the prenatal exposure of the brain to these hormones. Animal studies show that the animal brain is typed “male” or “female” just preceding or subsequent to birth. These hormonal studies have been conducted and confirmed in many different species, including primates.⁷⁰ Furthermore, animal studies have also clarified an important mechanism of learning which combines biology and socialization. In this type of learning, called “imprinting,” the members of a species are genetically programmed to learn certain behaviors at critical periods in their early development. The concept of imprinting has already been effectively applied to the development of language skills and gender identity in humans.⁷¹

Other differences between males and females have surfaced in animal experiments. Male and female monkeys react differently to stress situations in early life: Male infants respond to maternal separation with more abnormal behavior. Monkeys also react differently to novel external stimuli: Males approach, females withdraw.⁷² These differences among animals do not necessarily indicate parallel differences among humans. However, when a similar pattern is found among humans (as it often is), the animal studies suggest that it is at least partially rooted in some biological factors.

Longitudinal Studies ▸ Longitudinal studies—that is, studies of a sample population over time—can often isolate causes of behavior more precisely than other types of experimental studies. A longitudinal study usually examines a small sample of individuals intensively over a period of years. Since the researcher works with the same group, he can often observe various behavior patterns more clearly and isolate specific causes more easily.

Two longitudinal studies are especially significant for our purposes.⁷³ Both have been conducted by John Money and his associates. The first set of studies confirmed in humans the conclusion from animal studies that

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male hormones have a substantial effect on the fetal central nervous system. Money's subjects were females suffering from the Adrenogenital Syndrome, a genetic defect which causes an excessive production of male hormones in a female fetus. Money's study of these girls during their middle childhood produced some extremely significant data: An unusually large number of the girls were "tomboys," expending a high level of physical energy on vigorous outdoor play, dressing in a "utilitarian and functional" manner, and preferring cars, trucks, and guns to dolls. In later life they subordinated marriage to career in thinking of the future, and entered romantic attachment with boys at a later age than a control group. The results of this study strongly support the hypothesis that prenatal exposure of humans to hormones organizes the central nervous system along distinct "male" and "female" lines in a manner similar to that demonstrated in earlier animal experiments. It also appears that this prenatal sexual typing affects not only directly reproductive behavior but also behavior which is usually identified with the traditional male and female role.⁷⁴

A second set of studies conducted by Money demonstrate the significance of environmental factors on how a child learns to identify himself as a male or a female. One of these studies was performed on a pair of identical twins, both genetically masculine. One of the twins was accidentally castrated at the time of circumcision, and was subsequently reared as a girl. This child adapted successfully to the female role, and acted differently than the other twin who was raised as a male. At the same time, the twin with the female gender identity showed a high degree of "tomboyish" behavior tendencies, much like the young girls cited in the earlier study. Because of the unique and unfortunate circumstances surrounding this longitudinal study, it is not easily replicated and confirmed. However, Money has conducted other longitudinal studies which also suggest the importance of the sex of rearing in the formation of a person's gender identity.⁷⁵

Physiological Studies ▸ Some researchers have shown correlations between human physiological processes and emotional, behavioral, and intellectual differences between men and women. Money's examination of the enduring effects of fetal exposure to male hormones is an example of this type of physiological/behavioral study. Another helpful set of physiological studies have focused on the menstrual cycle.⁷⁶ Studies conducted over the past thirty years confirm the popular belief that most women experience a cyclic emotional fluctuation corresponding to the various phases of the

menstrual cycle. Endocrinologists hypothesize that this fluctuation results from the varying levels of estrogen and progesterone, the two primary female hormones, present in the female system at different phases of the female cycle. Low levels of estrogen and progesterone correlate with higher levels of anxiety, irritability, and depression; high levels of these hormones correlate with greater sense of well-being and self-esteem. The degree of these emotional fluctuations vary from woman to woman according to the emotional stability of the individual woman and the environmental pressures she experiences. Other studies have examined the other stages in a woman's life when estrogen and progesterone production decrease—immediately after childbirth and during menopause.⁷⁷ Again, many women are more anxious, irritable, and depressed during these times. Physicians sometimes treat women suffering from severe menopausal depression with estrogen, and the treatment is usually successful. In short, studies of the hormonal variations within the female menstrual cycle reveal some important ways the female emotional makeup differs from the male makeup.

Some of the most interesting recent physiological/behavioral studies of men's and women's differences have concentrated on the consequences of brain lateralization.⁷⁸ The cerebrum, center of a human's higher intellectual processes, consists of two hemispheres. Recent studies of subjects who have had these hemispheres surgically disconnected to control severe epilepsy have revealed that each hemisphere specializes in different functions. Most verbal functions are centered in the left hemisphere, while most emotions and visual-spatial functions are centered in the right hemisphere. Therefore, future experiments may show a physiological base to the female superiority in verbal functions and the male superiority in visual-spatial functions, as well as to differences in emotional behavior. Further experiments have also disclosed a possible difference in the way brain hemispheres interact in male subjects and female subjects. Though research in the area of brain lateralization is only beginning, it promises to illuminate some of the biological processes underlying the differences between men and women.*

* Though verbal ability and visual-spatial ability are the two most obvious areas of difference between men and women that are affected by this new research into the human brain, other areas could become even more significant in the future. For example, emotional differences between men and women may also be connected in some way to differences in the interaction of right- and left-brain hemispheres in males and females (see Sage, 27, and Buck, 33, on brain lateralization and emotions). In addition, there may be some relationship between the integration/differentiation trait-pattern and differences between men and women in the way right- and left-brain hemispheres are specialized (see Buck, 32). These connections are not certain, but there is some likelihood that correlations will be shown.

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Psychoanalytic Theory and Technique > In some ways psychoanalysis is not an experimental technique like the others we have been discussing. Instead, it is more of an all-embracing theory of the origins of the differences between men and women. However, psychoanalysis should be examined because some research into the causes of sex differences has borrowed concepts from psychoanalytic theory. Erik Erikson has used the conceptual framework of psychoanalysis to study the different approaches to inner and outer space among male and female children.⁷⁹ Judith Bardwick and other experimental psychologists have also made use of some psychoanalytic approaches.⁸⁰

The root of the psychoanalytic approach is the view that the differences between men and women develop mainly through a child's evolving perception of anatomy and social roles. According to Freud, the visibility of the male sexual organ produces in young girls "penis envy," a sense of lack and a desire to have a penis. In the normal psycho-sexual developmental sequence, "penis envy" becomes a desire for children. The male child suffers a different but corresponding trauma: He covets his penis, and fears that it will be forcibly taken from him by his father. Freud terms this fear "castration anxiety." The boy conquers this fear by identifying with his father and the adult male role. These concepts of "penis envy" and "castration anxiety" have been modified, reformulated, and supplemented by contemporary psychoanalysts. One common reformulation is known as the "womb envy" theory.⁸¹ This theory views male aggression and achievement orientation as a compensation for an inability to bear children. Psychoanalytic explanations for the differences between men and women differ substantially, but the basic psychoanalytic perspective remains the same: These differences develop in large part through a child's perception of sexual anatomy and adult social roles.

The psychoanalytic explanations of the origins of sex differences are quite controversial and much-disputed. However, if psychoanalytic explanations have any validity, they at least offer another perspective on the origins of men's and women's differences. In essence, psychoanalytic theory argues that some of the differences between men and women may not result merely from the direct influence of biological or sociological realities, but also from the individual's psychological perception of biological and sociological realities.* Psychoanalytic theory views both the family

* The main focus of Freud and his successors is on the developmental process by which differences between men and women become established and manifested. Freud would not necessarily argue

role and structure and the child's sexual anatomy as crucial influences on sexual identity and role. Though the biological factors are not necessarily direct determinants, they are seen as always exerting a powerful influence through the child's anatomy. It is not clear how fruitful the psychoanalytic approach will be to the future research into the origins of men's and women's differences.

Experimental
Psychology

To conclude, experimental methods of research have clearly uncovered many factors underlying the differences between men and women. Many of these factors are biological ones, as distinguished from factors which flow from processes of socialization or cultural conditioning. The six methods surveyed here promise to yield important data in the future.⁸² As investigators refine these techniques and learn how to combine them (e.g., performing a cross-cultural study longitudinally), they should be able to cast more light on the origins of the differences between men and women.

This survey of the experimental data provides a helpful perspective on the results that will come from future research. Those who wish to minimize the differences between men and women often state the results by saying that science (meaning usually experimental psychology) has *only* established the existence of a limited number of biologically based differences. This statement is true, although it is also true that the differences that have been established are of considerable importance for the human personality. However, the immature state of current research allows us to predict with considerable confidence that more differences will be established and more biological bases will be discovered in the future. Of course, the influence of socialization and cultural conditioning on the differences between men and women will also be highlighted. Nonetheless, we can expect that the direction of research will yield more experimentally confirmed differences between men and women and will establish more the biological origins for them.

Limitations of the Experimental Research

Like the descriptive literature discussed earlier, experimental psychology has advantages and limitations when applied to the study of the differences

against the possibility of biological factors predisposing males and females toward particular views of anatomy and social roles. Nonetheless, this biological issue is not of greatest concern for Freud, nor is it one on which his successors in psychoanalysis would easily agree.

between men and women. The chief strong points of the experimental studies are their sensitivity to causal factors and their use of measurements and test designs which yield clear quantitative data. However, the experimental research also contains some weaknesses and limitations. Some of these limitations are important to note.

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In general, experimental research into the differences between men and women is at an early stage of development.⁸³ Experimental psychology as a whole is probably the least developed of the sciences, and within experimental psychology the study of men's and women's differences has received comparatively little attention. Indeed, much of the available data on men's and women's differences has been drawn from studies primarily concerned with other questions. Also, many experimental studies investigating possible differences between men and women have yielded both conflicting and inconclusive results. Such conflicts may mean that the hypothesized differences do not exist, or they may reflect serious conceptual and methodological problems blocking the discovery of significant data. The experimental research must be assessed with these limitations in mind.

Within this experimental research, the physiological studies currently provide the most reliable and useful data. Problems of measurement are reduced, as are problems involved in detecting underlying causes. Other experimental studies, especially those aimed at measuring social behavior and emotional states, suffer from weaknesses, most of which revolve around the problem of conceptualization. How does one define such elusive and subjective terms as passivity, dependence, emotionality, and empathy? In addition, the investigator must solve serious difficulties in operationalizing such terms—that is, he must define a qualitative category in quantitative terms. For example, an investigator who wants to study nurturance behavior in men must define “nurturance” in such a way that it refers to observable and measurable behavior. What is nurturant behavior in men? Obviously there is much male behavior which the investigator could define as nurturant. The results of the experiment will depend on his choice of behavior and his choice of method of operationalizing his definition. Furthermore, emotional dispositions and underlying motivations are difficult to connect to standard behaviors. Eleanor Maccoby and Carol Jacklin make the point in this way:

Suppose it should prove true that children of one sex are more likely than those of the other to cry when the mother or father leaves them alone. Are these children more “attached” to the parent or more frightened of being

alone? Or do they show more intense attachment behavior because they become frightened more easily? We have encountered frequent instances in which sex differences at an overt level of behavior are attributed to dispositions that are thought to underlie them.⁸⁴

In other words, an experimental study may succeed at accurately measuring external behavior but then fail to connect it to the appropriate emotions and motives.

Limitations of
the Experimental
Research

Another example of experimental problems of conceptualization arises in connection with “trait-patterns.” One of the most helpful insights contributed by the descriptive literature is the observation that the individual traits of men and women differ partly because of the differing pattern or organization of individual traits within men and women. Experimental methods are usually highly analytical, carefully separating one variable from another. This method decreases the chances that broad overall patterns will be observed.*

To summarize, the experimental literature offers much data to illuminate the differences between men and women. However, the experimental findings must be approached with caution, for they are often sketchy and sometimes contradictory. This caution should also make one more open to other sources of data, especially the descriptive literature.

FINAL COMMENTS

This review of the current states of descriptive and experimental studies of the individual differences between men and women leads to several broad conclusions. The data shows that men and women differ emotionally, intellectually, and in their typical approaches to social relationships. Several of these differences are at least partially rooted in biological factors. Men and women also differ in the pattern or structure of their psychological makeup. The social scientific data indicates clearly and decisively that men and women are not identical and interchangeable units.

It is now possible to ask once again if the evidence from the social sciences about the individual differences between men and women fits with the scriptural role structure discussed in previous chapters. Before

* As Bardwick writes, “Another great difficulty is that the scientific method forces us to analyze one or a very few characteristics at a time, separating out one factor in order to see it more clearly. As a result, I sometimes have the feeling that the psychological data on human beings bears little resemblance to people we know” (3). See also Carlson, 275–276.

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this question can be answered, another body of evidence from the social sciences must be examined. These are studies of the patterns of men's and women's roles in various cultures, and the relationship between these social patterns and the individual psychological differences among men and women. After examining this literature, it will be more possible to assess how the social sciences can contribute to an understanding of a sound approach to men's and women's roles in the modern world. It will also be more possible to determine the relationship between the evidence from the social sciences and the teachings of the scripture.

Finally, this review of the individual differences between men and women provides a perspective on the value of the common views of these differences mentioned earlier. Does this "conventional wisdom" receive support from the social sciences? Are women "warmer" and more emotional than men? Are men "tougher" than women, and less sexually self-controlled? And so forth. The common-sense view seems generally based on truth, but none of the popular ways of describing men's and women's differences finds uncritical and unqualified endorsement from the social sciences. The common-sense view notes actual observed differences in the ways men and women behave, but its conceptual framework is too simplified. For example, women's emotions function differently than men's emotions, but it is not accurate to say that women are more emotional than men. Significant differences between men and women do exist. However, they must be carefully defined and described if they are to pass the test of scientific scrutiny.

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S DIFFERENCES ▶
SOCIAL STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

MEN AND WOMEN differ as individuals. They differ in the way they manifest traits such as aggression and nurturance, and they also differ in the way these traits are structured. These differences have been described and documented in Chapter Sixteen.

Such individual differences—in traits and trait-patterns—are very useful, but they are only some of the many differences between men and women. Men and women cannot be adequately described, analyzed, and tested solely as individuals outside of their social context. One must also study the regularities men and women exhibit when engaged in the social fabric of daily life. These observations will yield a new set of important differences between men and women—differences in social structural characteristics. These are differences which emerge in the course of social interactions in groups. They are not always visible in observations of individual behavior.

Social structural differences between men and women have been studied in two main ways: cross-cultural studies and psychological or sociological studies of group behavior. The cross-cultural study involves description of those roles and expressions of roles consistently assigned to men and women in all cultures. Anthropological field studies and historical sources reveal a large number of cross-cultural uniformities in the patterning of men's and women's roles. These uniformities show that men and women consistently differ, not only in individual traits and trait-patterning, but also in the structure of their social relations. The second type of investigation of social structural characteristics is the psychological or sociological study of group behavior. These studies show that all-male groups, all-female

groups, and mixed groups differ considerably in their internal structure. In addition, ethological data obtained by methods similar to the two main types of investigation confirm these studies of human social structural characteristics. In short, all of this data together draws a helpful picture of the way men and women differ in their social structural characteristics.

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This chapter will examine data drawn from both cross-cultural studies and studies of group behavior as well as data drawn from ethological research. It will then present the various hypotheses which have been offered as explanations for this data. Finally the chapter will review the last two chapters and summarize the implications of social scientific research for a Christian approach to men's and women's roles in the twentieth century.

The Social Structural Patterns of Men and Women

Consistent Cross-Cultural Patterns

KNOWLEDGE of other cultures has increased dramatically in the past hundred years. Anthropologists have studied the cultures of primitive peoples extensively, while the discipline of archaeology has developed methods of studying the earliest human societies. The new knowledge has often conveyed an impression of the stunning diversity of human life. What Western society has regarded as normative and universal often proves to be a unique practice or custom of Western culture. One example of this is the supernatural and corporate mentalities of primitive peoples.¹ Primitive peoples tend to view the world without clear-cut distinctions between the natural and supernatural and between the individual and the community. The modern Western mind finds it difficult to grasp this way of looking at the world, but the obstacle is largely the individualistic, naturalistic Western cultural mentality—a point of view which is not shared by other peoples. Similarly, studies have demonstrated a wide variety of expressions of family life from culture to culture, many of them drastically different from the independent nuclear family system of technological society.² Some family systems are polygamous, some monogamous, and a few polyandrous. Some societies trace descent through the father, some through the mother, while others trace it bilaterally. In some cultures a newly married couple lives with the man's family (patrilocal residence); in others they live with the woman's family (matrilocal residence); in still others they immediately establish their own residence (neolocal residence). Significant variations can also

be observed in the expression of men's and women's roles. An activity (for example, painting) reserved for one sex in one society may be forbidden to that sex in another, and practiced by both sexes in still another.³ Cultures also differ in the degree of female involvement they permit in political and economic affairs and the degree of male involvement in domestic duties such as childrearing. It is no wonder that anthropological evidence can create an impression of unlimited cultural diversity.

Consistent
Cross-Cultural
Patterns

Nevertheless, some human practices remain the same. Though cultures develop men's and women's roles differently, a careful examination of the anthropological evidence reveals that several significant underlying patterns can be discovered in all human societies. Four patterns appear to be especially significant:

1. *Sexual division of labor.* In every known society, past or present, the primary tasks of men and women are different. In his review of the anthropological literature related to men's and women's roles, Roy D'Andrade describes the pattern clearly: "One well-documented finding about behavioral sex differences is that men and women not only tend to perform different activities in every culture, but that men tend to perform particular types of activities and women to perform others. This division of labor is especially sharp for subsistence and other economic activities."⁴ Though the specific tasks assigned to men and women are not completely consistent from culture to culture (much consistency does exist), the fact that men and women perform different functions is a cross-cultural universal.
2. *Complementary roles in the communal and domestic spheres.* Men bear primary responsibility for the larger community. Women bear primary responsibility for domestic management and rearing of young children. Every known society, past or present, assigns to the men a primary responsibility for the government of the larger groupings within the society, and assigns to the women a primary responsibility for the daily maintenance of the household unit and the care of the younger children.⁵ As stated by Michelle Rosaldo, "... an opposition between 'domestic' and 'public' provides the basis of a structural framework necessary to identify and explore the place of male and female in psychological, cultural, social, and economic aspects of human life. 'Domestic,' as used here, refers to those minimal institutions and modes of activity that are organized immediately around one or more mothers and their children; 'public' refers to activities, institutions, and forms

of association that link, rank, organize, or subsume particular mother-child groups. Though this opposition will be more or less salient in different social and ideological systems, it does provide a universal framework for conceptualizing the activities of the sexes.”⁶ The degree of differentiation of male and female responsibility among communal/household lines varies from culture to culture. In almost all cultures, the father of a family or a father-surrogate exercises an overall responsibility for the family, and involves himself personally in the household life. In some cultures, women are allowed to participate actively in economic and political affairs. However, the general underlying pattern emerges universally regardless of the variations in expression.

3. *Some form of female subordination to the male.*⁷ In every known society, past or present, the female is in some sense subordinate to the male. As stated by Sherry Ortner, “I would flatly assert that we find women subordinate to men in every known society. The search for a genuinely egalitarian, let alone matriarchal, culture has proved fruitless.”⁸ This subordination is found on two levels. First, the females are subordinate to the male governing of the communal structures. The “public” sphere, which includes the exercise of overall governmental authority, is the domain of males in every known society. Secondly, females are also customarily subordinate to males on a more personal level within the family. In all known societies, women are personally subordinate to a husband, father, uncle, or other male figure.⁹ This second type of subordination is usually minimal in societies in which adult males play only a peripheral role in family life, but it usually has at least some symbolic expression even in these societies. Personal subordination in the home appears to be related to communal subordination in the larger society. If the men are to effectively govern the society as a whole, they must also have some authority over the women who are managing the household units which make up the society. Once again, cultures express female subordination differently. However, the underlying pattern of female subordination is the same.
4. *Cultural expression of gender differences between men and women.* Every known culture, past or present, includes some expressions of gender differences between men and women in its customs and traditions. Men and women dress differently, develop different character traits, and express respect with different customs. As stated by van den Berghe, “It seems that virtually all societies, not content with the moderate amount of sexual dimorphism with which we are born,

further stress sex role differentiation through highly visible social means. Clothing styles stand out most obviously, but even in societies in which nudity or near nudity is the rule, gender differences are visibly expressed through body adornment such as tattooing, scarification, jewelry, tooth mutilation, and the like. . . . Beyond differences in dress and body adornment, sex roles are also symbolically differentiated in most societies through a combination of rituals, taboos (for example, menstrual or post partum), spatial segregation (separate sleeping quarters, men's clubs), and rules of etiquette (for instance, 'chivalry' and 'gallantry' in the Western tradition).¹⁰ Some modern societies which have an ideological commitment to reduce male-female differentiation try to keep these cultural expressions to a minimum. For example, in China men and women dress in nearly identical ways.¹¹ However, even these modern societies include some ways of expressing gender differences between men and women.

Consistent
Cross-Cultural
Patterns

Some people respond skeptically to these assertions because they have a vague notion that some societies have been "matriarchal"—that is, the governing authorities have been women. However, anthropologists unanimously dismiss matriarchy as a characteristic of any known society, present or past. As stated by Rosaldo, "The issues involved here are complex, but the evidence of contemporary anthropology gives scant support to an argument for matriarchy."¹² There are two main reasons for the persistent confusion about matriarchy. First, some primitive tribes have myths which tell of a time in their ancient past when women ruled. Anthropologists now generally regard these myths as justifications for some current aspect of the tribal life, such as male authority, and not as historically reliable tradition.¹³ Myths about Amazonian warrior women are also considered unhistorical by anthropologists. Secondly, anthropologists once used the term "matriarchy" to describe societies which are today called matrilineal or matrifocal.¹⁴ Matrilineal societies are those which trace lineage through the mother and not the father. Matrifocal societies are those in which the female role receives special attention and honor. Modern anthropologists no longer use the term "matriarchal" to describe these societies precisely because it implies that the women of the society actually govern the overall life of the group. In fact, men are the overall governing authorities in both matrilineal and matrifocal societies. Thus, the idea that matriarchal societies did or do exist is a popular misunderstanding, and a notion that modern anthropologists reject.

Diversity of Cross-Cultural Patterns

Men's and
Women's
Differences ▸
Social Structural
Characteristics

While there is substantial anthropological evidence for these four universal patterns of men's and women's roles, one must still be impressed at the great variety of ways societies develop their patterns of men's and women's roles. Often this impression of variety does not concern the underlying approaches to men's and women's roles, but rather the distinctive elements of cultural expression in different societies. For example, customs of respect and honor between men and women are a feature of most cultures, but the particular expressions can be utterly different. A bow, a deferential silence, a recited prayer, a gift—all these can be expressions of respect in the symbolic language of different cultures. Like the spoken language, these symbols of respect will seem utterly different to the observer who does not know what they mean. However, two very different actions in two different cultures may express an identical social role or relationship, just as the same meaning can be expressed in two very different languages.

Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that diverse cultural expressions do not explain all the variety among various cultures in the fashioning of men's and women's roles. At times different customs do express different content; cultures do sometimes differ substantively from one another in their approaches to men's and women's roles. The four patterns described above always emerge, but with different emphasis. The diversity of cultural patterns for the roles of men and women is caused by the diversity of geographic, social, economic, political, and ideological forces operating within a society. These forces never totally erase the four cultural universals: sexual division of labor; different spheres of responsibility; female subordination and male government; and cultural expressions of distinct roles for men and women. However, these forces do determine the emphasis each of the four patterns will receive. Anthropologists have identified five environmental factors which appear especially significant. These are: (1) type of descent group, (2) type of economic system, (3) male absenteeism, (4) social complexity (including the scope and complexity of governmental institutions and technological development), and (5) religious and ideological commitment. To understand how societies develop the four universal patterns of men's and women's roles, these five factors must be understood.

1. Descent Group Structure ▸ The nature of a society's descent group structure greatly affects its pattern of men's and women's roles. Matrilineal societies—those which trace descent through the mother—tend to place

less emphasis on male authority and often foster stronger personal relationships among women than patrilineal societies.¹⁵ This is especially true when the residence pattern is matrilineal—where husband and wife live with the wife’s family. In such societies, the woman’s brother rather than her husband often becomes the key bearer of familial authority and position, though the woman does not live with him. The matrilineal, matrilineal system promotes female solidarity because a new wife will remain in the same household as her mother and sisters. The system avoids the competitive female relationships which exist under the patrilineal system when a new wife enters the household of her husband’s mother. However, the matrilineal system has other relationship conflicts caused by awkward and inconvenient organization of authority relationships, and is therefore far less common than the patrilineal descent system.¹⁶ The authority of males in the family and the larger society still exists in the matrilineal system. It merely operates through different and more awkward channels than in patrilineal systems.

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2. Economic System ▷ A society’s economic system also influences its form of men’s and women’s roles.¹⁷ A subsistence economy which demands that men work together in close-knit collective groupings usually leads to a greater emphasis on male authority and more explicit customs of respect. Cultures which rely primarily on agriculture or pastoral labor usually fall within this category. Those forms of subsistence which demand less male interaction and cooperation and more interaction and cooperation among women and between men and women usually lead to a less intense focus on male authority. Horticulture is an example of such an economic system.¹⁸ The locus of ownership and control of the key economic materials of a society also influences the shape of men’s and women’s roles. In some societies, women formally own land, houses, and other domestic property and play an important role in the larger economy. All of these economic factors seem to correlate highly with the type of descent grouping found in a society. That is, societies which depend heavily upon horticulture or those in which women own domestic property are often matrilineal in descent group structure. However, it must be emphasized again that “matrilineal” does not mean “matriarchal.” Regardless of the type of descent group structure or economic system, males still hold the overall governing positions, and the four universal patterns still exist.

3. Male Absenteeism ▷ A third factor influencing a society’s form of men’s and women’s roles is male absenteeism.¹⁹ In some societies most men

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are regularly absent from the family for extended periods of time. The economic structure of the society may require the men to travel long distances to work, and therefore to regularly reside apart from their families, as in some Indonesian tribes.²⁰ The men may engage in so much warfare that they are gone much of the time, as among the Iroquois or the ancient Spartans.²¹ External pressures may cause a form of social disorganization in which the men no longer assume family roles, as in the Black American ghetto culture.²² When the men are absent—for whatever reason—women must assume many of the male roles within the family. Female dominance and aggressiveness appear to increase in such situations. The men still govern the group as a whole, but their relationships with their women and families are brittle and unstable.

4. Social Complexity ▸ A fourth factor influencing the form of men's and women's roles is the degree and scope of social complexity. This factor is actually a number of intimately related sociological, economic, political, and technological factors. The generalization which appears to emerge from these factors is this: The more complex the society, the more pronounced are the four universal patterns of men's and women's roles. The simpler the social system, the less pronounced are those patterns. (It should be pointed out immediately that the latter phase of technological society represents one significant exception to this generalization.)*

At least one reason for this correlation can be easily understood. Cultures with very rudimentary forms of social organization simply lack a means to strongly and clearly express distinct roles. Eskimo culture is an example. Elements of distinct and complementary roles are present, but, in a society so close to the margin of physical survival, practical consider-

* In one sense, all human social behavior is complex. However, societies differ in levels of complexity. These levels are functions of such variables as size, diversity of roles, and level of economic production. The complexity of economic systems ranges from small group subsistence at the most primitive level, through economies based on trade and commerce, to mass production and retail economies—the most complex. Similarly, governmental systems vary in complexity. A typical continuum of increasing complexity would be: tribal government, tribal confederation, the feudal kingdom, the centralized kingdom, and the modern nation-state. Residential patterns vary in complexity in a similar continuum: from societies based on spatially distinct kinship groupings, to those based on the village, the town, the city, the metropolis, and finally the megalopolis. Usually complexity in one social sphere correlates highly with complexity in the others. Those societies with subsistence economies are also likely to have tribal government and residential systems based on kinship groupings. The societies with the most complex economic systems usually have nation-state government and a megalopolis residential system. Thus whole societies can be roughly compared on a scale of social complexity. This concept underlies the above generalization: With the important exception of later technological society, high social complexity correlates with a strong expression of the four universal patterns of men's and women's roles, while low social complexity correlates with a weaker expression of these roles.

ations take precedence over expressions of role difference.²³ More complex societies with more developed spheres of social and economic life are better equipped to express complementary sex roles. As will be seen later, complex “traditional” (but non-technological) societies have found great practical use for distinct and complementary sex roles.

In fact, the absence of a strong correlation between social complexity and distinct roles in advanced technological society can perhaps be partly understood in precisely these practical terms. Distinct sex roles serve useful functions in advanced non-technological traditional societies, but their advantage is less obvious in technological societies. There are few practical advantages to large families in an economy shaped by advanced technology. The services rendered by the large bureaucratic institutions of technological society have also replaced the family’s traditional educational, welfare, and health functions. Thus patterns such as division of labor by sex, male authority, complementary roles, and expressions of respect and deference fulfill fewer functions in technological society than they do in pre-technological or nascent technological societies.²⁴

Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo, an anthropologist, has proposed a theory which promises a comprehensive explanation of the relationship between social complexity and men’s and women’s roles.²⁵ Rosaldo suggests that there is a correlation between female subordination and the degree of separation between the public and private spheres of a society’s life. She suggests that female subordination is stronger and relationships among women less cohesive in those societies which demonstrate a greater separation of public and private spheres; roles are less distinct, male authority is less emphasized, and female relationships are more amiable and durable in those societies which tend to merge public and private spheres. In Rosaldo’s terms, “public sphere” means the world of religion, business, politics, and communal life, while “private sphere” means the life of a family or household.

Rosaldo suggests that as societies divide into distinct and increasingly separate public and private spheres, men tend to predominate in the public sphere and women tend to predominate in the private sphere. The essence of her theory is that men’s and women’s roles vary according to the relationship of the household to the larger communal life of the society. Primitive societies tend to merge the household with the public sphere, and the patterns of men’s and women’s roles tend to be similarly merged. These patterns tend to be more distinct in societies which sharply distinguish the household from the public sphere of social life.

Rosaldo’s theory may also explain the apparent anomaly—technological society. In most primitive societies, public and private spheres are merged

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because the public sphere hardly exists. In more complex societies, the public communal sphere expands in significance, and becomes distinct from the world of family. Among the middle class in the nascent technological society of Victorian England, the public and private spheres became almost completely detached from one another, though the private domestic sphere maintained some strength. This gulf between the two spheres may explain the traditional Victorian bourgeois approach to men's and women's roles, which represents one of the more rigid cultural manifestations of the four universal patterns.²⁶ However, as technological society develops, the private domestic sphere begins to lose its vitality as the public sphere expands and dominates more of human social existence. Ironically, technological society and primitive society both achieve a unity of public and private spheres. Primitive society does so by diminishing the public sphere to a minimal level. Technological society achieves a similar unity by diminishing the private domestic sphere to a minimal level. Those functions once assigned to the private sphere—education, health care, insurance, and so forth—are transferred to the public world of mass institutions. The anomalous position of advanced technological society may therefore be explained by the correlation between social complexity and men's and women's roles in the public and private spheres.

5. Religion and Ideology ▶ A fifth factor influencing the shape of men's and women's roles in a society is the presence of culturally sanctioned religious or ideological commitments.²⁷ Some traditional religious systems, such as Islam, buttress a particular social structure and pattern of men's and women's roles. When such a religion is a vital and dynamic element in the culture, there will be little radical variation from the prescribed social pattern. For example, a strong form of female subordination and distinct sexual roles arises in most societies which hold to a traditional form of Islam. By contrast, modern ideologies such as Socialism and Communism include a commitment to equality in the relations between men and women, a commitment most often interpreted as meaning the elimination of distinct social roles. Such ideologies can lead to considerable changes in family structure, as has occurred in the Soviet Union, China, and the Israeli Kibbutzim.

Descent group structure, economic system, male absenteeism, social complexity, and religious or ideological commitment all influence the pattern of men's and women's roles in a society. An understanding of these

influences is important for several reasons. First, these factors must be taken into account in any effort to apply scriptural teaching on men's and women's roles to modern societies. The remaining chapters of this book will be largely concerned with examining the environment of the modern world in relation to men's and women's roles. Special attention will be paid to the influence of technological society and modern ideologies. Secondly, an understanding of these influences explains much about the great variety of cultural approaches to men's and women's roles. Such variety is the inevitable consequence of variety in economic, sociological, political, technological, and ideological systems. Thirdly and finally, an understanding of these influences places the four universal patterns of men's and women's roles in their proper context. In many societies the descent group structure, economic system, degree of male absenteeism, level of social complexity, and ideological commitment do not favor the expression of these four patterns. In fact, one could even say that these factors at times actively work against the expression of sexual division of labor, division of sphere, female subordination, and the development of distinctive dress, character traits, and customs of honor and respect. Nevertheless, these patterns always appear; they tenaciously resist extinction. They appear in all societies, though sometimes in a subdued form. The strength of these patterns can best be appreciated in the light of the environmental forces which work against them.

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The Strength of the Cross-Cultural Patterns

The tenacity of these four patterns of men's and women's roles in the midst of a hostile environment is especially visible in the light of opposing ideology. The Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, and the Israeli Kibbutzim have all embraced radical programs intended to bring social equality among men and women.²⁸ In these societies, Socialist or Communist ideology have at one time or another directly attacked each of the four universal patterns—division of labor by sex, complementary roles in the communal and domestic spheres, female subordination, and the cultural expression of men's and women's roles. Indeed, in important respects, men's and women's roles in these societies have been changed. Men and women in these societies live much differently today than they did in pre-Communist China or Russia or in traditional Jewish society. The changes have been particularly marked in China, for women and their social role had little respect in traditional Chinese society in comparison to

other traditional societies. While Chinese Communist propaganda about the “bitter past” cannot be accepted on face value, it is certain that Chinese women no longer occupy such a role today. Significant, though not quite so striking, changes in the roles of men and women have also occurred in the Soviet Union and the Kibbutzim. However, despite these changes, the four universal patterns are preserved intact in all three societies. Neither Russia, China, nor the Kibbutzim have eliminated a sexual differentiation of labor. Women have greater job opportunities, but a division of labor still exists. Men still dominate the higher echelons of government, education, and the professions; women still dominate the care of children, though sometimes within a childcare institution rather than the family. There is still some sense of female subordination, though the ideological stand continues to assail it. There are still cultural expressions of men's and women's roles. It might be added that modern revolutionary societies such as Russia, China, and the Kibbutzim are better equipped than any previous societies to succeed in efforts to eradicate traditional social patterns. They possess new tools of propaganda such as mass state-controlled education, a new ideology which seeks to replace traditional social controls such as religion, and economic development plans which disrupt patterns of traditional life. Nevertheless, the universal patterns of men's and women's roles reassert themselves. They appear even in the midst of those societies which are earnestly seeking to undermine them.

The Kibbutzim present an especially important subject for study.²⁹ Their potential to successfully reshape the roles of men and women is greater than either Communist China or the Soviet Union. The Kibbutz groupings are small, and thus are simpler and more manageable than a nation-state. Membership in the Kibbutzim is voluntary; and those who dislike the lifestyle can (and do) leave at any time. This ensures that the Kibbutz members will have a consistent and firm commitment to the ideals of the Kibbutz. Coercion is almost never necessary. Serious social problems rarely occur. The Kibbutzim need not deal with political subversion, criminality or insanity. Most men and women joining a Kibbutz have broken previous ties and are explicitly seeking to create a new society. Thus the Kibbutzim are in an excellent position to immediately establish a radical social policy regarding the family. The early founders of the Kibbutzim theoretically and practically dismantled the family unit. Children were reared corporately in common childcare facilities. Men and women shared an equal proportion of the labor of the Kibbutz and everyone had equal opportunity to share in the overall government of the group.

The Kibbutzim are also important because social scientists have studied them adequately. Western social scientists do not have accurate and thorough data on the social life of Communist countries, especially Communist China. Governments of these countries generally forbid firsthand sociological study by Westerners, and official statistics and information are notoriously unreliable. Indeed, even if sociologists could freely study Russian and Chinese family life, the sheer size of the samples would complicate the researcher's task. In contrast, the Kibbutzim present miniature societies suitable for study and open to objective research. They are the best laboratories for assessing the success of a powerful and determined attempt to alter the universal patterns of men's and women's roles.

Strength of the
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In their book *Women in the Kibbutz*, Lionel Tiger and Joseph Shepher report on their research into the current social structure of the Kibbutzim. Their research has been extensive, employing computer analysis and other sociological techniques. Their results are extremely significant. Tiger and Shepher show that the universal patterns have once again appeared despite the Kibbutzim's commitment to eliminate them. A division of labor exists in most occupations.³⁰ Certain tasks are viewed as male, others as female. Men hold most high political positions. Women prefer to care for children, especially their own children. The women have begun to pressure the Kibbutzim authorities—mostly men—to allow greater parental involvement in childrearing. The men appear to resist this trend and to reassert the Kibbutz ideal of eliminating family life and the distinctive roles of men and women. But the Kibbutz women persist. As Tiger and Shepher state it, "They (the women) have acted against the principles of their socialization and ideology, against the wishes of the men of their communities, against the economic interest of the Kibbutzim, in order to be able to devote more time and energy to private maternal activities rather than to economic and political public ones. Obviously these women have minds of their own; despite obstacles, they are trying to accomplish what women elsewhere have been periodically urged to reject by critics of traditional female roles."³¹

It can therefore be confidently asserted that several important patterns of men's and women's roles have been consistently observed in every culture yet studied. The qualification "yet studied" is added for scientific precision, but in fact the evidence implies that these patterns have existed in every human society. One should not overlook the implications of these universal patterns. A later section of this chapter will fully treat the issue of the origins of these patterns, but it can be observed here that the universality

and tenacity of these patterns implies that some powerful underlying force is behind them. As Sherry Ortner, a feminist scholar with no “biodeeterminist” sympathies, states it, “The universality of female subordination, the fact that it exists within every type of social and economic arrangement and in societies of every degree of complexity, indicates to me that we are up against something very profound, very stubborn, something we cannot root out simply by rearranging a few tasks and roles in the social system, or even by reordering the whole economic structure.”³² In short, the unanimity and strength of the data concerning universal social structural patterns makes it one of the most significant areas in the study of the differences between men and women.

Studies of Group Interaction

Sociological and psychological studies of group interaction provide another useful source of data for the study of the social structural characteristics of men and women. These studies are usually conducted on groups within a particular culture, though some include cross-cultural samples. The aim of these studies is to better understand the nature of human social interaction in various types of groupings. These studies have not been conducted as extensively as anthropological studies of the four universal patterns. However, they do strongly suggest that men and women differ from one another in the way they relate in many social contexts.

Studies of group interaction have been conducted in two types of settings: the family and groups of men or groups of women. The evidence from the second type of study indicates that men relate to men differently than women relate to women.³³ All-male groups tend to be larger than all-female groups. From an early age, males tend to form large “gangs,” while females tend to form smaller groups based on intimate friendship. Men also tend to establish more hierarchical order in their relationships than women appear to do. In all-male groups, leadership roles are assumed more readily, submitted to more eagerly, and executed more effectively. This propensity for hierarchical order is probably responsible in part for the greater average size of the male groupings. Finally, all-male groups appear to involve more stable commitment and loyalty than all-female groups. They are more continuous over time and also tend to be more important to the lives of the participants.

The studies of family relationships also indicate that men relate to family groupings differently than women relate to these groupings.³⁴ Females

tend to be more oriented to people they can care for, such as children and the needy, and to people who can care for them, such as husbands, fathers, and other personal authority figures.* On the other hand, males are more oriented to the male peer group. As a consequence of this difference in social orientation, females tend to be more intensely loyal than the adult male members to the small care-oriented group. Male loyalty tends to be divided between the same-sex peer group and the small care group. Finally, some evidence shows that females prefer male authority to female authority. If so, then the small care group drawing the greatest female loyalty will ideally contain at least one adult male. (This assertion is consistent with the universal patterns of men's and women's roles discussed earlier.) To sum up, the data suggests that the small care group—the family—is the locus of greatest female loyalty and commitment, whereas the male divides his loyalty between the family and his male peer group.

Studies of
Group
Interaction

This presentation of the conclusions of group interaction research is an attempt to concisely summarize the results of many studies of ostensibly unrelated behaviors. One of the best sources for this evidence is the book *The Psychology of Sex Differences* by Eleanor Maccoby and Carol Jacklin. This volume, published in 1974, is a comprehensive and detailed survey of the experimental literature in regard to the differences between men and women. The authors' conclusions sometimes seem to be determined by factors other than the data itself; nonetheless, their basic summary of the data proves very helpful.³⁶ Particularly helpful are their observations about the existence of social structural patterns in the research they are reviewing.

Though Maccoby and Jacklin point out many of these social structural

* Men and women appear to differ from one another in the way they relate to authority. As mentioned in the text, men tend to form large, stable groups characterized by a pronounced hierarchical organization, or, in other words, an elaborated system of authority and subordination. Therefore, the relationship of "dominant/subordinate" among males occurs within the context of a large peer group ordered and organized for the purpose of maintaining solidarity and achieving some functional goal. Many scholars see these hierarchies as connected in some way to male aggressiveness; the system may normalize and contain the competitive dominance and achievement-striving of males in relation to one another, and at the same time free them to express some form of aggression toward threatening elements external to the group.³⁵

On the other hand, female authority relationships occur within a very different context and involve a different set of dynamics. The relationship usually occurs within a smaller, mixed grouping. In addition, the other member of the relationship is not a peer in the same way as in male groups (although among men the person in authority is usually older, difference in age is not so important). When females are subordinate, the person in authority is most often either a member of the opposite sex (husband, father, uncle, brother, etc.), or a female who is much older. Also, the relationship is less characterized by the containment and channeling of aggression, and more by the desire to care for and be cared for, to provide for and be provided for, to protect and be protected.

patterns, these patterns do not always emerge clearly in their analysis. The reason may be that their basic framework of analysis is mainly oriented to individual trait differences. They do not often explicitly adopt a social structural perspective in examining their data, although social structural patterns of men's and women's differences can be discerned in the data.

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A good example, and one which is relevant to the current discussion, is dependence behavior. Maccoby and Jacklin examine their data on dependence behavior from an individual trait perspective: they ask, "Are women more dependent than men?"³⁷ They answer, "Probably not." The data does strongly indicate that both men and women are dependent on personal relationships, and both are affected by social pressure. In this sense, women do not seem *more* dependent than men. However, the data also shows that men and women differ significantly in the type of dependence they prefer, and in the patterns of their expression of dependence. The most important of these differences are along social structural lines. Males are more dependent in their relationships with male peers; females are more dependent in their relationships with authority figures. Men associate strongly with their male peer group and are highly subject to the influence of this group. Women prefer smaller groups, and are more subject to the influence of an authority figure. It is clear that this is an important difference between men and women, one which is strongly related to the four universal patterns of men's and women's roles discussed earlier.

Another example of an important social structural difference noted by Maccoby and Jacklin concerns aggressive behavior. As we saw in Chapter Sixteen, men consistently exhibit higher levels of aggression than women. But an equally important finding is that particular configurations of social relationships affect the way men and women express aggression. Male aggression is rarely directed against females, but is instead usually directed against other males.³⁸ The presence of females in a social situation also affects the way men express aggression. Some element in the dynamic of male-female relationships inhibits aggression, and some element in the dynamic of all-male groups tends to release it. In other words, a social structural element is at work in the expression of this trait. This social structural element is at least as important in the understanding of aggressive behavior as is an understanding of the trait itself.

Maccoby and Jacklin detect similar social structural differences in the studies of almost every personality variable which they survey. The key variable causing different patterns of social expression between men and women appears to be the nature of the group confronted: Is it a same-sex

group or a mixed group? Does it include an authority figure or people in need? Such social structural differences between men and women appear in studies of compliance, dominance, affiliation, activity rates, achievement orientation, competition, and task and person orientation.³⁹

Thus the data drawn from studies of social interaction highlights the importance of social structural characteristics. As mentioned earlier, this data can be organized and summarized in the form of observations concerning peer relationships and family relationships.

Social Structural
Patterns of Men
and Women

Evidence from Ethology

Cross-cultural studies and group interaction studies provide most of the evidence which is useful for understanding the social structural characteristics of men and women. However, a new and expanding discipline known as ethology also provides helpful supporting evidence.⁴⁰

Ethology is the study of the social behavior of non-human animal species. It utilizes methods similar to those examined in the previous pages of this chapter—comparative cross-species studies and group interaction studies. Those who relate ethological data to human social life are especially interested in the study of primates, for primate species resemble human beings more closely than do other species. Many connections have been made between human social behavior and primate social behavior. Nonetheless, the ethological evidence as a whole does not contribute anything strikingly new to an understanding of social structural patterns in humans. Its value consists mainly in the support that it gives to the evidence from human studies.

As one would expect, the ethological studies reveal a great diversity of social structures among animal societies. Variety is found in the amount and complexity of social behavior as well as in the particular structural arrangements from species to species.⁴¹ However, several nearly uniform patterns underlie this variety among animal societies, just as they do among human societies. Among mammals, five significant patterns should be noted:

1. *A directive, aggressive, protective male role.*⁴² In most species the males assume a position of overall direction and protection. This characteristic is strongly pronounced among primate species, but it is common in many other species as well.
2. *Distinct male and female peer groupings.*⁴³ Apart from the sexual relationship, males and females in many species segregate into distinct

social groupings. Once again, this pattern appears most strongly and consistently among primates, but it is present in many other species as well.

3. *Formation of male-dominance hierarchies.*⁴⁴ In many species, and in almost all primate species, the males vie with one another for leadership and the privilege of breeding with particular females. Out of this competition emerges a stable hierarchy of rank and privilege. Such a hierarchy of males often forms the core leadership of the group.
4. *A female maternal role.*⁴⁵ This may be the closest to a universal mammalian pattern. Females almost always have the primary responsibility for bearing and nurturing the young. Male nurturing behavior varies from species to species. In some species the males relate extensively to the young, while in many other species the males preserve a constant distance between themselves and offspring. However, females appear to have the primary responsibility for the young in almost all mammalian species, and in most other animal species as well.
5. *Differential maternal response to male and female offspring.*⁴⁶ This pattern has only become clear in recent studies of some primate species. Among those species studied, the female recognized a sex difference in her offspring, and proceeded to relate differently to the males and the females. It is not as yet known how widely this pattern recurs from species to species. However, the initial studies appear to be significant, since they reveal an explicit social structural characteristic of primate maternal behavior.

Each of these five patterns is directly parallel to the evidence discussed earlier concerning social structural characteristics in humans.

The ethological data can be interpreted in several ways. Many scholars, applying an evolutionary perspective, see in this data support for the theory that human social structural characteristics developed from the primitive primate social structure.⁴⁷ Whatever one's attitude toward this evolutionary hypothesis, it is clear that the ethological data, particularly from primate studies, has significance for the study of the social structural characteristics of human males and females. Analogies between primate and human behavior can sometimes help clarify patterns that are easily obscured by the complexity of human culture. In addition, when a pattern of primate behavior is found to resemble a pattern of human behavior, one can take this data as evidence that the pattern is deeply rooted in the

human biological makeup. Therefore, the ethological data adds weight to the observations of human social structure from cross-cultural and group interaction studies.

In fact, the evidence drawn from all of these sources proves remarkably consistent. The anthropological data, the data from studies of group interaction, and the ethological data provide a strong argument for paying serious and thoughtful attention to the social structural characteristics of men and women. Males and females differ in the way they behave in various social groups. These differences can be observed in consistent cross-cultural patterns, in narrower studies of human social interaction, and in studies of animal behavior. Examination of the individual psychological differences between men and women cannot uncover this important set of differences.

At this point, the question of origins arises once again, as it did in the last chapter. What lies at the root of these social structural differences between men and women? How are the social structural characteristics of human societies related to the individual physical, intellectual, and psychological differences between men and women discussed in Chapter Sixteen? These questions must now be examined.

Evidence
from Ethology

Explaining the Social Structural Data

MUCH of the effort to explain the strong and consistent evidence for the existence of important social structural differences between men and women has followed the classic nature/nurture controversy. How much human behavior is programmed into the human genetic structure, making it part of human “nature”? How much behavior is learned—through early childhood training, nurturing customs, cultural conditioning, and other social and environmental factors? The different theories ascribe different degrees of biological contribution to the social structural patterns. However, it is important to note that no theory attributes all human social structural patterns purely to non-biological environmental factors. The evidence for some degree of biological influence is too strong. However, the various theories differ in their understanding of the specific mechanisms behind the development of the social structural patterns. A key question is the relationship among the individual psychological differences (such as aggression, nurturance, and visual-spatial ability), the individual physical differences (such as muscular strength and reproductive organs), and the social structural patterns. In what way are the three connected? Can any

of these sets of differences be attributed directly to the action of one of the other sets?

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The most prominent theories which address these questions fall into four major categories. First, some social scientists explain the social structural differences as primarily caused by innate individual psychological differences. Stephen Goldberg is a prominent advocate of this view. Goldberg begins by describing the patterns of men's and women's roles found in all cultures. He then presents the evidence from experimental psychology indicating a male advantage in aggression, and discusses the likelihood that male aggression is a biological fact, rooted in male hormones. Goldberg links the two sets of data together: Universal social patterns are explained in terms of male aggression. He does not say that aggression is the only significant innate individual difference between men and women. He even indicates that there are probably other important differences, such as a female advantage in nurturance. However, Goldberg maintains that his theory holds even if aggression is the only significant innate difference between men and women. Therefore, Goldberg's formulation explains social structural differences in the following order: (1) individual psychological differences (mainly aggression); then, (2) social structural differences.

A second theory is similar to Goldberg's but adds physical differences to the chain of causation. The writings of many psychoanalysts provide the best expression of this view.⁴⁸ As described in Chapter Sixteen, psychoanalysts generally see the child's early reaction to his sexual organs as a primary factor underlying most of the social structural and trait differences between men and women. Whether the psychoanalyst emphasizes womb envy or penis envy, the explanation of psychological differences and social structural differences follows the same order. Social structural differences between men and women are caused by either a male achievement-striving rooted in his frustration at not being able to bear children, or a female attachment to motherhood as a compensation for not having a penis. The psychoanalytic explanation adds another element to Goldberg's chain: (1) physical differences (sexual organs); then, (2) psychological differences (achievement-striving or receptivity and an attachment to maternity); finally, (3) social structural differences.⁴⁹

A third theory maintains the preeminence of the physical differences but reverses the positions of the psychological and the social structural differences. Michelle Rosaldo presents this view.⁵⁰ Rosaldo claims that the universal patterns of men's and women's roles spring primarily from the physical capabilities of men and women. Primitive human societies found

that some group of people were needed to care for young children, and they assigned this role to women because they seemed best equipped physiologically to assume it. Women bore, fed, and raised the young children. In addition, the male's greater size and muscular strength equipped him to be more effective in warfare and in certain types of subsistence behavior such as hunting. All the universal characteristics of men's and women's roles derive from this primitive division of labor. The social structure which evolved from this division of labor then socialized men and women so that their personalities and inclinations fit consistently with the structure. The sequence of causation in this theory thus follows clearly and logically: (1) physical differences (female reproductive and lactative capability; male superiority in muscular strength); lead to (2) social structural differences (men provide, defend, and govern; women manage the domestic sphere and care for the young children); finally, (3) psychological differences (differences in male and female personality).

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It is worth enumerating some limitations of this third theory. First, it does not take into account the most recent psychological and ethological data indicating that males and females differ biologically in significant areas other than those related to reproduction or muscular strength. Secondly, this theory does not squarely confront or explain the four universal patterns of men's and women's roles: the sexual division of labor, male responsibility for the community and female responsibility for the household, female subordination to the male, and cultural expression of role differences. Given the immense variety of social patterns that exist among different cultures, the universality of these patterns has great significance. Such constant and tenacious patterns cannot be adequately accounted for without positing a major biological influence.* Finally, the

* Although this view adopts an evolutionary perspective to explain the temporal origin of social structural patterns, it does not deal adequately with the process of selection and adaptation which is an integral part of the evolutionary perspective. According to the theory presupposed by this third approach, the human species developed over millions of years. This development involved radical size and structure changes in the brain. Initial human social structural patterns may have originated in simple physical differences such as male muscular strength and female reproductive capability. However, the principle of selection and adaptation operating over the millions of years of evolutionary history would surely have embedded these differences more deeply in the male and female organisms. In other words, evolutionary theory would likely make these social structural differences more than a simple matter of physical factors. Evolution is more likely to cause a biological reordering of male and female psychological characteristics. For example, an evolutionary perspective would lead us to expect that the female nurturant advantage involves more than just the fact that the woman possesses breasts. It would probably include a biologically based psychological orientation which would make females adapted and inclined to a nurturant role, even when, in the course of technological development, bottles can replace breasts.

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Rosaldo view does not adequately explain why these universal patterns of male-female differences persist in technological society. In modern society, small families, greater longevity, institutionalized childcare and childrearing, a predominance of jobs not demanding great muscular strength, and a liberal ideology remove much social significance from physical differences between men and women. Yet the social patterns remain, even in the face of determined efforts by socialist societies to eliminate them. Rosaldo's hypothesis is logically constructed, and it helps point out the important impact that social structural characteristics have on individual personality. However, its ability to explain all of the evidence is limited.

Despite its serious limitations, variations of the Rosaldo view are widely held, especially among those committed to an ideological viewpoint which calls for a serious reordering of traditional sexual roles. For example, an approach similar to Rosaldo's, held by some radical feminists but rarely propounded in scholarly literature, locates the origin of the universal patterns of men's and women's roles exclusively in the male's superior muscular strength.⁵¹ According to this view, the origin of these roles was not social expedience, but the male thirst for power and prestige and his determination to prevent females from sharing this power with him. This position has a more polemical tone than the Rosaldo hypothesis. Both views are attractive to those committed to a radical feminist position. They both assert that the social structural characteristics of men and women originate in physical qualities that have little relevance in modern societies. Thus, one can easily argue that these universal social structural patterns are similarly irrelevant. In addition, both of these views perceive the psychological differences between men and women as almost totally the product of socialization and cultural conditioning. Distinct social roles, which originated either from expediency or male exploitation of females, were passed on to following generations by social processes of conditioning until the roles seemed natural, and even supernaturally preordained. Thus one can readily argue that a process of reconditioning will form male and female personalities into a pattern of roles more equitable and more expedient in modern society. One can easily see how these two explanations of male-female social structural characteristics can serve a particular ideological position. Thus, many who are committed to the ideology firmly hold to these views despite their serious limitations.

To be fair, all of the three theories which attempt to explain the social structural patterns are inadequate. All contain limitations. None seems broad enough to account for all the data. Each theory attempts to explain

weighty and detailed evidence by referring to only a few factors. This criticism affects the first theory least. Goldberg's view that social structural characteristics can be explained by individual psychological differences at least leaves room for the possibility that many individual innate psychological factors lie at the root of the social structural patterns. However, even this view appears overly narrow. One would expect that many factors of many different types would underlie social patterns which are so firmly entrenched in the human species and so complex in nature. In short, the first three theories may contribute to a more comprehensive theory, but, as theories in themselves, they seem inadequate.

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A Structuralist Hypothesis

A fourth theory of the social structural characteristics of men and women comes closer to providing a comprehensive explanation. It could be called a "structuralist" approach. In the tradition of Gestalt theorists, structuralists focus their attention primarily on larger patterns; they find fault with the reductionist tendencies of the first three theories discussed above.⁵² These three theories try to reduce social structural patterns to a simple process of causality: These patterns are *caused* by physical and psychological differences. The three theories attribute these complex and durable structural patterns to either innate psychological differences, or to the relationship between environmental demands and simple physical capabilities. By contrast, the structuralist insists that social structural patterns be understood in their own right. To do so, the structuralist avoids attributing these patterns to other causes. He tends to view the social structural patterns independently of physical and psychological differences, and perhaps even as a cause of the psychological differences.

The structuralist methodology has recently emerged as a significant intellectual force on the European continent.⁵³ Structuralism grows from the work of certain linguists in the early twentieth century, but has been applied to such disparate fields as anthropology, psychology, literary criticism, and biblical studies. Structuralists view all human communication and social life as systematic and ordered structures analogous to language. Like the Gestalt theorists, structuralists maintain that a whole cannot be adequately described simply by an analysis of its parts. They say that the structure or pattern which connects the parts is as important as the parts themselves. Many structuralists even assert that humans possess an innate structuring mechanism which produces regular cultural patterns.

For example, Noam Chomsky, one of the more important linguists of the last twenty years, theorizes that all human languages have at their base one uniform “deep structure.” He claims that human beings have an innate capacity for structured verbal communication.⁵⁴ They are not blank slates that learn arbitrary language systems, but are programmed learners predisposed to assimilate those language structures which build upon their innate capacities. Many structuralists thus give primacy to the importance of social patterns, and accept that these patterns are part of the innate human biological endowment. The key difference between the structuralist approach and those discussed earlier is that the structuralist views social structural differences between men and women as primary phenomena. He does not necessarily attempt to explain these differences as the product of other phenomena.

In their joint work, Robin Fox and Lionel Tiger specifically apply many structuralist concepts to the roles of men and women. They theorize that men and women are differentially predisposed to form various relationships at various stages of the human life cycle.* They therefore directly connect the universal patterns of men's and women's roles to a biological root. Fox and Tiger state their views in the following manner:

... the human organism is “wired” in a certain way so that it can process and emit information about certain facts of social life such as language and rules about sex, and can process this information only at certain times and only in certain ways. The wiring is geared to the life cycle so that at any one moment in a population of homo sapiens there will be individuals with a certain “store” of behavior giving out information at another stage to others who are wired to treat this information in a particular way. The outcome of the interaction of these individuals will be certain “typical” relationships.⁵⁵

All social acts are patterned. They are as nonrandom as our physical structures. The patterns of social relationships into which they are formed can be predicted and explained. They are major regularities of the species—of any species. They can be called bonds. . . . This process of social bonding encompasses the formation and maintenance of certain relationships that

* Linked closely to Fox and Tiger's view of the biological origin of the social structural characteristics of men and women is a theory of the historical origins of these characteristics. They assert that the social structural characteristics grew out of the need of the hunting/gathering society of primitive man. However, the structuralist approach to explaining social structural patterns need not be tied to any particular historical explanation of the origins of these patterns. In fact, the customary approach of structuralist methodology is “atemporal” (see Lane, 16–17).

appear stimulating, easy to learn, and in some cases necessary for the general health of the individuals concerned—to say nothing of the well-being of whole communities.⁵⁶

. . . The human being not only will proceed through a definable life cycle but also engage in social relationships—of foreseeable intensity and meaning—with predictable categories of people of predictable ages. Our behavior biogrammar underlies not only how we will act but how we will interact and with whom.⁵⁷

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Fox and Tiger treat the four universal social structural patterns of relationships between men and women as the outcome of a set of “typical relationships” stored in some fashion in the “behavior biogrammar” of the human species. For example, the fact that overall group leadership customarily resides in males relates to the “male bond,” a biological aspect of interaction in all-male groups. Tiger states this in the following paragraph:

More important from the social scientists’ point of view is the possibility that these male patterns lie at the heart of all community action and organization. Are the male bonds of politics, work, and war the behavioral mechanisms by which small-scale communities—perhaps of one adult male and females and young—link under certain circumstances to form the large communities in which many contemporary humans live? . . . My proposition, perhaps supported by data about political participation, would be that when human groups expand beyond, say, ten to thirty individuals, it becomes necessary to form some kind of bond of super- and subordination and some allocation of work and defence functions. This bond is typically male, and is observable in the rudimentary political arrangements of rural settlements in areas sufficiently beyond the subsistence level to sustain secondary economic institutions.⁵⁸

In similar fashion, Fox and Tiger view the mother-infant and male-female relationships as “typical relationships” formed by human biology.⁵⁹ According to Fox and Tiger, therefore, the social structural characteristics of men and women are not built solely on the foundation of individual psychological or physical differences, but are instead rooted directly in the innate biological endowment of the human species.

The structuralist thesis of Fox and Tiger finds some support in the psychological evidence cited earlier in this chapter. First, this evidence

shows not only that social structural differences exist, but also that they cannot be easily translated into inherent individual terms, as the first two theories imply. For example, male and female dependency patterns differ significantly when viewed in social structural terms. Males and females differ from one another according to the types of social situations and the types of relationships in which they develop some kind of dependency.⁶⁰ However, a generalized *individual* difference does not exist. Females are not totally “dependent,” nor are males totally “independent.” Instead, they are dependent in different ways upon different people in different situations. The first two theories, which view social structural patterns as the product of generalized individual trait differences, do not account for this variety very well. On the other hand, Fox and Tiger’s concept of “typical relationships” and “social bonding” seems to be getting at the heart of the problem. Can the nature of, say, dependency behavior be explained by understanding the relationships and social situations in which it is observed? This seems to be a more promising avenue of inquiry than the reductionist tendency to focus on trait differences.

Secondly, the psychological data provides support for the view that at least some social structural patterns are rooted in biological factors which influence modern as well as pre-technological societies. This evidence comes from studies of social interaction in children.⁶¹ As soon as children are able to interact with other children, certain social structural patterns begin to form. Young boys prefer all-male groups, while girls prefer all-female groups. The activity rates of young boys rise dramatically when the boys are in the presence of other male peers. Young boys and girls also relate differently to adult authority figures such as parents and teachers. Several of these social structural patterns in children have been shown to be cross-cultural. This psychological evidence does not prove that these social structural characteristics have biological origins, but it does point in such a direction. The Rosaldo theory and its variations cannot deal adequately with this psychological data, whereas the structuralist approach predicts and explains it.

Though their insights are often clothed in a confining mechanical terminology, the work of Fox and Tiger suggests a new and useful set of explanations for the social structural data. In the past, most of the discussion about the roots of the social structural patterns have revolved around the nature-nurture controversy: Are these social patterns caused primarily by biological factors that are relevant today, or are they stamped on human beings through generations of social conditioning? To be sure, the Fox/Tiger hypothesis takes a stand on one side of the nature/nurture controversy; it

comes down on the side of nature. However, the structuralist hypothesis is more sensitive to social realities than most theories proposing a biological hypothesis. Human behavior is not a determined, totally predictable given, but instead springs from a biologically formed response to a variety of social situations. The response differs according to the type of social situation confronted, and is therefore in some sense dependent upon and shaped by the social environment. The way the response is expressed also varies according to the unique qualities of the social environment. However, at the most basic level, the individual responses, and the larger social patterns built upon these responses, are formed predictably by the biological nature of the human species.

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Some structuralists have proposed the concept of a “biogrammar,” a species-wide, biologically based predisposition to certain forms of social behavior. Biogrammar is analogous to the structural linguistic theory of a “deep structure” at the root of all human language. Beatrix Hamburg uses this framework in the following manner:

... plasticity of gender behavior has been used to argue for an environmental determinism of the development of sex-role behaviors. However, can sex roles be said to be nonbiological even though they show the greatest possible impact of learning?

One might use the analogy of language. There is clearly a biological basis for language. No other animal has the adaptation of brain and vocal apparatus to make meaningful speech possible. The neurological basis of speech is well described. Despite this, language is clearly learned behavior. Langer has pointed out that man does not say even the first word by instinct.

As in the example of language, the important issue is not the biological behavior per se but rather the biological contribution to the shaping of what is learned.⁶²

Structural linguists such as Chomsky argue that a uniform basic structure of language is biologically embedded in the human species.⁶³ Languages thus differ from one another dramatically in sound and form, yet all adhere to certain universal structural principles. Fox and Tiger apply this model to the social structural characteristics of men and women, and make it the basis of a comprehensive explanation of their origins. They hold that it includes and transcends the other theories discussed previously.

Indeed, the four theories explaining the social structural characteristics of men and women need not be mutually exclusive. Each theory singles

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out certain factors as being especially important in determining social structural patterns. None of the theories need rule out the possibility that other factors also play some role in the process. The weakness of the first three theories is not that they are plainly wrong, but that they cannot comprehensively explain the complex, detailed, and weighty evidence for social structural differences drawn from anthropological, psychological, and ethological studies. The structuralist theory may constitute a comprehensive theory, or may be an important element in such a theory, or may be simply a valuable attempt to produce the kind of theory needed. Nevertheless, it may be safely observed that any adequate theory must account for all of the physical, psychological, and social factors which these four theories identify.

Earlier it was observed that none of these theories attribute the social structural differences entirely to non-biological factors. It is now apparent that this is true. All the theories note the influence of some biological factors on social behavior. The third theory relies on such factors least, but even this hypothesis sees physical differences between men and women as relevant in pre-technological societies. As has been seen, this approach also suffers from serious limitations.

In summary, the evidence for social structural characteristics is too strong to allow for a purely environmental explanation. The anthropological data which documents the universal patterns of men's and women's roles in itself calls for some biological hypothesis, even apart from the psychological and ethological evidence which supports it. Therefore, it can be concluded that the social relationships of men and women, and the patterns which grow out of these relationships, are not merely produced by a process of socialization or cultural conditioning. The biological nature of the human race makes a considerable contribution to the development of men's and women's roles.

Conclusion ▸ Individual Characteristics and Social Structural Characteristics

THE past two chapters have surveyed the findings of modern psychology and modern anthropology about the differences between the sexes. They have reviewed a large amount of data and evaluated the interpretations and explanations of this data. While no comprehensive theory explaining all the evidence has been found, it is nevertheless true that the data does

converge and interconnect in a remarkable fashion. The data from the studies of individual differences between men and women harmonize with the data from the studies of social structural differences.

Four main types of data have been discussed in the last two chapters. Chapter Sixteen presented data on individual characteristics obtained through descriptive and experimental methods; this chapter presented data on social structural characteristics obtained from cross-cultural and group interaction studies. (The ethological data in this chapter is only of a supportive nature.) The data from these four sources converge in two particularly significant patterns. One pattern forms around the male governing role, while the other forms around the female domestic role. The following table summarizes the convergence around these two patterns.

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	Individual Descriptive	Individual Experimental	Social Structural Group Interaction	Social Structural Cross-Cultural
Male ▸	Differentiated personality, Goal oriented	Aggression, Visual-spatial ability	Male-peer bond (hierarchical, committed)	Overall male authority
Female ▸	Integrated personality, Personal need orientation	Nurturance, Verbal ability	Family bond	Female responsibility in domestic sphere

The cross-cultural evidence shows that men have held the overall governing position in every known society. The data from the other sources shows that men have characteristics which suit them for this role. The male bond allows a group of men to form a cohesive nucleus for governing a large community. Male aggressiveness equips men to protect and lead the social groupings. Superior visual-spatial ability may equip men to cope with broad social structural questions. The man's differentiated personality, along with his accomplishment orientation, also harmonizes well with an overall governing role. A governor must be able to take a disciplinary perspective, to be detached, to order a situation, to move a group forward and advance its interests, to be ready to sacrifice individual needs and feelings to the common good. Thus it can be seen that the data clusters in a coherent pattern around the male governing role.*

* This is not to say that only men are able to assume a governing role. The key point being made here is that, according to the data surveyed in these chapters, men as a group have more of those characteristics suited to a governmental role than do women as a group.

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The data clusters in a parallel way around the female domestic role. The cross-cultural evidence shows that in every known society women have cared for the young children and managed the domestic sphere. The female family bond certainly equips women for this role, as does female nurturance. Women's superior verbal ability may be related to the focus on personal relationships in domestic life. Women's integrated pattern of personality, expressed in an immediate and personal response to a social environment, also fits well with the role of caring for the young and making a home.

The evidence summarized in the past two chapters leads to two important observations. First, men and women appear to differ from one another in many ways, along a wide spectrum of individual and social structural characteristics. These differences do not surface randomly, but instead cluster in a coherent pattern. No theoretical consensus has emerged on the exact nature of the relationship between the individual differences and the social structural differences. Nevertheless, no one seriously contests the existence of such a significant relationship. One could even say that individual and social structural differences are not two distinct sets of differences, but are rather one set of differences seen from two separate angles.

Secondly, it is clear that many of the differences between men and women have some biological basis. The data from psychological studies most clearly points to this biological basis in the areas of aggression, nurturance, and visual-spatial ability. It is entirely possible—even likely—that further study will uncover a biological basis to other differences, including those where data is currently ambiguous. The social structural evidence, particularly as found in the cross-cultural studies, also points to biological factors as the basis for certain social relationship configurations. Once again, all of the specifics are not known. The precise biological mechanisms influencing each characteristic have not been isolated, though new research in endocrinology and neurology has begun to fill in the gaps. The development of new experimental techniques seems to be leading to a greater appreciation for the formative role of biological factors.

In the light of these two observations, one can conclude that, though no overarching theory explains all of the data, and though most of the precise causal chains underlying the known differences remain hidden, the evidence from social science still contributes substantially to an understanding of the differences between men and women.

Consequences and Directions

IN the past two chapters, many conclusions have been drawn from the current social scientific data on the differences between men and women. These conclusions can be summarized as follows:

1. There are considerable differences between men and women, these differences have some biological roots, and they relate to the distinct social functions that men and women perform.
2. All known human societies have included stable patterns of role differences according to sex in their social structure, and these role differences have involved some subordination of the woman to the man. These role differences are expressed through division of labor, as well as through differences in dress, customs of respect, and character traits.
3. Social structural differences between men and women support and express their distinct social roles. Women are more oriented toward home and children, they form less-stable groupings with other women, and respond better to male authority than to female authority. Men are more oriented toward communal situations, they form stable hierarchically ordered groups with other men, and protect their women and children. These patterns correlate with social structures in which the men provide the backbone of the communal grouping and the women are primarily linked to the larger community through their husband, brother, or father.
4. There are a number of individual trait and trait-pattern differences between men and women, and these differences also support and express their distinct social roles. Men are more differentiated in their pattern of response, while women are more integrated. Men are more accomplishment oriented, while women are more helping oriented (another term might be "personal-service oriented"). Men are more aggressive than women and more oriented toward social dominance. Men are physically stronger than women. Women are more nurturant than men. In other words, men and women differ in the way they relate to other people and to social situations, and these differences correlate with a governor-protector-provider role for the man and a care-service role for the woman.

One can confidently predict that many of the details of the scientific conclusions presented in these chapters will be modified in future years.

However, one can also confidently predict that the main outlines of these conclusions will endure. The evidence solidly verifies the existence of differences between men and women that are not merely the product of culture or socialization. The evidence also solidly demonstrates that these differences are related to a structure of society and a set of role differences common to the entire human species. To be sure, these differences can be expressed in many ways and, in fact, this variety can be observed in the cultures of the world. But beneath this variety is a common pattern or fundamental structure which is rooted in human biology. One might say that a role difference between men and women was “created into” the human race.

The Argument against Biodeterminism

An important question still remains: What is the proper attitude toward these differences between men and women? A strong movement today would pay as little attention as possible to these facts. This movement advances what could be described as “the argument against biodeterminism.” In its strongest form, the argument against biodeterminism denies that there are real or significant differences between men and women. As the past two chapters demonstrate, the evidence solidly refutes this strong form of the argument. A modified form of the argument against biodeterminism is more widely held. This is the view that some differences between men and women exist, but that we can and should recondition people so that they do not express these differences in any way other than in the physical necessities of sex and reproduction. This view holds that the human race is very malleable, that socialization and cultural conditioning are much more powerful in forming the human race than most biological factors, and hence that the human race should simply mold itself into whatever it wants to become.

This form of the argument against biodeterminism possesses some plausibility. To a great extent, the human race does possess the ability to condition itself away from what could be described as its “natural state.” Humanity *is* malleable. Socialization is powerful. Humans can determine their own destiny in a way that animals cannot. However, human malleability has definite limits. There are physical limitations. There also appears to be a tendency to cling to a “natural” order. For example, women in the Kibbutzim have returned to a more traditional pattern of men's and women's roles despite an ideology which points in the opposite direction.

Nonetheless, it does seem possible that the human race, through diligent and ingenious effort, could condition itself away from the pattern of men's and women's roles that has appeared in every human society.

However, the human race would attempt this change only at great risk. Developments in ecological studies in recent decades have demonstrated the fragility and complexity of the "natural" environment. Seemingly small changes in our physical environment can produce unexpected—even disastrous—consequences. The human race is not always adept at foreseeing the consequences of such changes because its understanding of the interrelationships of overall ecology lags well behind its technological ability to produce change.⁶⁴

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against
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The radical feminist movement has by its success shown its ability to produce vast social change. However, this could be one of the most destructive changes in the history of human society. The roles of men and women have proven useful in previous societies; in fact, past societies functioned well only when these roles were operating properly. Today a strong movement would destroy these roles without a firmly established understanding of the ecological consequences. The rationale is simply that human nature is "unbelievably malleable." In essence, the human race is told that it should make such changes simply because it is capable of doing so. In the face of such a claim, human beings would do well to acquire a humble sense of the limitations of human knowledge, and to recall recent lessons about some of the painful consequences of technological change.

For many years now our society has been experiencing a gradual weakening of men's and women's roles. Recent ideological and social movements have begun to hasten this process in many countries and this trend will probably continue. One should attempt to analyze the effects of this change. This is a complex and difficult task, but one can already observe in countries where the process is most advanced several destructive social trends that can probably be traced in part to the breakdown of men's and women's roles.

1. *Family life is weakened.* The breakdown of men's and women's roles weakens family life in two main ways. First, it undermines the subordination of the wife and turns her attention to her own life and career apart from her husband's career and apart from the life of the family.⁶⁵ This takes away from the unity of the family, and is associated with the family's general loss of order and authority. Secondly, the breakdown of men's and women's roles leads men to take less responsibility for

family groupings.⁶⁶ As family life becomes an undifferentiated responsibility of husband and wife together with no defined male role of leadership, men often lose the motivation and commitment needed to care for their families. They tend to relate to women predominantly for sexual gratification. The man no longer focuses his desire for accomplishment on the family, but instead directs his interest elsewhere. As a consequence of these two trends—the increasing independence of the wife and irresponsibility of the husband—the family becomes less of a stable, ordered, and cohesive group, and more of a collection of individuals living together. These weaker families then produce weaker children with significant personal problems.⁶⁷

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2. *Sexual relationships become troubled.* Confusion about roles may be a factor in the apparent increase of sexual disorders in Western culture. Evidence indicates that impotence in men is tied to the way their partners relate to them.⁶⁸ When wives relate to their husbands in a challenging, aggressive, or dominating way, men often lose interest in sexual relationships and sometimes become impotent.⁶⁹ Some social scientists also believe that a breakdown in men's and women's roles is associated with homosexuality and confusion in sexual identity.⁷⁰
3. *Women often lose a sense of value.* The modern feminist movement—ostensibly a movement “for” women—normally devalues the very things that women feel the greatest desire to do: to be a wife and mother and have a home. Moreover, it often devalues precisely those elements of her personality that are most naturally feminine.⁷¹ Ironically, the effect of the feminist movement is largely to make women feel the “disadvantage” of being female more acutely. It puts them under greater pressure to compete with men.
4. *Womanly roles are neglected.* Our society neglects or institutionalizes roles involving care for personal needs—the roles traditionally filled by women. Thus home and family life becomes less supportive and charitable service is more impersonal and less charitable.
5. *Manly roles are neglected.* Our society provides less order, discipline, and personal protection in daily life than previous eras.⁷² Men are taught to avoid these traditionally male responsibilities; in fact, many men have become incapable of bearing these responsibilities because they have lost what was once the characteristically male approach to emotions and personal relationships.⁷³
6. *Men and women develop psychological instabilities.* There is some evidence that those groups in modern society most directly affected by

the feminist movement have been specially plagued by psychological problems. The lack of social roles appears to make life more difficult for both men and women.⁷⁴

It probably cannot be proven that all these trends are caused by the erosion of men's and women's roles in our society. However, a reasonable case can be made for this position, and this case should be taken seriously until it is disproved. These trends amount to a picture of increasing social weakness. The fabric of our society could be seriously weakened by the continued breakdown of men's and women's roles.

The Argument
against
Biodeterminism

Of the several social trends just described, the weakening of the family is of the greatest concern. Those who oppose the feminist program for restructuring society have long held that this program would undermine the most fundamental elements of family life. Radical adherents of the program agree with this analysis, and hail the undermining of the family as an essential step in social progress; more moderate adherents deny that the weakening of men's and women's roles must weaken the family. However, it is clear that the family in modern society is growing more fragile, and this fragility must stem at least in part from new approaches to men's and women's roles. This connection between weakened roles and a weakened family is illustrated in the following paragraph from Barbara Seaman, a feminist journalist who is writing from her own experience about families whose wives were actively involved in the feminist movement:

I was in an early consciousness-raising group, which proved effective. We all went on to publish books, get PhDs, or rise up some way in the world. Years later, those of us who were mothers tried to reassemble in order to measure the price our families might have paid. The sessions were so painful that after five or six of them we quit. Too many husbands had deserted (one for a Playboy bunny), too many children had dropped out of school, turned gay, attempted suicide. To a man the divorced husbands, however affluent, were copping out on child support, college tuitions and psychiatrist bills. These were women, mind you, who never requested alimony for themselves.⁷⁵

Seaman's chronicle of family dissolution, children's problems, and male irresponsibility is a vivid testimony to some of the possible consequences of a feminist restructuring of society.

The argument against biodeterminism and similar forms of argumentation are seriously flawed in their very structure. Built into these theories

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and ideologies is a faulty view of where the burden of proof lies. They begin with the undeniable malfunctioning of many aspects of men's and women's roles today, and proceed to argue that distinctive roles for men and women should be abolished or substantially reduced. To be sure, they produce much evidence for the malfunctioning of the current remains of traditional men's and women's roles. However, this evidence alone cannot lead them to the conclusion they assert. If they are advocating a radical restructuring of society, then it is not enough to merely substantiate the problems and disadvantages of the present structure. Those arguing for change should also be required to show that their proposed new pattern can more successfully accommodate the natural differences between men and women and can provide a better basis for the structuring of society. They should be asked to show that a new approach would work *better than* the current system or the alternatives. If the present pattern of men's and women's roles is inadequate, but more promising than the alternatives, it would be a grave error to discard it in favor of a change that is even more inadequate. Nonetheless, those advocating the radical feminist positions today seldom try to show that their option is better. They are simply dismantling the remains of a traditional system of men's and women's roles without replacing this system with anything superior.⁷⁶

The feminist line of argumentation has another weakness. The argument advocates the abolition or reduction of role differences by documenting the problems in the current system of men's and women's roles. However, it can also be argued that the weaknesses in the current system point instead to the need for a restoration of fuller role differences. The current system of men's and women's roles is merely a remnant of the traditional patterns of men's and women's roles. These traditional patterns have been under ideological and cultural assault for over a hundred years. Therefore, the system of men's and women's roles in technological society today is largely the product of the very forces which would now take change even further, removing even the remnants of a traditional pattern. If the current system is any indication of the desirability of further change, the radical feminist program must appear highly undesirable.

Finally, the feminists are proposing sweeping, and untried, alternatives to a pattern of human life that has endured throughout all history. Surely the radicalness of their proposals puts the burden of proof upon them to justify the safety as well as the desirability of a program of eliminating all sexual role differences.

The Value of Social Roles

There is an alternate approach to men's and women's roles today, an approach articulated in the following remarks of Margaret Mead. In the course of a discussion of the relationship between biological male-female differences and social roles, Mead asks the question, Must a society fashion distinct social roles for men and women?

The Value of
Social Roles

We have here two different questions: Are we dealing not with a *must* that we dare not flout because it is rooted so deep in our biological mammalian nature that to flout it means individual and social disease? Or with a *must* that, although not so deeply rooted, still is so very socially convenient and so well tried that it would be uneconomical to flout it—a *must* which says, for example, that it is easier to get children born and bred if we stylize the behavior of the sexes very differently, teaching them to walk and dress and act in contrasting ways and to specialize in different kinds of work? But there is still the third possibility. *Are not sex differences exceedingly valuable, one of the resources of our human nature that every society has used but no society has as yet begun to use to the full?*⁷⁷ (Emphasis added)

Mead proposes that society should not attempt to condition people away from all role differences, but instead develop a constructive approach to men's and women's roles. Instead of eliminating men's and women's roles, they might be developed so that they are more adapted to modern conditions, and thus continue to tap the "valuable . . . resources of our human nature."

As will be seen in the next chapter, a technological society presents a special challenge for developing an adequate approach to men's and women's roles—or any form of social roles. However, there is good reason to think that men and women in technological society should meet this challenge. In all human societies, social roles have been crucial for the formation of a viable society. As seen earlier in the present chapter, these social roles have been universally structured according to the difference between the sexes. Every society has not only recognized the need for social roles, but has also structured these roles differently for men and women.

Furthermore, the evidence discussed in Chapter Sixteen indicates that human beings are still psychologically constructed to fit a pattern of role differences between men and women.⁷⁸ It would be foolish to ignore something so basic, so consistent, and so transcultural to the human race.

It would be foolish to eliminate such a constant feature of human society without any certainty that something else would successfully replace it. In other words, the most sensible and constructive approach would be to form distinctive social roles adapted to the conditions of contemporary society.

Men's and
Women's
Differences ▶
Social Structural
Characteristics

As stated at the beginning of Chapter Sixteen, any constructive approach to men's and women's roles (or to social roles in general) in contemporary society must take into account three factors. The first factor is the basic human realities that do not change as society changes. The past two chapters have examined these factors. The second factor is the conditions which contemporary society presents. Any attempt to structure men's and women's roles only according to the differences between men and women will only be partially successful. Full success depends on the degree to which a particular approach to roles effectively copes with the social environment. The third factor is the vision of the ideal human society. Neither the facts of human realities nor the demands of the contemporary social environment alone or together completely dictate what human society must be like. Both are important and both impose conditions, but human beings still have a fair amount of latitude to decide what their life will be like. Human beings will choose their direction by accident or according to an ideal. The following chapters will consider both the demands of the social environment and the various contemporary ideals which influence this question. Finally, a possible Christian approach to men's and women's roles in contemporary society will be proposed.

The primary purpose of the past two chapters has been to survey the findings of modern science regarding men and women. However, these chapters also allow one to reflect upon the scriptural teaching on men's and women's roles. It is unclear to what extent the New Testament bases its teaching on the "nature" of man and woman. Several passages suggest that the "nature" of men and women is one factor in the New Testament approach. However, the primary foundation of the New Testament teaching is an understanding of the creation and what the creation reveals of God's purposes for the human race. In the Genesis account, the first man and the first woman show God's intention for man and woman in human community. God enjoined a difference in role between men and women for the sake of the order in their relationship.

It does not necessarily follow from the creation account that God created men and women with the range of physical, psychological, and social structural differences that modern science can definitively establish. The creation account simply shows how God wants men and women to

relate. It does not state that God made them so that they would have a strong inclination to relate the way he wished.* The person immersed in the thought-world of the Old and New Testaments would be impressed by the fact that God created man and woman for a purpose. He would be less likely to view as significant the fact that there are psychological differences between men and women with biological origins. These differences are more impressive to people of the twentieth century than they would have been to the early Christian writers. Most contemporary Christians who study this question will instinctively try to correlate the creation account with the results of empirical investigations in the social sciences.

The Value of
Social Roles

From the perspective that sees the results of creation in the biological makeup of the human race, modern science confirms the scriptural account. Man and woman differ from one another in their biological and socio-psychological makeup. These differences endure through great cultural diversity. The Christian can express this fact by saying that men and women were created differently by God. Of course, there is a problem when Christians make their faith or their Christian lives dependent on the results of modern science. Their faith is then no longer based on the Lord and on revelation. However, in a time when the scriptural teaching is dismissed as culturally relative and outmoded, it is helpful to observe that God's purposes indeed seem to have been "created into" the human race.

* In other words, though it may make most sense to see the revelation of God's purposes for men and women as a revelation of their inherent nature, this is not the only possible interpretation. God could have created men and women in a less differentiated way and asked them to conform to his purposes solely out of obedience. On the other hand, it does not seem reasonable to hold that God made men and women so that they naturally reject his purposes. However, the main point is that it is not clear that the writers of scripture would have approached the discussion with the same view as contemporary people trained in modern science.

NOTE ON METHOD ▷ SOCIAL SCIENCE

NOTE TO THE READER

This excursus discusses how the perspective taken in the last two chapters relates to the conclusions and interpretations found in the main currents of the scientific literature on the differences between men and women. Like the earlier Note on Method on exegesis, this section is intended primarily for those acquainted with the professional literature. Also like the earlier section, it is not essential to the argument of the book and can be skipped without missing necessary information or discussion.

The Distinctiveness of This Book's Approach

THE social scientific literature on men's and women's differences, like the social scientific literature in general, displays a considerable variety of viewpoints. Some of this variety arises naturally from the inevitable differences among social scientists in their intentions, conceptual systems, methodologies, and disciplinary perspectives. For example, an anthropologist, an endocrinologist, and a behaviorist psychologist will conduct three very different studies of human aggression. Their data will differ. Their conclusions may differ, even though they may not in fact be inconsistent. However, some of the variety in the social science literature amounts to incompatible differences in substantive conclusions. Some social scientists say that men and women differ in various traits and characteristics; some say they do not. Such conflicts are not merely differences in perspective.

They arise from conflicting data, conflicting interpretations of data, conflicting theories, and sometimes from conflicting ideologies. Whatever the source, these substantive differences lead to controversy and disagreement. They are not matters of complementary viewpoints.

The presentation of the social scientific data on the differences between men and women in the past two chapters has some distinctive features which distinguish it from other social scientific studies. However, these distinctive features are differences in approach and viewpoint, not points of substantive controversy. They do not derive from new data, from novel interpretation of existing data, a new theory, or from an unconditional endorsement of any of the existing theories. Rather, the main distinctive features of this presentation are the interdisciplinary nature of the survey method and the use of a conceptual framework derived from the earlier exegetical chapters of this book. In short, the social scientific analysis conducted in these two chapters is mainly distinguished by its methodology and conceptual system.

Distinctiveness
of This Book's
Approach

Methodology

Much of the social scientific literature consists of reports of data drawn from direct observation or experimentation. These chapters instead employ an interdisciplinary survey approach. They survey the direct work of others rather than offer new observations or experiments. In itself, the survey approach is not an uncommon way to present research.¹ However, this survey differs from most others in that it is interdisciplinary, and not concerned solely with summarizing the data obtained within or through one methodology. Though this type of interdisciplinary approach has become more common in the past ten years, it is still uncommon to give attention to both descriptive and experimental studies in the same survey.² Descriptive and experimental social scientists sometimes deny the validity of one another's methodology and findings, and surveys (even interdisciplinary ones) usually follow one or the other course. The social scientific survey contained in Chapters Sixteen and Seventeen, however, presumes the validity of both forms of study, and surveys the findings of both.

The particular type of interdisciplinary approach adopted in Chapters Sixteen and Seventeen arises from the broader concerns of this book. The primary aim of these chapters is to discover what modern science has to say about the pattern of men's and women's roles which was discussed in the earlier exegetical sections of this book. These chapters accept all accredited

modern science, and do not attempt any major critique or advances. They rely on the body of evidence and interpretation generally accepted within each field or discipline. These chapters do not hold to one theory at the expense of another, or favor one particular discipline or method. Instead, they survey a wide body of literature, accepting and observing the canons of acceptability within each field and discipline. The goal has been to bring the body of reported scientific results to bear on the questions raised in this book concerning men's and women's roles.

Note on
Method ▸
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Conceptual Framework

The second main distinguishing feature of this social scientific survey is its underlying conceptual framework. The earlier exegetical chapters of this book have provided this framework. It is very specific and differs from the conceptual systems found in most social scientific surveys. This conceptual framework has greatly influenced the course and content of this study. In fact, the conceptual framework underlying any scientific study has immense impact on the conduct of that study. It defines the issues to be examined, provides the terminology necessary for the formulation of a hypothesis, and determines which data is relevant and which is irrelevant.³ For example, when a researcher employs a psychoanalytic conceptual framework to investigate the development of male and female personality, he will concentrate on early parent-child relationships, with a special focus on psychosexual development. This researcher may finally conclude that such psychoanalytic terms as castration anxiety, penis envy, and the Oedipus complex are inadequate to explain personality development, but these concepts will nonetheless govern the conduct of his study and the interpretation of his data. Conceptual frameworks are of great importance in the sciences; in fact, they are essential for research. The distinctive conceptual framework used in this book explains much of what is distinctive in the social scientific survey of Chapters Sixteen and Seventeen.

The conceptual framework underlying the last two chapters focuses on social structure and social roles. It was developed for the goal of relating social scientific conclusions to the exegesis and interpretation of the scriptural teaching found in the first part of the book. This teaching mainly concerned social structure and social roles rather than individual behavior. Consequently, this conceptual framework is particularly attentive to group behavior, the dynamics of interpersonal relationships, and the structure of social patterns. Moreover it influences the way the data

is presented. For example, the framework led to summarizing the data in the descriptive literature in terms of trait-patterns.* It also influenced the importance the survey placed on “pattern” and “structure,” the intimate connection between personality traits and personal relationships, and the emphasis on social predispositions rather than functional abilities. The conceptual framework also affected the interpretation in Chapter Seventeen of the social structural data found in Maccoby and Jacklin.† Maccoby and Jacklin emphasize the individual characteristics rather than social structural characteristics which can be seen in their data. This survey took special pains to stress these social structural patterns because they are highly significant within the conceptual framework of this book. However, it must be emphasized that this presentation was faithful to the data it surveyed. The point is that a different conceptual framework prevailed in the organization of the presentation.

Distinctiveness
of This Book's
Approach

Two other examples from Chapters Sixteen and Seventeen illustrate the way a conceptual framework specially attuned to social structure and personal relationships affected these chapters. First, the conceptual system governed the organization of these two chapters according to individual and social structural characteristics. Such a distinction is not common in the social scientific literature. Social scientists sometimes draw a distinction between intellectual abilities (verbal ability, etc.) and social behavior (aggression, nurturance, dependence, etc.), but they rarely distinguish between characteristics manifested by an individual in all types of relationships and characteristics which individuals manifest according to the structure of social groupings.⁴ The data is organized this way because it is especially helpful in shedding light on the scriptural teaching on men's and women's roles and social structure. Secondly, the concluding synthesis of the data found near the end of Chapter Seventeen is explicitly ordered around the New Testament description of the roles of men and women as seen in the first part of the book.[‡] The intention is to point out the degree to which the data fits the scriptural picture of men's and women's roles. This type of synthesis is faithful to the data, but it would be stated differently if the scriptural teaching did not shape the underlying concerns of these chapters.

Although a particular conceptual system influences the presentation

* For the discussion of trait-patterns in Chapter Sixteen, see pp. 388–402.

† For the discussion of Maccoby and Jacklin's social structural data, see pp. 435–437.

‡ See pp. 448–452 for the concluding synthesis of the data.

and interpretation of the social scientific data found in Chapters Sixteen and Seventeen, this does not mean that the data has been slanted to fit the conceptual system. Any study, including the most objective and academic, will be influenced by its underlying conceptual framework. The past two chapters have employed a distinctive framework and thus these chapters appear distinctive in comparison to the body of social scientific literature on men's and women's differences. However, these chapters are fully compatible with other studies and surveys. In fact, this book's survey essentially relies upon well-known studies, the work of reputable investigators, and a traditional—not novel—interpretation of data.

Note on
Method ▶
Social Science

The past two chapters survey the social sciences, but this book is not primarily a study of the social sciences. It is primarily a study of a Christian approach to men's and women's roles in the modern world. The survey of the social scientific literature is subordinate to the broader purposes of this volume. The book does not review social science for its own sake, but rather as a way to help develop a workable approach to Christian life in the modern world. The survey method and the conceptual framework used in these chapters follow from this basic purpose.

Feminist Social Science

THIS book's approach to the social scientific data on men's and women's differences is consistent with the most significant work in the social sciences, but one must acknowledge that this approach is not consistent with all of it. The content and conclusions of these chapters conflict substantially with much of the material produced by a particular movement within the social sciences in the 1970s. This movement could be called Feminist Social Science. The feminist ethical and political position has become very prominent in social scientific circles in the '70s, and it has exerted a considerable influence on the study of the differences between men and women. It often shapes the selection and interpretation of data and affects the conclusions many modern works of social science draw about men's and women's differences. This book does not adopt this feminist perspective and consequently the preceding chapters are sometimes inconsistent with the relevant feminist literature.

Feminist Social Science as a movement is a relatively new phenomenon. However, the broader nature/nurture controversy—of which Feminist Social Science is a part—has a long and stormy background.³ A radical

environmentalist view of human potential dominated the thinking of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, though Enlightenment thinkers were slow to apply this view to the differences between men and women. Then, in the second half of the nineteenth century, Darwinism came to dominate intellectual discussion, and biological explanations of individual and social behavior flourished. Such biological factors as brain size and sexual drive were proposed to explain the differences between men and women. The direction of the social sciences shifted again at the beginning of the twentieth century, especially in the United States and England. Behaviorism,* a school of social science which emphasizes the influence of socialization on behavior, attained sudden prominence and led to a new emphasis on social conditioning—the “nurture” side of the controversy. Nonetheless, as in the Enlightenment period, behaviorism, and the attendant views that human beings can become whatever they want, was only slowly applied to men’s and women’s differences, at least in the non-Marxist West. In the first half of the twentieth century, a Freudian psychoanalytical approach dominated the study of men’s and women’s differences. The Freudians saw men’s and women’s differences as essentially rooted in biology and early family experience. However, the Freudian school had already been weakened when, in the 1960s, the radical and libertarian movements of the decade ushered in another period of strong emphasis on forces of socialization. This time, especially with the rebirth of the feminist movement, these views were applied to men’s and women’s differences. Views which even the most radical previous “nurture” advocates were reluctant to assert were now forcefully affirmed: The main differences between men and women arise from training, socialization, and cultural conditioning, not from biological endowment. This view, prominent in the 1960s, has been challenged by a resurgence of biological research and theorizing in the 1970s. Both schools now maintain an uneasy coexistence on either side of the updated nature/nurture debate. Their coexistence is often broken by fierce battles, punctuated by polemics.

This historical background sheds light on several important features of the social scientific literature on men’s and women’s differences. First, the tone and approach of the social sciences changed during the mid-sixties. This change was not caused primarily by new data or theoretical breakthroughs, but mainly by an ideological shift in the academic community and in society at large. The new ideology attacked the traditional

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* Commonly known in the twenty-first century as *behavioral psychology*.—Ed.

or semi-traditional pattern of men's and women's roles which most people, including social scientists, had accepted as a necessary element in the social structure. Moreover, this ideology produced numbers of students dedicated to advance an ideological position who entered areas where they could study "women's issues." These new currents of thought had a great impact on the study of men's and women's differences: A feminist perspective began to dominate the field.

Note on
Method ▶
Social Science

The historical background also explains a second important feature of modern social science: Much of the recent literature on men's and women's differences is polemical in nature. The first feminist attacks were aimed primarily at classic studies of these differences. (For example, see Betty Friedan's critique of Freud and Parsons.⁶) However, the most recent feminist polemics have been aimed at modern social scientists who have challenged the feminist approach by asserting again the importance of biological factors.⁷ Consequently, a polemical tone often dominates the entire subject, on all sides. The discussion is motivated not merely by a professional concern for scientific precision, but also by a profound attachment to certain ethical and political principles. Much of the social science literature on men's and women's differences has been thoroughly politicized.

The social scientific literature on men's and women's differences can be roughly divided into five groups according to the approach taken to the biological sources of these differences. As with all such classifications, this division is imperfect. Nonetheless, it is helpful for discerning the main currents present in the literature. This division also helps clarify the ways the survey of data in Chapters Sixteen and Seventeen differs from most other social science writing on the subject.

1. The first body of literature views biological mechanisms as the chief source of the differences between men and women. Steven Goldberg is perhaps the most noted example of those in this grouping.⁸ Some researchers in this group emphasize hormones, some emphasize genes, and some evolutionary mechanisms, but they draw the same type of conclusion: The basic pattern of men's and women's roles and many of the differences between men and women which support this pattern are biological necessities. The approach taken in Chapters Sixteen and Seventeen does not adopt this perspective, but accepts it as a valid viewpoint not yet disproved.
2. The second body of literature takes a more moderate position on the question of the biological sources of differences between men

and women. The investigators in this group tend to speak of a biological predisposition to learn certain types of behavior, rather than a biological determination of behavior. Such authors as Judith Bardwick, Corinne Hutt, Erik Erikson, and perhaps Lionel Tiger fit in this category.⁹ (Tiger probably speaks more readily about biological determination, but he does not entirely fit in the first group.) These thinkers all believe that there is a significant biological substratum to the differences between men and women, but they also acknowledge the plasticity of human nature and the possibility of using tools of socialization to work against and perhaps overcome these biologically rooted differences. The writings of this group of social scientists are consistent with the approach taken in Chapters Sixteen and Seventeen.

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3. The third group tends to avoid theories and conclusions about the sources of differences. These are specialists who mainly restrict their study of the differences between men and women to limited technical questions (often biological in nature), and largely avoid broad theory formulation and the most heated polemical issues. The papers collected in Friedman and Richart's *Sex Differences in Behavior* provide examples of this body of research.¹⁰ Most of the writers in this group tend to focus on severely limited bodies of material, questions that are narrowly circumscribed enough to be treated exhaustively and with considerable nuance. They tend to state their conclusions in a tentative, guarded, and qualified way. Though the approach taken in Chapters Sixteen and Seventeen is different from the approach taken by these scientists because of the necessity of considering the broader questions, the summary of the data contained in these chapters is consistent with their findings.
4. A fourth body of literature takes an explicitly feminist perspective on the question of biological sources of differences. These are writings which are for the most part thorough and unbiased, while the authors' basic perspectives, conclusions, and recommendations reflect a clear feminist commitment. Eleanor Maccoby, John Money, and Pierre van den Berghe are prominent figures in this group.¹¹ These scholars take account of the biological data, and acknowledge the biological roots of many of the differences between men and women. However, they also emphasize the importance of learning in human behavior, and they believe that most of the differences between men and women can and should be diminished. Their conclusions and

recommendations derive largely from a moral and political position, and they do not attempt to hide this fact. Their work could be called “social science done by feminists.” Their tone and conclusions often differ from the tone and conclusions of Chapters Sixteen and Seventeen, but the basic presentation and interpretation of the data in these chapters is consistent with their data. In fact, much of the data in these chapters is drawn from this literature.

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Method ▶
Social Science

5. A fifth body of literature can be termed Feminist Social Science. It is distinguished from the fourth group—“social science done by feminists”—by the way the authors’ strong feminist convictions dominate the entire approach to the question of men’s and women’s differences. Writers in this group include Sandra Bem, Janet Chafetz, Betty Yorburg, Carol Tavris, Carole Offir, Barbara Lloyd, and John Archer.¹² In these writings, a feminist bias shapes the topics, data, tone, and direction of the research. Above all, a feminist political commitment shapes the conclusions of the research and the recommendations drawn from it. The purpose of Feminist Social Science is not so much to understand the differences between men and women as it is to persuade the reader to accept the feminist moral and political position.

This underlying political purpose distinguishes Feminist Social Science from other writings on the subject. Many investigators of the differences between men and women are feminists, and they do not mind trying to prove their position scientifically and noting scientific support for their political beliefs. However, feminist social scientists more readily *use* science to convince others of the truth of their political views. In their writings, science is subordinate to feminism. As will be seen, the commitment to advance feminism and to establish a sexually “egalitarian” society often leads to a distortion of the scientific method. Of the five groups of social scientific literature on the differences between men and women, only this group is inconsistent with the approach taken in this book.

One feminist psychologist, Sandra Bem, openly admits her political preconceptions and motives. In an article on her work, she is reported as stating that her interest in sex roles “is and has always been frankly political,” and that her major purpose is “a feminist one: to help free the human personality from the restricting prison of sex-role stereotyping and to develop a conception of mental health which is free from culturally imposed definitions of masculinity and femininity.”¹³ The primacy of the political end in Feminist Social Science means that data is not always handled so-

berly and fairly. Even when the evidence is not obviously distorted, the discussion is framed in a way that is antagonistic toward traditional social roles and toward social scientists who find scientific support for these roles.

The Methodology of Feminist Social Science

Feminist Social Science uses distinct methods to foster a feminist political position. Six of these methods, which are employed frequently and effectively, deserve more detailed examination.

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1. The Burden of Proof Rests with the Opposition ▸ Feminist Social Science often assumes that its view is the only reasonable one, and that those who assert a strong biological influence on the differences between men and women must prove their case. Janet Chafetz states this view in the following manner:

Where does gender leave off and sex role begin? Are some behavioral and temperamental differences innate to the two genders, or are they all aspects of sex role? The argument in the pages to follow will be this: Given present evidence, no precise line between organism and environment, gender and role, can be drawn. However, the burden of proof rests with those who argue for the innate quality of virtually any behavioral, attitudinal, emotional, or intellectual trait.¹⁴

Chafetz frames her question as if it were self-evident that the burden of proof must lie with those who oppose her views. Thus Chafetz, and other feminist social scientists, demand that the biological data be conclusive before it can be heard. Of course, much of the biological data, like most social scientific data, is not yet conclusive in the sense of being final and indisputable. Indeed, the data supporting many of the non-biological “possible interpretations” advanced by such feminists is not conclusive. But this attitude, which judges any biological theory of the roots of men’s and women’s differences guilty until definitively proven innocent, effectively prevents much data from receiving a fair hearing. As a procedure guiding scientific research and interpretation, it is highly deficient.

2. Methodological and Ideological Critique ▸ Feminist Social Science frequently attacks the methods used in those studies which lay great weight on sex differences.¹⁵ More often, they attack traditional or biological

social science by criticizing its ideological grounding. For example, Jessie Bernard critiques traditional social scientific study on men's and women's differences with the following ideological critique:

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The single paper in Part 1 deals not so much with substantive sex differences as with research on sex differences as an institution. This research has not apparently been notably successful in its manifest functions, which have varied over time, but it has been remarkably successful in its latent function of legitimizing the status quo by demonstrating the inferiority of women on most of the variables that are highly valued in our society. In the selection of variables for study, in the value placed on them, and in the interpretation given to results, it has shown a male bias.¹⁶

Barbara Lloyd offers a similar critique of more recent research and theorizing on men's and women's differences from a biological perspective:

Currently biological explanations of sex differences are popular; so it is relevant to ask why this should be and to consider the possible impact on society of the results of scientific studies sympathetic to this view. . . . Crook has suggested that one substitute for the ethical code lost when orthodox religious beliefs were abandoned has been found in simple theories of biological determinism. . . . As a psychologist I think that the illusion of normlessness and lack of boundaries which popular discussions of the "permissive society" create also furnish impetus to a search for universal, immutable verities, which biologically based explanations appear to supply.¹⁷

Such ideological critiques, like the methodological critiques, may have some value. Ideology does affect social science, and inadequate methods do vitiate the results of many studies. This should make one cautious when assessing the social scientific data on the differences between men and women. However, as used in Feminist Social Science, these methodological and ideological considerations often have one major flaw: They are applied scrupulously to enemies and laxly to friends. These critiques could just as appropriately (perhaps more appropriately) be directed to the work of feminist social scientists themselves. Their evidence is just as methodologically unsound, and their approach is even more ideologically based. In addition, ideological critiques, like the one by Lloyd, are sometimes merely ways of bypassing substantive biological data through the use of dubious and tendentious psychological and sociological analyses. "Sinful motives" do not preclude a researcher from producing valid results.

3. Casual Dismissal of Contrary Evidence > A third polemical method often used in Feminist Social Science is the casual dismissal of the data supporting the biological roots of men's and women's differences. This method appears in various forms. Sometimes it appears as a dismissal of useful evidence because it is not "conclusive," as in the following critique of the primate data:

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... we think that observations of other primates, though thought-provoking, cannot provide conclusive evidence one way or the other on the question of whether human behavior is biologically based.¹⁸

True, the primate data is not conclusive in the sense of yielding an indisputable picture of the origins of men's and women's differences. However, the mere fact that it is not conclusive in this sense does not mean that it is worthless. In fact, the primate data is very helpful. A similar technique is used below to make light of the biological contribution to the anthropological universals:

I propose here a model to account for the reproduction within each generation of certain general and nearly universal differences that characterize masculine and feminine personality and roles. My perspective is largely psychoanalytic. Cross-cultural and social psychological evidence suggests that an argument drawn *solely* from the universality of biological sex differences is unconvincing.¹⁹ (Emphasis added)

Of course, any "argument drawn solely from the universality of biological sex differences" is bound to be "unconvincing." Biological and environmental factors interact dynamically in the formation of almost every human social trait. However, this does not free a social scientist from the responsibility of seriously considering the significance of the biological contribution. The biological evidence has much weight; it should not be casually dismissed because it is not the "sole" factor involved.

This light dismissal of the biological data also appears in a neglect, clouding, or rearranging of the evidence. Sometimes important data is merely ignored. When Feminist Social Science examines the work of John Money, it almost always focuses exclusively on his studies which show the environmental determination of gender identity without giving proper attention to his studies of the prenatal hormonal sex-typing of the human brain.²⁰ Sometimes evidence is not ignored, but is instead presented in a way that clouds its true significance. The anthropological universals will

be buried in lengthy accounts of the endless diversity of men's and women's roles in different societies. Psychological evidence for men's and women's differences will be hidden in the middle of discussions of the many areas where psychological studies have been inconclusive.²¹ Finally, feminist presentations often weaken biological data by compartmentalizing the various types of evidence. They will not view the primate, anthropological, and psychological data synoptically in a way that allows a general view to emerge from the parts, but they will instead treat the data as distinct and unrelated bodies of material.²² This allows the feminist social scientists more easily to dismiss each of the spheres of evidence as in themselves "inconclusive." However, the biological evidence appears more weighty when it is viewed soberly, attentively, and as a synthetic whole.

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4. Focus on Modern Problem Areas ▸ Feminist Social Science often fosters a feminist political position by studying those problems which appear to follow from modern attempts at distinct men's and women's roles. For example, many feminist social scientists devote much attention to emotional disorders which are associated with the extreme distortion of the male and female personality in the modern world. Feminist social scientists will relate psychological problems experienced by women (depression, anxiety, frustration, and despair), and those experienced by men (anti-social behavior, criminality, and violent aggression), to the rigidity and inadequacy of the modern structure of men's and women's roles. Chesler states the point as follows:

For a number of reasons, women "go crazy" more often than men, and this craziness is more likely to be self-destructive than other-destructive. . . . Most female "neuroses" are a result of societal demands and discrimination rather than the supposed mental illness of the individual. . . . Women's physical and emotional symptoms of disturbance are different from those of men, and these differences are first apparent in childhood. When little boys are referred to child-guidance clinics, it is for aggressive, destructive, anti-social and competitive behavior. Little girls come in for such problems as excessive fears and worry, shyness, lack of self-confidence, feelings of inferiority and so on. These differences carry on into adulthood. . . . These symptoms may not illustrate mental illness so much as they indicate the inevitable stress born of trying to fit oneself into a role that is too tight. They are the concomitants of a sex-role stereotype that demands conformity, that pinches one psychologically when one does not or cannot conform, and the symptoms are merely exaggerations of accepted male or female behavior.²³

The cultural ideal of male character (inexpressive, insensitive, impersonal) and female character (passive, emotional, dependent) regularly comes under strong criticism as an ideal psychologically maladaptive for life in modern society. Sandra Bem is one of the strongest critics of all systems of sex-typing:

In fact, there is already considerable evidence that traditional sex-typing is unhealthy. For example, high femininity in females consistently correlates with high anxiety, low self-esteem, and low self-acceptance. And although high masculinity in males has been related to better psychological adjustment during adolescence, it is often accompanied during adulthood by high anxiety, high neuroticism, and low self-acceptance . . .²⁴

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This research persuades me that traditional concepts of masculinity and femininity do restrict a person's behavior in important ways. In a modern complex society like ours, an adult has to be assertive, independent and self-reliant, but traditional femininity makes many women unable to behave in these ways. On the other hand, an adult must also be able to relate to other people, to be sensitive to their needs and concerned about their welfare, as well as to be able to depend on them for emotional support. But traditional masculinity keeps men from responding in such supposedly feminine ways.²⁵

Further research has called into question many of Bem's assertions.²⁶ However, the important point here is that such feminist social scientists as Chesler and Bem focus predominantly on flaws in the pattern of distinct men's and women's roles found in the modern world. They are thus able to stir up dissatisfaction with the current order of men's and women's roles and simultaneously offer a feminist solution to the problems.

Some of the feminist criticisms of modern patterns of men's and women's roles are justified. As will be discussed in the following chapters, there are serious problems with the way men and women live out their roles in the modern world.* Nevertheless, the feminist viewpoint on these issues can often be misleading. First, it can mislead by falsely identifying a traditional order of men's and women's roles with the modern remnant of this order. What Bem calls "traditional" concepts of masculinity and femininity actually derive more from a Victorian culture after the advent of technological society. Most traditional societies rely too heavily on the contribution

* On the problems faced by women in the twentieth century, see Chapter Eighteen.

of women to emphasize female passivity, and require too much communal cooperation among men to emphasize male independence and self-reliance. Secondly, an understanding of the modern problems with men's and women's roles does not necessarily lead to a feminist political position. As was asserted at the end of the last chapter, it is just as easy to conclude from these problems that modern society needs a full restoration of traditional men's and women's roles. The feminists can only argue from the scientific evidence to their political program by falsely equating the modern problems with the traditional structure of men's and women's roles and by playing upon the emotive power of the issues themselves. The modern problems have great emotive force because they are experienced by most modern people. An elaborate presentation of these problems can motivate a desire for change, and the feminist social scientists are on hand to strongly recommend which direction this change should go. Nonetheless, there is no necessary connection between their scientific evidence and their political recommendations. The modern Western system of men's and women's roles may be inadequate to meet the challenges of technological society, but this does not mean that all distinct men's and women's roles are ineffective, arbitrary, and oppressive.

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5. Polemical Terms ▸ Feminist social scientists also advance a political position by employing direct polemical techniques. They often present scientific data and the theories about men's and women's differences in a way calculated to produce a particular emotional response in the reader. They strive for a response which would not occur if they presented the data in a more neutral, objective fashion. For example, the following quote is packed with terms full of emotive and ethical significance:

The *secondary status* of woman in society is one of the true universals, a pan-cultural fact. . . . This paper is primarily concerned with . . . the problem of the *universal devaluation* of women. . . . What do I mean when I say that everywhere, in every known culture, women are considered in some degree *inferior* to men? First of all, I must stress that I am talking about cultural evaluations; I am saying that each culture, in its own way and on its own terms, makes this evaluation. . . . On any or all of these counts, then, I would flatly assert that we find women subordinated to men in every known society. The search for a genuinely *egalitarian*, let alone matriarchal, culture has proved fruitless.²⁷ (Emphasis added)

Ortner has found that women have had a subordinate social role in all cultures, but, as discussed elsewhere in this book, such a subordinate role in no way implies “secondary status,” “devaluation,” or “inferiority.”* However, Ortner and other feminist social scientists view the data from a feminist political perspective—drawing partly from a Marxist ideology—which sees all consistent differentiation of social role as a sign of political oppression. Thus she employs political terms in interpreting the data. Furthermore, she employs them in a way that appeals to the reader’s emotions. She does not merely stimulate or inform.

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Feminist social scientists such as Ortner often apply liberally such terms as “dominance,” “oppression,” “repression,” “inferiority,” and “subservience” to men’s and women’s roles. This terminology, based on a political power model of social analysis derived from modern political ideologies, is designed to make all social role differences appear repulsive.

Other polemical techniques are also often employed in Feminist Social Science. One such technique is to compare the modern proponents of biological theories of men’s and women’s differences to nineteenth-century social Darwinists, the Nazis, or other racist biological theorists. The following is one example:

I conclude therefore, that attempts to use biological evolutionary arguments to defend traditional sex roles are not justified. It is interesting to reflect that evolutionary viewpoints were also used over 100 years ago to argue against extending higher education to women. It is thus ironic that contemporary women who have benefitted from this reform (i.e., Hutt, Stassinopoulos) should want to use similar evolutionary arguments against further reforms beneficial to their own sex.²⁸

Another common polemical technique is to apply the term “biodeterminist” to any social scientist who argues for an important biological influence underlying men’s and women’s differences. This is often unfair, since the term “biodeterminist” implies a one-sided belief in the biological determination of sex differences to the exclusion of environmental factors. For example, Barbara Lloyd criticizes Judith Bardwick as a biodeterminist and advocates instead an “interactionist” model that “prevents an exclusive focusing on either biological or social factors.”²⁹ However, as the following

* See pp. 43–45 for a discussion of this point.

shows, Bardwick does not appear to be a “biodeterminist” who opposes an “interactionist” model:

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I think that differences between men and women originate interactively: in genetic temperamental differences, in differences in the adult reproductive system, and in sex-linked values specific to each culture. What are the bases for differences between the sexes, and how do they develop? From infant differences in gross activity levels and sensitivity to stimuli (temperament), from parental responses which are sex-linked, from pressures to identify with appropriate models of the same sex, from the ramifications of the physiology of the mature reproductive system, from an internalized concept of masculine and feminine that is a source of self-evaluation. This position is more complicated than either the classically psychoanalytic view or the culturally oriented view—but it is, perhaps, closer to the truth.³⁰

By using such terms as “biodeterminist,” feminist social scientists can portray their opponents as extreme and unreasonable while making their own positions appear moderate and sensible.³¹

6. Slanted Implications ▸ A sixth method used in Feminist Social Science to foster a political view is a distorted way of assessing the implications of the biological and environmental contribution to men’s and women’s differences.* In Feminist Social Science, the question is, “Do biological factors *compel* a traditional approach to men’s and women’s roles?” This is the underlying form of the question in the following:

The recognition of cross-cultural sex differences in behavior does not in itself suggest that such patterns are *necessary*. . . . From a cross-cultural perspective, and given the real limitations in present knowledge, few sex differences in social behavior seem *inevitable*.³² (Emphasis added)

When the question is asked in this way—Are sex differences inevitable?—the answer is almost certain to be no. In fact, once the question is posed this way, there is little need to survey the data to arrive at an answer. The question only serves as a way of distorting the real implications of the data: There is something in the biological endowment of men and women that leads to men’s and women’s differences.

* See pp. 440–442.

Feminist Social Science has become an important force in the academic community in the 1970s, and it promises to maintain its influence in the future. It is a type of intellectual inquiry which is more concerned with politics than science. It uses science as a means to bolster the feminist critique of society and win converts to the cause. Feminist Social Science has had a substantial impact on the social sciences and has contributed to their becoming highly politicized.

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Not all modern social science is Feminist Social Science. Not all social scientists who happen to be feminists—even zealous feminists—are feminist social scientists. There are many sober and reliable scholars who do not mold their science to fit their politics. The work of these scholars supports the data and the basic interpretations of the past two chapters. Men and women are different in important ways, and many of these differences are rooted in human biology.

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TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY

THE LIFE OF THE HUMAN RACE has undergone a radical change in the last two hundred fifty years, a change as great or greater in scope than the change from primitive society to traditional society which occurred among some peoples in the third millennium BC.¹ We have moved from a traditional society, or, to be more accurate, a collection of traditional societies, to a worldwide technological society that is rapidly becoming universal for the human race. This change from traditional to technological society has revolutionized human life, and one of the elements of human life that has been radically altered is social relationships. It is difficult at this time to assess the full significance of this change, since we live even now in the midst of an ongoing process of rapid technological and social change whose end result can be predicted in only a tentative fashion. Though some observers predict that the process of rapid change will soon be brought to a halt as the new technological order encounters various crises, such as resource shortages, the change could possibly continue for a while to come.²

To understand men's and women's roles in the contemporary world, one must understand the transition to technological society. In particular, one must understand those aspects of modern social life that have resulted from the rapid social change produced by technological development. This understanding is first of all necessary background to comprehend accurately the scriptural teaching. In the above discussion of the scriptural teaching on men's and women's roles, it was often necessary to consider the differences between the social structure in scriptural times and the social structure in modern society in order even to understand the meaning of the

words in the scripture. But in order to understand more fully the scriptural teaching, we also have to understand ourselves as modern people who are reading the scripture. The writers of scripture had their own distinctive human characteristics that marked them as members of a specific culture and a specific era, but we do as well. If we are to avoid the mistake of assuming that our position is privileged and the presuppositions of our society and culture are automatically authoritative, we must understand the content and sources of our presuppositions. Then we can judge how these presuppositions ought to influence our response to the scripture.

In addition to aiding our understanding of the scripture, an understanding of the development of the modern world is in itself something that must be considered when discussing the construction of a workable Christian social structure. As mentioned in Chapters Sixteen and Seventeen, any adequate approach to social structure, and therefore to men's and women's roles, must successfully take three significant issues into account: What is the nature of the human material? What is the ideal human society? What is the nature of the existing social environment? This chapter will examine this third issue—the nature of the modern social environment. It will thereby contribute to a successful Christian approach to men's and women's roles, and social structure in general, in the modern world. The final approach to men's and women's roles advocated in this book will not be determined exclusively by the pressures and demands of the existing social environment. The ideal for human society and the nature of the human material must also contribute to the final approach. However, if we are to live with a pattern of men's and women's roles of any sort, we must do so within our present environment, and for most human beings today this environment is shaped by the development of technological society. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the development and the structure of modern technological society.

Technological and Traditional Societies

In the eighteenth century a major change occurred in Western European civilization, beginning with England. Peter Laslett, a British historian, characterizes the change in these words:

... the general contrast between seventeenth and twentieth century English society is the one which seems to us now considerably more important

than any other known to English history. If by the exercise of historical ingenuity it could be attached to a particular set of events, there can be no doubt that it would have been called revolution, *the* revolution in fact.³

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This “revolution” centers upon the advent of industrialization and the beginning of what is now known as technological development. However, this change extends beyond the industrial sector of society. Laslett calls this change a “revolution” because it effected radical change in the way human beings approach all of life. Defining and describing this change precisely is not an easy task. As Laslett points out, no easily isolated “particular set of events” make up the technological “revolution.” However, even the most casual student of history can perceive a great change beginning in the latter part of the eighteenth century, accelerating and spreading in extent in the nineteenth century, and in the process of totally transforming all of human life in the twentieth century. It is too soon to describe the exact results of this change should it continue to its fullest form, but it has clearly inaugurated a new era of human history among all the peoples of the world. This chapter is concerned with understanding how this change produces a life different from that of traditional societies, and how it affects social relationships, especially in the family.⁴

For our purposes, human social groupings can be divided into three main types: (1) primitive society⁵ (all of which is prehistorical except insofar as it is described by “historical men” who make contact with contemporary primitive cultures); (2) traditional society (the type of society in which the New Testament was written and which prevailed in Western Europe until the eighteenth century); and (3) technological society. The concern in this chapter is with the difference between “traditional society” and “technological society.” An understanding of this difference will clarify the unique and extraordinary qualities of this modern technological society which we so easily take for granted. The difference between traditional and technological society is also important because it is precisely the fundamental difference between the world of the New Testament and the world in which we now live.

In drawing a contrast between traditional society and technological society, one should be aware of the diversity that exists among both traditional and technological societies.* The term “traditional society” refers

* A sensitive socio-historical analysis will also note great diversity within most societies according to social class. Because of its limited purposes and scope, the present chapter pays little attention to class. However, it should at least be acknowledged that the history of men and women,

to a broad spectrum of societies with many diverse social arrangements.* The society of Palestinian Judaism in the first century AD differs in many respects from the society of Imperial Rome in the same century and of Western Europe in the fourteenth, and all of these societies differ greatly from that of Tang China in the eighth century. Significant differences can be observed in the shape of political institutions, economic arrangements, social stratification, and family life. Though there is good reason for grouping these societies together, they do demonstrate a high degree of diversity.

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Recognizing this diversity can be helpful, because many people inaccurately describe technological society by contrasting it exclusively with the type of Western European society which immediately preceded it in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Such a contrast can prove misleading, for Western society at this time had its idiosyncratic elements and was not completely typical of most traditional societies. First, this society contained many remnants from medieval Western Europe, such as the remnants of a feudal system. Secondly, Western Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (and perhaps earlier) also included features which can be considered advance developments of technological society, such as the development of the capitalist system and the emergence of a special school system for educating the young of at least the wealthy class.⁷ In other words, this particular society is not always representative of the majority of traditional societies.

The variety existing among traditional societies does complicate the contrast between technological and traditional society. This contrast is further complicated by the evolution of technological society.⁸ In its early forms technological society looked very different than it did in its later forms. A gradual but accelerating development of technology has spanned the past two hundred years. At first this technological development primarily involved mechanical changes, such as the harnessing of new forms of power in the steam and internal combustion engines. Now this development is predominantly technetronic, as exemplified by the remarkable

children, the family, and social structure as a whole varies a great deal not only according to period and place, but also according to social class. Family and communal social structure in late medieval Europe differed greatly among nobles, bourgeoisie, peasants, and laborers. As the bourgeoisie in the nineteenth century were developing the model of the protected woman at home, the working-class woman, accompanied sometimes by her children, would frequently be in the factory helping to support the family.

* The diversity among traditional societies applies also to those traditional societies which still exist in the twentieth century. This diversity affects how the process of "modernization" will shape these societies. The end result may not necessarily be completely uniform.⁶

advance of computer science. Corresponding to these technological changes, the most significant socioeconomic developments were at first in the most basic levels of industrial production, but are now, at least in the more “developed” nations, in the human organizational sector (managerial development) and in the application of technology to change in human beings (training and opinion-forming methods). A manifestation of this evolution has been the shift from a predominantly agrarian population to a predominantly proletarian or “blue-collar” population, and then to a population that is predominantly engaged in service occupations (such as secretaries, salespeople, clerks, social workers, and teachers). In earlier stages, technological change was seen mainly in terms of the machine and industrialization. Now the computer has replaced the machine as the symbol of modern society, and the power of technology to transform human life is much more evident.

The contrast between technological and traditional society is also complicated by the contemporaneous existence of all three types of society—primitive, traditional, and technological—in the twentieth-century world. It would be a mistake to view the modern world as a collection of uniformly technologized societies. However, the dominance of technological society in the twentieth century is evident from the rapid pace at which traditional and primitive societies are being drawn into the process of global technological advance and consequent social change.⁹ Traditional societies still exist, but they inevitably feel the impact of neighboring technological society, and begin to show signs of change. It is thus possible to pass a series of Bedouin tents in a Middle Eastern desert and find television antennae extending from the tops of the tents. Many people in rural areas of Africa, Asia, and Latin America still follow a predominantly traditional pattern of social life, but these rural areas surround major technologized urban centers which are in the process of transforming the nature of rural life. Even the nations of North America and Europe, which are some of the most technologically advanced nations in the modern world, still include remnants of traditional society, particularly among rural groupings and ethnic subcultures. However, these remnants are quickly dissolving. The world at present contains many types of societies, but the dominant force is that of technological society. Trends within all societies are in the same direction—toward a technological pattern of life.

For all the possible refinements of description in the contrast between traditional society and technological society, it is still the basic contrast that is most important in obtaining an overall perspective on recent hu-

man history and on the difference between our life and that of people in scriptural times. A characteristically new approach now dominates human life. Understanding the basic principles of this new approach and how they transform social structures will provide a helpful perspective for understanding social roles in the modern world and the roles of men and women in particular.

Functional and Relational Principles of Social Structure

WHEN a human society moves from traditional to technological society, a basic principle changes in the organization of the social structure. The organization shifts from a social pattern in which relationship is the most fundamental consideration to a social pattern in which functional accomplishment is the most fundamental consideration. An overall systemic change occurs in the structure of human society, and this change reshapes everything in human life. Because the change is systemic, many elements change in a subordinate way. Family life moves from being consanguineal to conjugal. Government moves from being personal to bureaucratic. The fundamental unit of society ceases to be the family and becomes instead the individual. The care of social needs shifts from the realm of stable personal relationships to the realm of specialized social-welfare institutions. Efficiency considerations replace status and honor considerations. Tradition as a source of authority yields to utilitarian rationalism as a source of authority. Each of these factors is somewhat independent of the others, but there is a mutual interaction among them. Hence, there are two systems of human interrelation, each shaped by a different basic principle. It is helpful to begin a study of the difference between traditional and technological society by examining the difference between a relational and a functional principle of social structure. It will then be possible to see how a change from the one principle to the other involves a major change in the structuring of society.¹⁰

When a group of human beings is highly interested in completing a task, they tend to organize their activities and interrelations according to a functional principle. One can speak of a functional approach to human activity and interrelations when a set of human interactions are systematically shaped to maximize production or to achieve other goals.¹¹ The functional approach is most dominant in a situation where work occurs in a different time and place from "living," that is, when a work site such

as an office or factory is separated from the home. When the functional principle has been thoroughly applied to a job, then the laborers will go to the work site for a particular amount of time for the purpose of performing certain tasks. The time spent at the work site is used primarily for performing these tasks, and all people are excluded from the work site if they are not contributing measurably to the accomplishment of those tasks. What leads most to accomplishing the task with the least expenditure of time and effort is what is most desirable. The chief or overriding criterion which organizes activities in the functional situation is task efficiency. The functional principle is thus a work principle oriented primarily to production, achievement, and efficient task performance.

This criterion of task efficiency is not universal to the human race. Those accustomed to the functional efficiency of the modern office or factory can be maddened when they visit another culture where work is not segregated from "life" in special environments dominated by a functional approach. They may become frustrated and confused when they discover that an official will readily spend hours talking to a friend who happens by, or when they confront a political situation in which ceremony is accorded a high value and consequently often replaces the functional tasks of government rather than being separated as much from them as possible. Such visitors are encountering a principle of social structure that differs from the functional principle.

The alternative to the functional principle of social structure is the relational principle.¹² This has been the predominant principle shaping the social organization of most cultures throughout human history. The main remnant of such relational groupings in technological society is the family, but other remnants are sometimes found in villages, neighborhoods, religious communities, or other intentional communities. People join together in relational situations primarily for the sake of living together and not primarily for the sake of accomplishing a task or producing a product. For example, a family often shows much devotion to a family member who is hostile, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to make a functional contribution to the family. If asked to explain such loyalty, family members would probably say simply, "He is my father," "She is my daughter," or "He is my brother." Their replies would consist of a simple statement of the type of personal relationship that exists among them. Questions of functional contribution and task efficiency are not primary in determining the structure and life of the grouping.

Many people living in technological society think of the word "func-

tional” as a term of unqualified commendation. What is not purely functional is described as “inefficient,” “purposeless,” or “disorganized,” in other words, as functioning poorly. However, though the relational approach is not primarily task oriented, it is inaccurate to characterize it as “purposeless” or “inefficient.” A different criterion for efficiency applies to relational settings. This criterion measures “relationship value” rather than “task efficiency.” A type of purposiveness exists in relational groupings, but one that differs from the task orientation of the functional grouping. The primary goal in a relational grouping is to strengthen the relationships and the people who are in the relationships. Task considerations are not ignored. However, they are secondary to the primary concern for the solidarity of personal relationships and the welfare of those individuals who are in the relationships.

People who live in a technological society usually find it difficult to understand the concept of “relationship value.” This difficulty springs largely from the functional tendency to divorce purposive, goal-oriented activities from expressive activities. The sphere of expressive activities includes aesthetic expression (e.g., music, dance, painting), emotional expression (e.g., anger, affection, grief), and ceremonial expression.¹³ According to the functional approach, this sphere remains separate from the functionalized work setting, since expressive activities do not directly contribute to the accomplishment of the tasks at hand. As a consequence, the concern for usefulness and purpose is not supposed to interfere with the expressive sphere. A person gets angry, celebrates, or sings a song, simply on the basis of preference and feeling. The more purely it expresses feeling (and not a utilitarian or even a social purpose), the more genuine or authentic it is supposed to be. Expression is an end in itself and is divorced from the purposive sphere of productive or utilitarian concerns.

This separation between goal-oriented and expressive activities does not occur in a relational situation. The relational work setting provides room for expressive activities, such as customs of respect or affection, as, for example, among a family preparing a meal. There is also a purposiveness in the expressive activities. They are not merely guided by emotion and preference. Activities such as showing affection of respect, worship, ceremony, and celebration express aspects of a personal relationship when done in a relational grouping and are often done on the basis of objectively understood principles. They are not primarily ways of expressing emotion, though emotions can be involved. The purposive, goal-directed sphere is thus integrated with the expressive sphere within the context of stable

personal relationships. This integration sheds light on the meaning of the term “relationship value.” An activity has high relationship value when it expresses, establishes, or strengthens a relationship, even though the activity may not be productive or utilitarian.

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There are several other important differences between groups structured according to functional and relational principles. First, functional groups tend to be characterized by certain types of impersonality when contrasted with relational groups. Functional situations are normally structured in a way that makes them independent of particular people. This type of impersonality in functional groupings is sometimes described as the “institutional” or “bureaucratic” element of the grouping.* An organization is created (a factory or a corporation or a government) which is staffed by people, but the people are replaceable. They assume positions on the basis of their competency for the job. The positions have set responsibilities and functions defined according to certain rules of administrative structure. The procedures by which the group operates are formalized, that is, fixed and official. All of the people in the organization could die simultaneously and be replaced by people of like skills, and, if adequate records were left, the organization could continue on in the future as it did in the past. The organization is thus independent of the particular people who work and live within it.

A relational grouping operates according to a different principle. The work and life of the group depends to a greater degree upon the particular people within the group. The father of a family is not replaceable. If he dies, another man may marry his widow and care for his children, but he would not easily be considered more than “like a father” to the children. A family shop will be passed on to a son, even if he is not specially competent, rather than be given to someone who passes an exam. Such a business may also be handed over to an apprentice, but the apprentice would inherit the business because of his personal relationship with the master. It is the personal relationship which counts, and not the fact that

* It is helpful to further clarify the relationship between bureaucracy and functional, technological groupings. Though functional groupings are usually organized according to bureaucratic or institutional principles, bureaucratic groupings are not always thoroughly functionalized. In bureaucratic organization, “system” predominates. The bureaucratic spirit is eager for uniformity, control, and order as a value in itself. Something must be added to the bureaucratic or institutional approach in order to make it functional, and this additional element is the preoccupation with results. The motive force of the functional principle is the tendency to improve production and effectiveness. The functional approach tests uniformity, control, and order by the criterion of efficiency. More often than not, the favored organizational scheme is strongly systematic, but greater flexibility is possible since results provide the controlling factor.¹⁴

he is the most skillful craftsman available in the town. In a traditional state, the personal identity of the ruler is central, and authority to act derives from a personal relationship with him. Government is executed by the servants or friends of the ruler; their commissions are often established to deal with a particular situation, and they can be changed at will by the ruler without the approval of a functionally organized administrative or legislative body. This contrasts with a functionalized or bureaucratic state, where, while a ruler may have his own personal staff, the government as a whole is structured according to functionally defined positions, each of which has its own area of responsibility, competency of authority, and rules of operation, and many of the office holders continue to fill their positions even after the term of the current chief of state has ended.

Functional
and Relational
Principles
of Social
Structure

A functional grouping is also impersonal in the sense that it tends to be concerned with people only insofar as they contribute to accomplishing a task.¹⁵ A functional approach tends to pare away all factors besides strictly functional ones, and hence tends to eliminate all personal considerations that are not in some way relevant to the efficient accomplishment of the task. Each individual works according to the job description and procedures (whether specified explicitly or understood implicitly), and, as far as the organization is concerned, the characteristics of the individual are irrelevant except insofar as they strengthen or weaken his or her ability to perform that job.* The functional principle thus leads to the sharp distinction between purposive goal-directed activities and expressive activities. Family life, personal interests, and feelings have no place in the functionalized goal-directed work environment. The consequence of this type of impersonality is the tendency to separate “private life” from “public life.”¹⁶ Private life occurs away from the impersonal functionalized work environment, and is the place where the individual expresses his own interests and preferences. It is the place where affective and expressive activities are acceptable in themselves and where family life can be lived.

A relational principle of social structure, on the other hand, leads to the integration of personal considerations and task considerations, with

* In recent years management experts have emphasized the connection between personal factors and the functional efficiency of employees. Managers are thus urged to pay attention to personal factors as a means of improving work efficiency and increasing production. The fact that personal considerations must be consciously reinserted shows how far the functional principle has dominated, and the need to justify these considerations by reference to efficiency and production shows what concerns are actually most prominent. The Japanese corporation seems to come closer to blending the functional and the relational effectively than most Western groupings, but it is likewise a primarily functional grouping. For a short but incisive treatment of this issue, see Jacqueline Scherer, *Contemporary Community* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1972), 88–90.

the personal considerations predominating. The personal relationships determine how the group acts together. The son may be more competent than his father at managing the family business, but he will not therefore become the father's boss. The nature of their personal relationship precedes in importance strict task-competency considerations. Nor is there anything like a private sphere. The entire life of each member of the grouping is of concern to each other member. A father is concerned with his son's performance in school or work, but he is also concerned with his son's personal interests, desires, and relationships. Relational groupings thus take into account and even build upon personal considerations, without totally neglecting the accomplishment of tasks.

Another important difference between functional and relational groups is that functional groups tend toward specialization and standardization, whereas life in a relational grouping is more holistic and varied.¹⁷ The tasks and roles that an individual performs in functional groupings tend to be highly specialized. Not only is economic life specialized by craft, but there is a tendency to specialize more and more within each activity. The extreme form of industrial specialization is found in the assembly line where each worker performs one operation. Governmental specialization leads to the creation of a multitude of departments designed to perform more and more circumscribed and specialized governmental activities. At the same time, a functional principle leads to greater standardization.* There is a tendency to make everything uniform so that it can be interchangeable. The same jobs are developed with the same qualifications. The same

* At first glance, the principles of specialization and standardization may seem to conflict. In fact, they complement one another perfectly. In a nonspecialized work setting, a craftsman performs a general task, such as building a piece of furniture, and single-handedly (or with the help of a servant or apprentice) accomplishes the wide variety of operations involved in the task. Such nonspecialized craft work necessarily allows for much personal and idiosyncratic expression. There may be objective standards of quality which each craftsman in the field must comply with, but there will also be a great deal of variety in the work produced and the methods used by different craftsmen. On the other hand, in the specialized work setting, a group of people perform a general task by dividing the task into a set of more limited operations and distributing the responsibility for the different operations among them. For example, one person may be responsible for the wooden frame of the furniture, another for the legs, another for the springs, another for the upholstery, and so on. If the group is large enough, it might even divide further and appoint different groups to take responsibility for different types of furniture. This trend toward specialization fits well with standardization. The more limited and specific the operation each person performs, the more that operation must be quantified, regulated, and strictly standardized. And since the process of specialization presumes the movement from small independent shops to large centralized industries, there is a strong pressure for tasks to be standardized among a large grouping of people and over a broad geographical area. Therefore, many of the personal and idiosyncratic elements characteristic of the nonspecialized work setting must be eliminated in the specialized setting.

methods are used. Tools, parts, and equipment become uniform. In addition, this standardization occurs not only in one area, but over a broad geographical region.

One result of the dual process of specialization and standardization is that people are mainly considered as the bearers of a skill. The chief interest that a functional grouping shows in another human being is in that human being's ability to perform a particular task effectively, i.e., that person's competence. Moreover, the functional grouping is only interested in individual bearers of skills.¹⁸ Relational corporate units bring needless complications. A civil service office or a factory cannot deal with a family as a unit. Families are not allowed to hold positions, only individuals who bear the requisite skills.

Life in relational groupings is approached in a more holistic and varied fashion. One man is father/farmer/warrior/builder/judge. One ruler performs all the functions of government. He might do so as part of a college (a council) or with subordinates who govern smaller geographical areas on his behalf, but he will normally perform all the functions of government. A relational principle also allows more variety from grouping to grouping. For example, in the Middle Ages there was a great degree of local variation in tools, parts, equipment, jobs, and methods. As a result of this varied and holistic approach, people are not considered primarily as either individuals or bearers of a specialized skill, but as members of particular corporate groupings. A man is not primarily seen as John the lawyer or engineer, but as John the son of Will from Bridlington.

Finally, functional and relational groupings differ from one another in the way they approach change. Functional groupings tend to prize innovation and flexibility, whereas relational groupings value stability.¹⁹ M. F. Nimkoff describes this contrast vividly:

An important factor here is that economic production, being based upon science, is subject to the process of rationalization, and the family is not. If science can be said to have a motto, it is: There is always a better way. Obsolescence and innovation are encouraged. But the family, like religion, is designed to afford stability to social life. We may be interested in a new model of car every year, but not in a new model of family life.²⁰

If something can be done better, the dynamic of the functional principle is to change to do it better—at least if the cost is not too great. This principle finds prominent expression in modern technological society, which

exposes all of its members to a constant experience of change. On the other hand, a relational principle tends more toward stability. Family relationships are considered permanent. No one can divorce their children, and divorce in a marriage is unfortunate rather than ideal. Friendship, neighborliness, and other bonds among people grow stronger over time. In addition, relational groupings value consistency in a personal relationship. When family members or close friends regularly rearrange their values or alter their patterns of response, the social group is weakened. Changes that are seen by all as improvements in someone's behavior are always welcome, but other types of constant change weaken and even destroy personal relationships. A relational grouping thus tends much more to stability than does a functional grouping.

The contrast between functional and relational groupings can be drawn too strongly. Functional and relational principles are actually "pure types" that are never completely embodied in one group.²¹ For example, families or friendships often employ a functional approach. In fact, human beings take this approach to some degree whenever they work together. A functional principle can be applied to specific areas within a grouping which is predominantly relational. The movement from Palestinian Jewish society to the Christian community discussed earlier involved a movement from a social situation in which many leadership positions were determined by birth (except those filled by the scribe-rabbis) to a situation in which the elders were all chosen for positions on the basis of ability. As the pastor of a community of people, an elder served in a much more relational way than a manager of a modern factory, but a functional element had been introduced. Various institutional or bureaucratic elements have existed in communities and groupings that are predominantly relational.

The relational principle also intrudes constantly in the modern world of work. Just as the functional principle emerges in some form whenever human beings work, so the relational principle emerges whenever human beings come together. Friendship, sexual attraction, and accommodation to preferences, feelings, and needs all surface in the functionalized world of work even though the demands of task efficiency would restrict them to the private sphere. In all likelihood no human groupings can ever be totally functionalized. Nonetheless, though the functional and relational principles exist only as pure types, it is still the case that all human groupings are formed primarily by either one or the other. Each principle has a logic of its own, and each produces different results when applied to particular social structures. The difference between a functional and re-

lational principle must be understood in order to accurately understand the nature of modern technological society.

Social Structure in Technological Society

WESTERN European civilization began to undergo a significant change in the eighteenth century which led to the development of what is now sometimes called “technological society.”²² A new type of society began to form, one based on new principles of social structure. The term “technological society” indicates the importance of the role technological change played in shaping this new form of society. However, technological development was not the only major factor involved in this process of social change.* Economic and social factors played a major role with the growth of population, economic activity, and urbanization, and with the disruption of traditional social patterns caused by the new form of economic life and by the rapidly expanding cities and proletariat. Ideological factors also played a significant role with the increasing influence of Enlightenment thought on society and the declining influence of Christian belief, values, and order. Nonetheless, this new social order has been sufficiently molded by the demands of modern technology that the term “technological society” is an acceptable label for the new society.

A central characteristic of technological society is the way the functional principle dominates social arrangements. In traditional society,

* Understanding technological society as a society which manifests a system of human relationships formed according to a guiding principle helps clarify the many discussions surrounding the origin of technological society. It is generally observed that a number of elements change at the same time when a society becomes technological. However, disagreement arises over the causal connections among the various elements. Does the economic change cause the ideological change (as Marx certainly held), or does the ideological change cause the economic change (as Goode sometimes intimates [*World Revolution*, 18–22], though his observations refer mostly to the shift from traditional to technological society occurring among less developed nations in the twentieth century). While this discussion has some usefulness, it often ignores the basically systemic relationship among the various factors. The elements of the social system are interdependent. Each is a condition for the other, and a change in one produces a change in the other. The ideological development of a concern for individual rights is both a cause or enabling factor for industrialism and a consequence of industrialism. Each causes the other and the advance of one makes the advance of the other easier. It is not possible to change one element without in some way changing the rest of the system. An ecological balance exists among the elements. It is helpful to trace the development of the set of conditions which makes a new dynamic possible and which allows it to gradually dominate a society, and it is helpful to trace some of the events which advance the development of that new system, but it is probably not possible to relate most of the main factors as dependent variables in connection with one or two all-important independent variables.

relationship considerations were dominant in shaping the social structure. Most modern people would be surprised at how little a functional principle was adopted as a way of structuring various groupings in traditional society. We are so thoroughly accustomed to the idea that people work in a different place from where they live that we tend to project this modern model into our view of the past. However, in past societies, most people worked at home: on a family farm, at a craftsman's workshop, or in a shop attached to a craftsman's or merchant's house. Moreover, functional considerations and family and personal considerations were much more integrated than they are today. People normally worked with members of their families or with members of other families as servants or apprentices, and the relationships shaped the way in which work was carried out. The functional principle played a more dominant role in some settings: in professional armies like the Roman army, in some civil service situations where bureaucratic methods developed (including some ecclesiastical "civil service" situations), and in some economic situations.²³ However, before the eighteenth century, it was rare for a group of human beings in any setting to systematically organize all of their activities and interrelations to maximize their efficiency in completing certain tasks. In the eighteenth century, this functional principle began to be widely applied to certain economic enterprises with the development of the factory system of production. As time passed, the dominance of the functional principle spread to other areas of life. The concern here is primarily with its impact on social relationships, and the differences between social relationships in the old and new order.

Basic Life Pattern

In technological society, social relationships are thoroughly transformed. As the world of interactions that follow a functional principle expands and dominates new sectors of society, the overall shape of people's lives changes. There is a life pattern that "fits" with the development of technology, a life pattern in which the shape of a person's life provides the least obstacle for that person finding a place in the socioeconomic activity that characterizes technological society.²⁴ Central to this pattern is the establishment of the individual and the mass collective as the main units of society.²⁵

The Individual and the Mass Collective ▸ The primary unit in traditional society was a group, not the individual. Individuals functioned as

part of groups in such a way that their lives were largely determined by the life of the group rather than by their own individual direction. People spent more time together in groups both physically (fewer homes had private rooms) and socially. Individuals in traditional society were more conscious than we are of belonging to certain groups and of identifying themselves according to their role in those groups. The primary group was the family, but not merely the nuclear family. The family in traditional society included a wider kinship grouping, though all in the grouping did not necessarily inhabit one residence. In addition, there was the larger social group of the village or the quarter of the city, or the guild or craft association.*

Basic Life
Pattern

In technological society an individual is detached from his group relationships so that he can function according to a skill he bears or a job he performs. Family commitments ideally play no part in a modern work environment such as a factory or an office. Guilds and other professional or religious corporations are inefficient and have to be eliminated because they operate as social bodies and fraternities rather than merely as functional groups.²⁶ The dynamic of technological society undermines the groupings of traditional society which constitute its fundamental structural units and which provide people with a communal life and a sense of communal belonging and identity. These groups are deprived of their legal protection and either reduced in importance if indispensable (as was the conjugal family), eliminated (as were most guilds and corporations), or replaced by functional and relational groupings which are more clearly distinct (as “functional” professional societies and “relational” clubs replace the older corporations which integrate relational and functional considerations). This frees individuals to move and act independently of other individuals. People become more mobile. They can take a job, invest money, and change residence without needing the agreement of anyone else (other than immediate family members). They can fit into the technological system according to their competency and the system’s need. In other words, individuals can fit into the system in a way determined solely by functional criteria and not by personal relationship or communal criteria.

As the individual replaces the relational grouping as the basic unit of society, the mass collective also develops as the main corporate body.²⁷ Society becomes less and less a structured set of interrelated groupings,

* The weakening of kinship ties and neighborhood-type groupings in technological society will be discussed later in this chapter, pp. 502–504.

each with its own rights and responsibilities. Instead, it becomes increasingly a mass aggregate of individuals. Historically, this process was aided by the concept of the absolute state and by the actual increase in the state's authority. A further major step was taken on the European continent beginning with the French Revolution: Many groups within society lost their rights. Local rights, guild rights, university rights, and church rights were frequently stripped away, or else conferred upon these groups by the sufferance of the state. The concept of the rights of man (i.e., the individual) and its correlate concept of state authority replaced the view of society as a network of interrelated semi-independent bodies, each with its own traditionally guaranteed rights. Jacques Ellul describes more fully this societal shift which occurred in France at the time of the French Revolution:

The very structure of society—based on natural groups—was also an obstacle [to the development of technological society]. Families were closely organized. The guilds and the groups formed by collective interests (for example, the University, the Parliament, the Confraternities and Hospitals) were distinct and independent. The individual found livelihood, patronage, security and intellectual and moral satisfactions in collectives that were strong enough to answer all his needs but limited enough not to make him feel submerged or lost. . . . These obstacles disappeared at the time of the French Revolution, in 1789. . . . a systematic campaign was waged against all natural groups, under the guise of a defense of the rights of the individual; for example, the guilds, the communes, and federalism were attacked, this last by the Girondists. There were movements against the religious orders and against the privileges of Parliament, the Universities, and the Hospitalers. There was to be no liberty of groups, only that of the individual. There was likewise a struggle to undermine the family. Revolutionary legislation promoted its disintegration; it had already been shaken by the philosophy and the fervors of the eighteenth century. Revolutionary laws governing divorce, inheritance, and paternal authority were disastrous for the family unit, to the benefit of the individual. And these effects were permanent, in spite of temporary setbacks. Society was already atomized and would be atomized more and more. The individual remained the sole sociological unit. . . . For the individual in an atomized society, only the state was left.*²⁸

* Though Ellul's remarks can create the impression that mass society includes no collective groupings other than the state, such is not the case. In most non-Communist countries, many types of collectives operate without complete state control, e.g., business corporations, labor

Thus the French Revolution gave considerable impetus to the movement towards the mass collective. This collectivization has only been implemented thoroughly and uniformly in certain Communist or Fascist states. However, even in Western societies, which contain various independent corporate bodies such as labor unions, the main social and political groupings are not structured relationally. Instead, they are structured functionally as a band of individuals joining together to exercise power in the only ways available to them in a mass collective society. This trend towards mass society is present today throughout the technologized world.

Basic Life
Pattern

Government and Authority ▷ The shift in the basic units of society has several significant aspects. One of these aspects appears in the way groups are governed and authority is exercised.²⁹ Government in traditional society is predominantly personal. It is incarnated in a position represented by a man who is the leader of the people. A personal relationship exists between him and the group he is leading. He is a figure in their lives, someone they respond to with personal loyalty (or personal disloyalty and hostility). He may gain his position through inheritance or by being chosen (either by training or election), but he exercises his leadership within the context of a personal relationship.

By contrast, government in technological society is more impersonal. It occurs within a mass institution, not within a small relational grouping. The leaders are officeholders, and they can be freely replaced by others as long as the function is fulfilled. Their role consists primarily of administration and policy setting rather than personal leadership. This does not mean that they cannot exert personal leadership or become the focus of personal loyalty (or hostility). The president of the United States, for instance, frequently exerts some form of personal leadership, although he mainly functions as a chief executive. Human beings cannot completely avoid wanting or having leaders. Nonetheless, the trend away from personal government is evident, and the contrast between traditional and technological society is clear: In technological society an institution tends to fulfill the functions of government, whereas in traditional society leaders assume a more personal governmental role. The government in technological society is “the state,” not the king or the council or the elders, and the historical development of the nation-state was one of the chief factors preparing for the advent of technological society.

unions, charitable organizations, and churches. The key observation is that these groups are not relational but functional and each is usually regulated, supervised, and licensed by the state.

As forms of government change, so do the ways of exercising authority or “social control” (a sociological term derived from the leadership models of technological society).³⁰ In traditional society, a leader relies primarily upon the direct exercise of personal authority within a personal relationship. A different mode of social control emerges in technological society. Rather than exerting direct authority, the leaders of mass institutions prefer to establish policy, make regulations, and influence opinions. In short, the governing institutions regulate and propagandize. The people in technological society are very susceptible to such control because they are all individuals isolated from one another and unconnected to stable groupings which loyally hold and carefully pass on other values.³¹ Moreover, much of this type of social control affects people on a less than conscious level. People are often unaware that they are being controlled, and will accept this control willingly while reacting against anything that looks like a direct exercise of authority. For example, most modern Americans resist and dislike clear commands and directions, but they submit with readiness to various forms of control through opinion formation. The exercise of social control in technological society can be at least as thoroughgoing as in traditional society, and perhaps more so.

Personal Care ▸ The shift in the basic units of society is also reflected in the way that society cares for personal human needs.³² In traditional society, education, professional training, health care, and financial support all occurred within a relational social grouping. Family, guild, village, and church normally met these needs. Hospitals existed in Western traditional society, but they were only for special illnesses, and they were ordinarily administered and staffed by religious orders. The aged were cared for within the family. Orphanages existed, but they too were special facilities, administered and staffed by religious orders, for those individuals who had lost their place in the interrelated set of groupings which was society.

In technological society, mass institutions predominate in the care of personal human needs. Education, welfare, and communications are increasingly entrusted to social institutions such as hospitals, schools, welfare agencies, and retirement homes. Personal needs which were once met within a relational grouping are now handled by functionalized public institutions staffed by people hired and trained for the purpose and with whom the cared-for individual has no personal bond. The development of educational institutions is of particular importance. In traditional society, children were educated and formed in the course of daily life by their parents and older adults within a relational grouping. In technological

society, they are segregated from normal adult life and entrusted to special institutions where they relate solely to other children (their peer group) and to professional educators. Just as government is exercised through a mass collective institution rather than a relational grouping, so personal needs are cared for within a mass institutional setting.

The functionalization of society thus undermines the traditional structure of society. Government and personal care are no longer conducted within a set of interconnected relational groupings which form the basis of society. Instead, the new technological social structure is based on mobile individuals and mass collective institutions which govern the aggregate of those individuals and care for their personal needs. The overall structure of society thus undergoes a change that has tremendous consequences for human life.

Basic Life
Pattern

Values and Personal Relationships

Ascribed and Achieved Positions ▷ In addition to the basic structural changes just described, the functionalization of society also produces concrete changes in values and personal relationships. In technological society greater value is given to achieved positions, whereas positions which derive from birth or inheritance are devalued.³³ The key criterion for obtaining status and respect is competency defined in functional terms. Family background and inherited wealth no longer qualify a person for status or respect, except insofar as they put someone in a position of power. However, power which has been inherited rather than earned usually draws an equivocal response of respect mingled with resentment. The positions of father, mother, son, or daughter are not highly valued, but are instead taken for granted (father and mother less so, since raising a family can be seen as an achievement). The position of Christian likewise loses value, as does the position of clergyman unless it is reinterpreted in functional terms (for example, as “counselor”). Class distinctions based on birth lose their importance (with the frequent exception of race), and members of society are categorized chiefly according to socioeconomic class. The main categories of upper, middle, and lower class are determined by job and education—the equipment for jobs. The functionalization of society thus leads to an increase in the status, respect, and value given to achieved positions, and to a corresponding decrease in the value given to non-achieved positions.

Commitments ▷ The functionalization of technological society also affects the nature and quality of personal relationships. One major change

occurs in the type of commitments that are made within social groupings. Technological society emphasizes partial functionally specific commitments.³⁴ Commitments in traditional society tend to be few, but they encompass the whole of life. For example, a guild was a professional society, but a craftsman's commitment to the guild extended far beyond what modern people would consider the limits of his professional life.³⁵ It included an obligation for the welfare of the other members, who could call upon him whenever a need arose. The guild could discipline and regulate his private conduct. The guild was a religious body which worshiped together and a fraternal body which socialized together. By contrast, most commitments in technological society are functionally defined in a more specific fashion. Membership in a modern professional society involves a much more partial specified commitment than did membership in a guild. The member only participates to a limited extent: He is normally committed for a certain amount of time, money, and perhaps work, but no more. His religious and social life as well as his personal needs and conduct are of no official concern to the society except insofar as they directly affect his professional life. Aside from special friendships that develop among members, any acts of personal concern or of responsibility for the private life of another member would likely be resented as unwarranted interference. This trend towards limited, partial, functionally specific commitments affects most of the groupings within technological society, including most religious groups.

Separate Functional and Personal Spheres ▸ Another significant change in personal relationships occurs as a result of the new division created within technological society between the functional and personal sphere. As mentioned earlier, traditional society incorporates purposive, functional activities and approaches into a broader network of personal relationships. Relational groupings in traditional society are stable, structured, and purposive, but they are also personal at the same time. They contain an order of authority, defined roles, and customary patterns of relationship; they are stable over a long period of time; and they encompass both the world of work and the world of family, preference, and emotion. Relationships in technological society, on the other hand, tend to follow one of two courses. Relationships are either structured, purposive, and functional, such as those on a work site; or they are informal, expressive, and nonpurposive, as those in friendship groupings. There are several exceptions to this generalization. For example, the family still normally combines structure and purpose with expressiveness, though the tendency to separate these spheres

is affecting even family life. Clubs and groups sponsored and staffed by adults but geared for children, such as scouting groups and athletic clubs, also present some exception. In both the family and in youth organizations, the presence of children seems to increase the demand for structure. Nonetheless, the trend of technological society is definitely toward separating the functional and “personal” spheres of life.

This separation is a consequence of both the breakdown of stable social groupings and the reaction to the preponderance of functional groupings in technological society. People in traditional society associate with one another primarily according to stable relationships and according to the roles and order of those relationships. The patterns of interaction are determined by longstanding family, kinship, village, craft, and religious relational groupings. On the other hand, in technological society the stability of relational groupings decreases as commitments are partialized. Kinship relations outside the immediate nuclear family become less stable than in the past, while associations centered upon work or residence become more temporary and less likely to be marked by stable bonds or commitments than was once the case. Therefore, the nonfunctional relationships that do exist tend to form according to interest, attraction, and sometimes according to current proximity, and tend to be characterized by fluidity, informality, lack of structure, and instability.

The formation of these types of relationships is also furthered by a popular reaction to the preponderance of functional groupings in technological society. Most people have some reaction against the impersonality and structured rigidity of functional groupings. Though they accept that some type of order is necessary in functional situations to efficiently accomplish a task, they desire that their “private life” be free of such an order and purposiveness. The personal realm thus becomes the antithesis of the functional realm. In the personal realm, emotion, spontaneity, and preference hold sway. One makes friends for reasons of mutual interest or mutual liking, and not for reasons of mutual advantage or benefit. Romantic love becomes the sole basis for marrying and remaining married. Arranged marriage passes away in technological society and family considerations no longer enter into the choice of marriage partner. To a person living in a society where the functional and personal realms have been almost entirely separated, considerations such as mutual benefit or advantage in friendship or marriage choice seem crass in contrast to pure preference or attraction.*

Values and
Personal
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* The technological division between structured, purposive, functional relationships on the one hand and informal, expressive, nonpurposive relationships on the other explains some of the reactions modern people have to the social forms of traditional society. Most twentieth-century

The very term “personal relationship” as used in modern society reveals the extent of the divorce between functional and personal spheres of life. The term usually refers to human relationships that are not predominantly functional, that are in fact as different from functional relationships as possible. Since structure, order, and purpose characterize functional relationships, personal relationships should proceed according to different principles. Such a definition of “personal relationship” would be less intelligible to people living in a traditional society, where functional relationships are much less frequent and less important, and where “impersonal” relationships are nearly nonexistent. Almost all relationships in traditional society are “personal” in the sense that they involve all aspects of a person’s life, though few relationships in traditional society would be personal in the modern sense. The modern use of the term “personal relationship” is in itself a reflection of the divorce between functional and personal spheres in technological society.

Emotions ▸ The effects of this divorce are specially evident when examining the place of emotions in technological society. Emotional expression in traditional society was thoroughly integrated into stable relationships. People felt strongly and expressed themselves freely (perhaps more freely than people in technological society), but their emotions were regarded as but one element in their personal relationships. Emotion was not normally valued for its own sake, and the guide to genuineness in personal relationships was loyalty rather than emotional authenticity.*

people react with condescension or hostility to traditional social forms, for these forms are no longer integrated into a structure of society built upon personal relationships. Marriages in which family considerations are dominant or in which the choice is “arranged” are considered anathema. Objective patterns of ethics and morality are frequently disliked as being too restrictive. Stable social arrangements are avoided. The emphasis is on spontaneity, not on faithfulness; on authenticity not on loyalty. One of the areas of strongest reaction is the area of men’s and women’s roles. It is difficult for modern people to grasp how the structure and order of traditional social roles operated within the context of personal relationships rich in commitment and affectivity. The personal was not banished from the structure of traditional social roles for the sake of greater efficiency, but was at the very heart of this structure. For further discussion, see the section on the “romantic reaction” in Chapter Nineteen, pp. 529–532.

* Lionel Trilling, in *Sincerity and Authenticity*, traces the emergence of the modern ideal of authenticity and describes its inherently anti-social tendencies. He begins by analyzing the Renaissance ideal of sincerity, which he sees as best typified in the words of Shakespeare’s Polonius: “to thine own self be true / And . . . thou canst not then be false to any man.” Sincerity means behaving in such a way that motive and action are congruent, in a way that avoids the deception of others. Being true to one’s self is a means to a higher end: being true to other people. Trilling sees the twentieth-century ideal of authenticity as differing from earlier conceptions of sincerity in that truth to self becomes the primary end in view, rather than a means to a broader social

In technological society, as personal and functional spheres separate, emotion becomes more distinct from outside purposes, and becomes a major independent criterion of judgment. In fact, feelings become the basis and criterion of personal relationships. One should not show love without feeling love, nor show respect without feeling respect. To do so would be “inauthentic.” Sharing of emotions becomes the crucial test of the depth of a relationship. For those who live in technological society, the traditional approach to emotions appears repressive or unpleasant. However, it is not in fact clear that the technological approach is superior. For example, it is arguable that arranged marriages in traditional society may succeed better than modern marriages based on romantic love.³⁶

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Personal
Relationships

Though it is accurate to say that technological society tends to divorce emotion from functionality, one qualification must be made. Technological society has also created a technology of emotions. Functionally efficient techniques have been applied to the control of human emotion and many people labor diligently and methodically at increasing their emotional pleasure. The entertainment “industry” has only developed in technological society. The same is true of T-groups and other therapy groups designed to produce emotional results in their participants. The sphere which in certain respects contrasts with the functional realm has become in another respect one of the more functionalized areas in technological society.³⁷

This discussion has sketched the broad outlines of the substantial differences between technological society and traditional society. The basic units of technological society are the individual and the mass collective

virtue. The enemy of authenticity is not the conscious deception of others, but self-deception. Trilling states this point in the following manner:

The hypocrite/villain, the conscious dissembler, has become marginal, even alien, to the modern imagination of the moral life. The situation in which a person systematically misrepresents himself in order to practice upon the good faith of another does not readily command our interest, scarcely our credence. The deception we best understand and most willingly give our attention to is that which a person works upon himself. Iago's avowed purpose of base duplicity does not hold for us the fascination that nineteenth century audiences found in it; our liveliest curiosity is likely to be directed to the moral condition of Othello, to what lies hidden under his superbness, to what in him is masked by the heroic persona. (16)

The dominance of the ideal of authenticity leads to the introspective search for hidden motives and feelings as a criterion for action. Trilling connects this search to the popular emergence of psychoanalytic techniques and concepts. Ultimately, such a criterion of action dismisses the roles and structure of traditional society as a falsification of the inner experience of the individual. Trilling writes,

At the behest of the criterion of authenticity, much that was once thought to make up the very fabric of culture has come to seem of little account, mere fantasy or ritual, or downright falsification. Conversely, much that culture traditionally condemned and sought to exclude is accorded a considerable moral authority by reason of the authenticity claimed for it, for example, disorder, violence, unreason. (11)

rather than a set of relational groupings, and this affects both government and social services. Achieved positions are valued more than inherited positions. Commitments become partial and functionally specific. The realm of personal relationships and human expressiveness is separated from the functional realm, resulting in relationships based primarily on emotion, preference, and an anti-structural, anti-purposive bias. These changes amount to a radical transformation in the shape of human society. They also lead to significant changes in that grouping which proves most central for an understanding of men's and women's roles—the human family.

The Family in Technological Society

To understand technological society, one must understand and assess its impact on the family. The family constitutes the basic unit of both traditional society and, to a more limited extent, technological society. The family is also the unit of society which resists functionalization most stubbornly. In fact, one could even say that to the degree that the family is functionalized, to that degree it is weakened and dissolved. The dynamic of family life is contrary to the dynamic of technological society, and family life increasingly manifests the strains that come from inhabiting an inhospitable environment.

Changes in Family Life

Two major changes befall the family in technological society. The first change involves the gradual weakening of kinship ties and supportive neighborhood-type groupings.³⁸ In traditional society, the family consists of more than the nuclear unit of husband, wife, and offspring. The traditional family consists of a sizable group of people and includes many conjugal units linked through some structure based on common descent. This wide set of committed kinship relationships exists regardless of whether the group lives together in one building. The larger family, kinship group, or clan has several important functions. It provides financial aid to the individual conjugal unit in times of special need, and often functions as a unit of economic operation. For example, a family farm or business often belongs to the larger kinship group instead of to the head of a conjugal family. The kinship grouping therefore serves as the social security, welfare, and insurance system. The members of the larger family also share one

another's good fortune. If one member arrives at a position of power or wealth, the entire kinship grouping can expect to benefit. Side by side with this strong kinship system is a committed village, neighborhood, occupational, or class grouping.* These groupings sometimes perform functions and fulfill roles similar to those of the kinship grouping. The conjugal unit thus finds its place in the wider set of relationships and commitments provided by the kinship system and the neighborhood-type grouping.

Technological society changes the relationship between the conjugal unit and both the wider kinship and village-neighborhood networks. The bonds within a kinship grouping begin to weaken, and the family group as a whole becomes smaller. Village-neighborhood relationships lose much of their familiarity, stability, and interdependence. This process whereby the conjugal family is isolated from larger relational groupings should be familiar from the previous discussion. It includes an increase in geographic and socioeconomic mobility, the general weakening of all groupings which do not operate according to strictly functional principles, the trend toward making the individual the basic unit of society, and the gradual transfer of the functions of the kinship network to larger social institutions with more resources at their command. Thus, the conjugal grouping of husband, wife, and children assumes a new independent existence, and becomes the only major familial unit of society.

Many internal features of the conjugal unit also change.³⁹ Descent loses much of its importance, and the descent system therefore shifts from a matrilineal or patrilineal structure to a bilineal structure.[†] This means that the individual traces his descent through both the father and the mother, and kinship groupings thus become less unified and distinct. This change predated technological society in the Western European family but affects many other family systems in the process of technological development. Choice of spouse becomes primarily the prerogative of the individual, in

* Supportive relational groupings not based on kinship are very common in traditional society, though the precise nature of these groupings varies according to such factors as class, nationality, and historical period. For example, medieval peasants received much communal support from their village grouping, whereas immigrants to the United States in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries often found this support in the ethnic urban neighborhood. The traditional nobility usually related within a nexus of noble families that was not geographically proximate. For merchants and craftsmen, the crucial relational grouping outside of the kinship network was either a set of patrician families or a guild.

† The passing on of the father's name is one of the few patrilineal features of the modern Western family. There is no consistent cultural distinction between a conjugal unit's relationship to the wife's family and the husband's family (such a distinction being the central mark of patri- and matrilineal systems).

part because the newly created conjugal unit will find no integral place in a larger network of committed relationships. As larger relational groupings diminish in significance, the conjugal family increases in emotional intensity and in the psychological burden which it must carry.⁴⁰ In technological society, the nuclear family unit of husband, wife, and children therefore becomes “the family.”

The second major change affecting family life is the loss of family functions.⁴¹ In traditional society, the family provided for most of the needs of its individual members. First, the traditional family was a major economic unit. Whether the family consisted primarily of farmers, craftsmen, merchants, rulers, or warriors, the individual normally found employment through the family relationship, and most often worked in the context of his own home. Secondly, the family was a social-welfare unit. The sick would be cared for at home by other family members. The aged would live with their younger relatives, and would receive material and emotional support from them. Anyone who encountered financial trouble or other types of difficulties would normally seek help from family members. Only after reaching the end of family resources would they seek help from outside the family, from neighbors, a wealthy person in the region, or someone else in the associated village-neighborhood network.

Thirdly, the family was the primary educational unit. Most young people received their basic and technical education from their parents, older brothers and sisters, uncles, aunts, and older cousins. In Western traditional society, a young person’s technical education would often be supplemented by apprenticeship to an unrelated adult, but even in the new setting the young person would become part of the master’s household. Tutors only served in noble and wealthy families, and special schools, as developed later, would be only for those receiving professional training. In Western society, schooling did not become common for wealthier bourgeois children until the seventeenth century, and mass education was a product of the nineteenth century. Fourthly, the family was often a unit of defense and protection. Families were frequently armed. Families often served as units in citizen armies, and they sometimes had the responsibility and legal right to punish certain offenses committed against family members (i.e., the right of blood vengeance). Family functions vary from society to society and from time to time within the history of a society. Nonetheless, it is generally true that an individual in traditional society spent much of his life within his family and under the care of his family. The basic unit of society was the family, not the individual.

In technological society, most of the functions once associated with family life are transferred to the realm of mass institutions. Economic life occurs within distinct economic institutions (businesses, factories, offices) separated from people's homes. Hospitals, clinics, doctors, and nurses care for the sick, and most people are born and die in a medical institution apart from the family. Infirm aged are cared for in hospitals, convalescent homes, and retirement centers. Financial support is provided by insurance agencies, loan agencies, social security systems, and welfare departments. Most education (except for the earliest stages) occurs at a school or on the job. Religious education is provided by Sunday school or catechism class. Police and standing armies assume all defense functions. Even leisure becomes less the province of the family, and more the province of peer groups and "friends."

The family only retains the functions of reproduction and early childhood training, and emotional and personal support. In fact, the burden of emotional support falls more heavily on the nuclear family as kinship ties and neighborhood-type groupings weaken. The family becomes the only place in society where the individual receives stable, unconditional, overall concern. Home is the place where "they have to take you in." As society assigns more and more things to specialized groupings designed for specific purposes, and as an individual's life gets portioned out to different groups and institutions, the technological family loses many of the functions which the family performed in traditional society.

Consequences for Modern Family Life

The gradual weakening of kinship and neighborhood ties and the loss of family functions which occur in technological society have several significant consequences in family life.

Isolation ▸ First, the conjugal family becomes isolated from other relational groupings which can support the pattern of family life.⁴² It is popularly supposed that this isolation strengthens the conjugal family. This view assumes that as the conjugal family becomes more independent of the wider kinship grouping and makes more decisions on its own, it should increase in strength and vitality. In fact, isolation appears to weaken the family. The traditional kinship network has a great interest in the stability of the individual nuclear family. The kinship network strengthens the individual family by placing it in a larger communal setting that reinforces

family ties and compensates for individual family weaknesses. The institutions of technological society provide some support for family life, but they cannot replace strong kinship relations.

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Emotional Support ▸ Secondly, the nuclear family life tends to be unable to carry the heavy burden for personal and emotional support that technological society lays upon it.⁴³ In studying the family in technological society, Norman Ryder makes this point:

The competitive and impersonal environment of an occupational structure (for the adult) or of an educational structure (for the child) is psychologically burdensome because it asks much of the individual in discipline and returns little in psychological security. . . . The conjugal family serves as an oasis for the replenishment of the person, providing the individual with stable, diffuse and largely unquestioning support, assuaging the bruises of defeat and otherwise repairing whatever damage may have been done in the achievement-oriented struggles of the outside world. The network of relationships through which one could seek such acceptance without the test of satisfactory performance was once much larger; it encompassed the extended kinship structure and the community of residence. . . . With the erosion of these alternatives the importance of the immediate family as a source of dependable emotional support becomes enhanced.⁴⁴

Technological society is dominated by functional situations which demand much from the individual and give little in return. Since the kinship network is no longer strong enough to assist and other stable relational groupings have weakened or vanished, the conjugal family must shoulder the full burden of this support. In addition, the absence of other family functions tends to make this one function the focal point of family life. This emotional intensity produces a strain on the conjugal family which it is not always able to cope with.

Parents and Children ▸ A third and related consequence of the changes in the family within technological society is a weakened relationship between parents and children. As family functions are attenuated and emotional support becomes the basis of the family relationship, the bond between parents and children grows fragile. Ryder states this point as well:

The links between parent and child, unlike those between husband and wife, are forged during the long and intimate process of interaction re-

quired for child socialization. In spite of this solid foundation it is uncertain that those links will survive the child's transition to adulthood, because their structural supports, which are characteristic of a traditional society have now largely vanished. The parents once controlled access to the land and provided most of the training necessary for the child's later work, but now land is not the prime base of production and technical education is acquired outside the family. The shift of the control of rewards and punishments from the family to the society has attenuated the traditional authority of the parent over the child. Deference, respect and gratitude alike have been diluted by the intrusion into the family structure of the alien ideology of individual rights and liberties.⁴⁵

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Therefore, parents in technological society become less important to their children in every area other than emotional attachment. They provide for less of their children's needs—less of their education and rearing, less of the key to their future life. As they grow older, children rely upon their parents only for financial assistance, and even this need soon disappears. Nor do parents rely upon their children for anything other than some form of emotional support. As technological society develops, children perform less work within the family, and become uncontributing dependents. Parents increasingly provide even for their own old age. The breakdown of structural supports puts considerable pressure on the emotional bond, and in many cases the bond is too unstable to bear the pressure. The father's authority in the family becomes questioned, and the relationships between parents and children as a whole become brittle and unsteady.

The Man's Role ▸ Fourthly, the gradual weakening of kinship ties and the loss of family functions which occur in technological society also affect the role of the husband and father.⁴⁶ The adult male familial role narrows in scope, and many of the traditional incentives for assuming this role are eliminated. This can be seen first of all in the separation of work site and home that results from the loss of the family's economic function. Since he must spend a large proportion of his time away from his home and in activities which exclude the participation of other family members (such as young sons), it is more difficult for him to exercise consistent authority over the household and to raise his sons. In addition, the psychological demands of the functionalized work environment cause many men to use their time away from work as a period of emotional escape, rather than as an opportunity to fulfill the demanding responsibilities of a husband and father. The traditional male role in the family can appear as a difficult extra

chore, since it is no longer integrated into the daily fabric of the man's life. The loss of family functions also diminishes male incentive for fulfilling a paternal role by virtually severing the connection between a man's family and his career, livelihood, and status. In most traditional societies, a man desires offspring as a way of recruiting laborers for the family's economic enterprise, providing for his old age, gaining added physical strength for defense, carrying on his name and lineage, and generally advancing his position and status in society. These incentives no longer exist in technological society. Also, as "deference, respect and gratitude" for the paternal role are "diluted" among the children, the role of father and husband ceases to bring status and honor even within the family. The male familial role thus narrows in scope, and the man has few structural incentives to fulfill even this narrow role.

The Woman's Role ▸ Finally, the changes in family life which occur in technological society seriously undermine the traditional role of women in the family. The woman today who assumes the traditional role of wife, mother, and domestic manager becomes increasingly isolated and dependent.⁴⁷ The weakening of kinship ties means that her household role no longer places her in the midst of a lively and attractive set of personal relationships. The loss of family functions means that she no longer participates productively in the economic activities of the family. She thus becomes isolated from economic, social, and political life, and grows more emotionally and financially dependent upon her husband. At the same time that she becomes isolated, she also finds her traditional household role shrinking in significance. She has fewer children to care for than would a mother in traditional society, and the increasing longevity of people in technological society means that she will spend a much smaller proportion of her life caring for those children.⁴⁸ The diminishing significance of family life in all but its emotional aspects means that little of her knowledge and skill is demanded of her while much is demanded of her emotionally. In addition, the educational institutions of technological society treat men and women alike; thus many women grow up with functional work skills and desire for achievement. This causes a role conflict to develop. As Ryder puts it, "The education system, which typically exhibits less overt discrimination than either the home or the place of work, equips the young woman with capabilities for and interests in nonfamilial roles. If her aspirations are frustrated, she experiences discontent; if her aspirations are fulfilled, she experiences guilt."⁴⁹ Great pressure is therefore placed upon the traditional female role in technological society.

The traditional role of women is also attenuated by trends which detach

many women from family units. Women in traditional society were always attached to men and family life. Since their role was primarily internal to household life, they were even less independent of the family than the men were. However, the changes in the family in technological society have altered this condition. More and more women are unattached to men and to family, and not always by the woman's choice.³⁹ In many sectors of modern Western society it is assumed that females, like males, will eventually become independent of the parental conjugal family. Often they can expect to spend much of their adult lives alone because of a husband's death, divorce, or because they never marry. In traditional society, unmarried and widowed women would automatically become part of a family group. In technological society, being unmarried or widowed usually means being on one's own. In such circumstances it is almost impossible for a woman to fulfill the traditional female role.

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The role of women as traditionally defined is thus undermined by the changes in family life which occur in technological society. The female role within the family begins to lose much of its substance. Since the world of work appears to be the only option, many women enter this world. Children tend to be entrusted to various institutions and surrogates, such as the day-care center, school, or television set. The family—the one situation in technological society which has a place for men's and women's roles—diminishes as a significant relational grouping. Personal relationships among men and women occur chiefly in strictly functionalized settings, or in spontaneous, unstructured, and informal friendship groups. In such a social condition, the demands expressed in women's movements arise almost of necessity.

The forces of technological society militate against groupings structured according to a relational principle. The family therefore finds it difficult to inhabit such a society. Family functions are removed, wider support systems are broken down, and roles and relationships become less stable and secure. Yet the family continues to play a role of great significance in technological society, as it must in every society. The family rears the children and provides personal and emotional support. As Ryder points out, many conflicts result from the family's ambiguous position in technological society:

The conjugal family is a relatively efficient design for supplying the kind of labor force a productive society needs and for providing comfort to the individual exposed to the consequences of participation in that system. The family has been the foundation of all systems ascribing status on the

basis of characteristics fixed at birth (such as race, sex, ethnic group and frequently social class). Its influence is antithetical to the exercise of productive rationality through equality of opportunity. Yet any attempt at further attenuation of family ties, in the interests of optimal allocation of human resources, would probably be self-defeating because of the high psychological cost to the individual. The family is an essentially authoritarian system persisting within an egalitarian environment. The growth of industrialism has been closely linked to the development of the ideology of individual liberty. Family political structure—the authority of male over female and of parent over child—has no immunity to the implications of this ideological change. Grave internal difficulties may therefore be expected.⁵¹

The position of the family within technological society is precarious. It performs essential functions for the wider society, but in so doing it must operate according to a principle of social structure diametrically opposed to this society. Consequently, the family undergoes serious tensions, and its future in technological society is in question.

Men's and Women's Roles and the Misinterpretation of Social History

As the discussion of family life illustrates, the transition from traditional to technological society has had a great impact on the roles of men and women. The roles of husband and father, wife and mother now involve numerous conflicts and dilemmas that at least partly explain the rise of the feminist movement over the past one hundred and fifty years. Unfortunately, modern critics of the traditional remnants of men's and women's roles often make several errors in historical interpretation which come from a lack of genuine understanding of traditional social structure and of the social change which occurred in the shift from traditional to technological society. Three of these errors are especially prominent in the modern literature of men's and women's roles, and will be considered here.

The "Influence" of Traditional Roles

First, much modern literature on men's and women's roles attributes the social problems of technological society to the continuing influence of traditional society and the traditional structure of men's and women's roles. Sometimes this criticism of traditional approaches points to social

problems in advanced technological societies and holds the traditional approach responsible. For example, some critics blame isolation of the modern housewife on the traditional pattern of men's and women's roles which rigidly restricts her to domestic family-related tasks.⁵² However, such attacks on a "traditional" approach to the female role are not really attacking a fully "traditional" approach at all. Instead, they are attacking a remnant of an old order, a fragment that has lost much meaning as a result of being severed from its natural context. The domestic role of women in a technological society where the household has lost much of its strength and significance means something quite different from the domestic role of women in a society where the household is central to the corporate life of the entire society. It is important to understand that the full traditional approach to men's and women's roles passed away with the breakdown of the traditional social system. The remnants of a traditional social order may cause problems in technological society, but these are not problems which can justly be attributed to traditional society.

Sometimes the criticism of traditional approaches points instead to societies in an earlier stage of technological development, either in the nineteenth or twentieth century, and attributes their social problems to weaknesses in the traditional social structure. For example, Chinese society before the Revolution is often depicted as a time of great oppression and social turmoil, with good reason.⁵³ The conclusion usually drawn, especially among those who sympathize with the Revolution, is that the traditional social structure was responsible for the turmoil. However, China of the early twentieth century was hardly a traditional society in the full sense. It had already been influenced considerably by Western ideologies and Western industrialization. It is more accurate to describe China or Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century as predominantly traditional societies which were suffering great upheaval as a result of the importation of new and alien social principles—the principles characteristic of technological society. While traditional societies certainly have social problems, the problems caused by the impact of technological development on traditional societies are different. Traditional society should not be blamed for the problems caused largely by the pressure of a newly emerging technological society.

Women's Rights

A second historical error is the view that women have been deprived of full human rights since the beginning of human society and have only

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won these rights within the past two centuries—since the beginning of movements for women’s rights. In the past two centuries women have attained equal access to education; full rights to inherit, own, sell, and control property; full rights of citizenship; and access to most professions with equal compensation. Women may not always be treated equally with men in these areas, but these rights have a fundamental legal and moral recognition. To be sure, women in most societies did not have these “rights” before 1900. However, this is because traditional society made little or no use of the category of “individual rights” for anyone—men or women. This concept is an aspect of the shift from a society based on relational groupings to a society based on a mass of individuals.

When women are given “rights,” they are being treated as full individuals in a mass society. These “rights” are a way of applying the social structure of technological society—with all its advantages and disadvantages—to women. Giving women “equal rights” is a way of weakening relational groupings and communal social structure and fitting women into a functional technological society. Before the advent of technological society, men did not have these “individual rights” either; the structure of traditional society made these rights a meaningless category. Traditional society was based instead on the rights of relational groupings, and the position of men and women derived from their personal relationships within these groupings.* Women were generally subordinate to men in all traditional and primitive societies, but men were also generally subordinate to other men, and no one would have thought of such a subordinate role in terms of limited individual rights. As technological society developed, the basic pattern of individualization was applied more slowly to women and children than to men because the family unit was preserved longer than other relational groupings. However, as the family unit is gradually attenuated and functionalized, women are treated increasingly like men and gain their “rights” as full individuals in a mass society. At the same

* Nisbet makes this point in the following way:

In the medieval world there was relatively little concern with positive, discrete rights of individuals, largely because of the diffuseness of political power and the reality of innumerable group authorities. But when the consolidation of national political power brought with it a destruction of many of the social bodies within which individuals had immemorially lived and taken refuge, when in sum, law became a more centralized and impersonal structure, with the individual as its unit, the concern for positive, constitutionally guaranteed rights of individuals became urgent. European governments may have sought often, and successfully for long periods, to resist claims of individual right, but it is hard to miss the fact that the States (England, for example) which became the most successful, economically as well as politically, had the earliest constitutional recognition of individual rights, especially of property. In retrospect, however, we see that it was the sheer impact of State upon medieval custom and tradition, with the consequent atomizing and liberating effects, that, more than anything else, precipitated the modern concern with positive individual rights. (107)

time, however, women have lost the special legal provisions (both privileges and limitations) which came from their position in a society structured on families.*

The Victorian Caricature

A third error in historical analysis found in much feminist literature is a caricature of traditional womanhood based on the late nineteenth-century Victorian attitude that women should stay at home, work as little as possible, and be kept in a protected, restricted, and passive state. Feminist polemics can draw a particularly vivid contrast between this late nineteenth-century view of woman and the new liberated woman of the future.⁵⁵ It is reasonable to attack such a view of ideal womanhood, but it is not reasonable to express or presuppose that this late nineteenth-century view was the traditional view of womanhood. The non-working, passive, delicate, protected woman who always stayed at home is a bourgeois Western ideal.[†] It grew partly out of the medieval tradition of courtly love, partly out of a trend toward domesticity in the seventeenth century, and partly out of social conditions in the nineteenth century after the first phase of industrialization had taken the world of work from the home and left the women behind. The late nineteenth-century bourgeois ideal of womanhood is hardly that of the sturdy helpmate found in scripture or in most of the history of Western society.

All three of these historical perspectives are severely critical of the approach to men's and women's roles taken in traditional society. Traditional society certainly had its weaknesses; nevertheless, the charges made in these three interpretations of social history do not accurately reveal any such weaknesses. They are errors in historical interpretation which probably derive from a critical attitude toward the remnants of traditional men's and women's roles as they are found in modern society. Admittedly, there are many problems with the way men's and women's roles currently operate in technological society. However, these problems should not be allowed

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* The purpose of this discussion of women's rights is not to assert that women always received better treatment in traditional society than in technological society. Such comparisons are very difficult to make.⁵⁴ Rather, the key point here is that "individual rights" is an inappropriate category for making a historical comparison between the status of women in traditional and technological society. The term itself takes on different meanings in the two different social systems.

† The working-class Victorian woman was also very different from the bourgeois ideal of femininity. Her economic role made it difficult for her to live a "delicate" or "passive" existence.

to distort our perception of the way men's and women's roles were actually lived out in a traditional social setting.

Evaluating Technological Society

AN overall evaluation of the shift from traditional society to technological society lies beyond the scope of this book. Some people idealize traditional society and deplore "modernization" as the ruin of humanity. Others demonstrate more enthusiasm for modern "progress," and see the increase in knowledge and power brought by technological society as an unparalleled boon to the human race. However, it is in fact very difficult to make an adequate evaluation of the overall shift. This is true largely because of the great variety that exists among both traditional and technological societies. Both types of society have had their share of successes and failures. One can readily draw up a list of atrocities that have occurred solely within traditional societies, but then one can as readily draw up a list of equal length for technological societies. Both types of societies have their weaknesses, and stand in need of improvements. In the final analysis one's evaluation of the shift from traditional to technological society depends more on one's values than on a factual assessment of strengths and weaknesses.

This chapter was not intended to provide either an exhaustive comparison between traditional and technological society, or a final assessment of the disadvantages and advantages of each system. For instance, the genuine benefits of technological society, such as medical science and increased food production, have not been touched upon. Instead, the purpose of this chapter has been to examine one significant aspect of the difference between traditional and technological society—the underlying organizing principle of social structure in each—and to see how these two principles affect social structure in general and the family in particular. It is possible to conclude, based on this examination, that in at least one area of human life traditional society seems to have succeeded better than technological society. Traditional society provides a more hospitable environment for what can be termed the natural structures of society—those structures based on age and sex differences that find primary expression in family life and supply an environment in which people can live and receive personal support, rather than merely work. Technological society fails to come to grips adequately with these natural structures, and thus develops a specific set of social problems.

These problems especially concern those groups of people who are unable to participate fully in the functional world of work. Two such groups are the aged and the dying.⁵⁶ Neither group is able to participate functionally in the way demanded by the larger society. In addition, the changes in family life in technological society mean that the aged and the dying can no longer find their place in the family unit. The technological family is constructed in such a way that few adult roles remain after the children have been fully raised. Older people find themselves alone, isolated, separated from constructive life, and without a sense of being able to make a worthwhile contribution. Their age earns them little respect, for they are unable to fill the positions or perform the tasks that give status and honor. The family unit is no longer large enough or cohesive enough to care for the aged, the infirm, and the dying. These people are thus entrusted to mass social institutions or left to care for themselves. They often find their lives purposeless and meaningless, for they have no place or role in the society around them.

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In traditional society, the aged, the infirm, and the dying found themselves in a very different position. Although there was a consciousness that age brought failing powers, older people were normally accorded greater respect, partly because their greater experience proved more useful to a younger generation living in a society that did not know rapid change, but also as a consequence of an ascribed status. Age was automatically accorded respect. In addition, the aged were not isolated. Rather, they lived as part of a family group in a home environment where most of the vital functions of society were performed. They could relate actively and constructively to people of all ages. The infirm and the dying also found their place in the family. The size and commitment of the family allowed them to be cared for within a familiar home environment, in the midst of bustling daily life, among a group of people who were personally loyal to them. Thus, the aged, the infirm, and the dying all found themselves in relational groupings of people who had known them all of their lives and had built up an abiding respect, loyalty, and affection for them. Traditional society was therefore better able to incorporate these people into the whole life of the society. It could do this both because of the strength of the family, and also because functional considerations did not predominate in personal relationships.

In similar fashion, traditional society had a place for the young.⁵⁷ Children became a part of normal daily life after their first few years. They quickly began to contribute to the well-being of others and to care for others. They were surrounded by models from whom they could learn.

They were confident of their role in life and of the right way to live. They drew their personal identity from their family membership. On the other hand, the young in technological society are confined to a world of their own populated by other human beings who lack the age and training to be able to function competently. For years they are unable to contribute substantially to the welfare of others, and remain apart from the “real life” of society. They also grow into a world of uncertain values, and they are segregated from an experience of how more mature members of society confront the most important situations in life. The young consequently experience an “identity crisis” and seem increasingly prone to dissatisfaction with themselves and with others.

Finally, as discussed earlier, women occupy a difficult and ambiguous position in technological society.⁵⁸ Their traditional role within the household no longer places them in the mainstream of social and economic life. Women thus face a challenging dilemma. If they maintain their traditional role, they become isolated and dependent, and unable to assume a functionally productive role in the larger society. However, if they pursue an occupation and a career, they are less able to care for a family. Many women arrange some compromise between these two alternatives, but some ambiguity and tension normally remains. The female role operated much differently in traditional society. Because the family was so important to society, women were able to both care for a family and participate in the wider society. There is little evidence that women in traditional society experienced widespread dissatisfaction with their role in society. They knew that they were valued as women, and they could achieve a great deal of respect through fulfilling their womanly role well. In contrast, technological society tends to put less and less value on their role as women, and more value on their functional success as individuals.

In addition to these social problems, some psychological problems appear to be associated with technological society.⁵⁹ These problems are more difficult to describe and less commonly studied, but it is reasonable to see them as tied in some way to the advent of technological society. Many of them are emotional problems, and may well be connected to the lack of stable relational groupings in technological society. The following are some of these psychological problems:

1. *An emotional need for relationship, love, and community.* Many people are prone to loneliness, and feel that no one in the world can understand them or share their inner life.

2. *Greater personal insecurity.* This is likely tied to the weakening of commitment and stable relationships in technological society. This may be also tied to the fact that most social bonds are based on emotion. This often leads people to relate to others with great intensity of emotion, especially in sexually based relationships, but the emotional basis introduces instability and a lack of peace often all the greater because of the intensity of feeling.
3. *Heightened level of anxiety and guilt feelings.* These feelings are probably connected to insecurity, and the absence of stable, unconditional relationships which need not be earned and are not easily lost.
4. *Greater desire for the approval of others.* It is reasonable to relate this pattern to the fact that from early years people must compete for approval in evaluative settings. They earn approval and acceptance through the proof of personal abilities. The lack of unconditional committed relationships means that people must also “earn” satisfying relationships.
5. *Lack of self-discipline.* Most people receive technical training in modern society, but they do not receive training in personal life. This may be one cause of a problem with self-discipline.
6. *Greater susceptibility to stress, tension, moodiness, depression, addiction, and other psychological problems.* People in technological society may also be more prone to neurosis and psychosis.⁶⁰ The suicide rate, which relates somewhat to these problems, increases with the advance of industrialization and technology.⁶¹

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Technological
Society

Though these psychological problems are not completely alien to traditional society, they do not seem to play as prominent a role as in technological society.

Technological society as presently constituted fails to meet many fundamental human needs that were once met within traditional society. The near universal application of a functional principle to all aspects of social structure appears to be the major cause of this failure. This does not necessarily mean that technological society should be abandoned in favor of traditional society. However, it does imply that some space must be made in modern living for social groupings based on a relational principle. Some restoration of family and community life is needed if the problems of technological society are to be successfully overcome.

The transition from traditional society to technological society has

radically altered human social structure. Since the world of the writers of the scripture was a traditional world, while ours is a technological world, it is not surprising that many Christians find it difficult to understand the scriptural teaching on social structure. The material presented in this chapter should help us to perceive clearly the background of much of this teaching, and thus help us to understand the teaching itself. This material should also help us identify our own preconceptions and presuppositions, as people of the twentieth century, regarding various approaches to social structure. Many people respond negatively to the scriptural teaching because they bring a functional mentality to their reading of scripture. In addition, the material presented in this chapter should also clarify the genesis and development of the feminist movement. This movement is in part a response to genuine needs and problems. Though the feminist solutions are often inadequate, any adequate Christian approach to the roles of men and women must squarely face these same needs and problems. Finally, an understanding of the transition from traditional to technological society gives us a clearer grasp of the world in which the scriptural teaching must be lived and applied. If the teaching of the scripture can speak to the man and woman of the twentieth century, and can meet the needs of the Christian people of the twentieth century, it has to be applied to twentieth-century needs and circumstances. It is therefore necessary to understand these needs and the concrete circumstances within which the word can become flesh.

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THE GULF THAT SEPARATES life in the twentieth century from life in first-century Palestine or tenth- or fifteenth-century Western Europe consists only in part of a new social order, characterized by the refashioning of government, occupation, and family according to a functional principle. This gulf also consists of important changes in intellectual climate. Modern approaches to morality, ideals, and social structure all differ greatly from those of past societies. This intellectual change is sometimes termed “the rise of modern ideologies.” Just as modern social life is revolutionized by the dominance of functional groupings, so the realm of modern thought becomes dominated by powerful new ideological currents.

It is as important for us to understand these ideologies as it is for us to grasp the differences between the traditional and technological social environments. Modern ideological thought is as new in human history as technological society, and it may be as significant a factor in contemporary discussions of men’s and women’s roles. One cannot fully understand many of the modern viewpoints on the scripture passages about men and women, on the interpretation of scripture, and on the evidence from the social sciences discussed in previous chapters without also appreciating the impact of modern ideological thought on society, including its impact on the Christian churches. The influence of ideology on modern thought is not always immediately apparent. However, what appear to be unrelated opinions, viewpoints, value judgments, and ethical positions actually coalesce into integrated ideological systems with definite sources and definite implications. This chapter will locate the sources of these ideologies, draw

the outlines of the main ideological systems, and evaluate them as social strategies or “ideals” of societal formation. It will also examine the past and present Christian response to the ideologies and the challenges of modern society as a whole. Such an analysis will help in understanding the modern discussion of men’s and women’s roles.

Modern Ideological Positions

THE term “ideology” is used in several different ways in popular language and in the social sciences.¹ In a broad sense, the term can refer to any set of “theoretically articulated propositions about social reality.”² As used in this chapter, the term refers to a worldview focusing especially on social structure. An ideology is a system of thought which presents in implicit or fully articulated form an understanding of human life and what it should be like. From this understanding, an ideology develops an ethical system and an approach to the formation of human society. Though it is a type of intellectual system, an ideology can embody the views of ordinary people; it does not have to be merely a philosophical system entertained by an intellectual class. Most modern ideologies originate in the philosophies of an elite group within society, but they do not reach the full stature of an ideology until they filter into the consciousness of an entire social grouping and provide the basic values and perspectives of that grouping.* Ideologies shape the opinions of the ordinary members of society, regardless of how conscious these members are of having their opinions shaped. Whether justifying an existing system or clearing the way for a new system, ideologies play a significant role in forming people’s approaches to ethics and social structure.³

The rise of modern ideologies is closely associated with the rise of technological society. Modern ideologies first emerged in the latter half of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries—the formative period in the development of technological society. The ideology of the Enlightenment—probably the first modern ideology—paved the way for

* Though an ideology usually takes systematic form among intellectuals, it is also shaped to a certain extent by social and economic forces. An ideology will not become dominant in a social grouping unless it fits the needs and circumstances of that grouping. For example, many ideologies take shape in response to the needs and circumstances of a particular social class. The feminist ideology in the United States has developed largely among the upper middle class—the managerial-professional class—and has received much less support from the lower middle and poor classes.

the advance of technological society by eroding the common acceptance of traditional social forms and by undermining the Christian view as a social consensus. The process of industrialization which followed, intensifying in the nineteenth century, also brought with it a need for new social solutions. This opened the way for the full emergence of modern ideologies. Ideology thus paved the way for technological society, and in turn technological society created a need for further ideological developments.⁴

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Modern ideologies focus particularly on issues concerning the organization of society and social change. They deeply affect the ethical and social structural positions taken in the modern discussion of men's and women's roles. Therefore, the following pages will examine and analyze some of the major ideological currents of the mid-twentieth century. The first ideologies to be examined are Liberalism and Socialism, the two most influential ideologies of the past two centuries. Then consideration will be given to the "romantic" reaction to technological society, and to an ideological amalgam of various positions which can be called "American Liberation Thinking." Both of these currents of thought shape much of the discussion of men's and women's roles. Of necessity, the treatment of each of these bodies of thought cannot be comprehensive. Only the general outlines of their thinking and historical development will be presented. The picture that results will thus be somewhat of an ideal type. Nonetheless, the basic presentation given here should provide a helpful orientation to the sources of many positions often taken in modern discussions of men's and women's roles.

Liberalism

"Liberalism" sometimes simply refers to the opposite of conservatism. A "liberal" in this sense is someone who is favorable to social change. But "Liberalism" also refers to an ideology, and it has been used in this sense in Europe and in Latin America. Liberal parties are active in European politics, and these parties have taken on an ideological approach.⁵ They often include the word "Liberal" in their formal titles. In the mid-twentieth century, these parties are by no means the most leftist or willing to change. They are frequently right of the political center because they still maintain an ideological position that was developed early in the nineteenth century. Classical Liberalism was born of the Enlightenment and of the French Revolution. It is the ideology which was commonly espoused at the beginning of the movement toward a technological society, and it is the

ideology which most consistently advocated the changes which furthered the development of technological society.⁶

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The core of the Liberal ideology is the concept of individual rights. It is expressed in phrases like “life, liberty, and the preservation of private property,” or “liberty, equality, and fraternity.” In the American Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson stated the central Liberal principle as follows: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” The pivotal point of Liberal ideology is the idea that the individual, apart from any social grouping, is born with rights which cannot be taken away from him. Rights are not conferred upon individuals by society, but instead reside inherently in each individual. The most basic human right is the right to liberty. “Liberty” means the freedom of the individual to act as he chooses and to pursue his own interest with as little outside interference as possible. In his essay *On Liberty*, John Stuart Mill, one of the most prominent English Liberals of the nineteenth century, discusses the right to liberty in the following manner:

... the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection. That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not sufficient warrant. . . . The only part of the conduct of anyone for which he is amenable to society, is that which concerns others. In the part which merely concerns himself, his independence is, of right, absolute. Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign.⁷

The Liberal ideal therefore calls for total individual autonomy, limited only when it infringes upon the individual autonomy of others. According to Mill and other nineteenth-century utilitarian Liberals, the final goal of liberty and individual rights is the attainment of personal fulfillment defined in utilitarian terms. The “happiness” of the individual is the highest value.

Not surprisingly, Liberalism tends to be individualistic and anti-authoritarian.⁸ The chief social unit emphasized within Liberalism is the individual, and a chief social goal is the securing of individual rights. The solidarity of the society as a whole is not so much ignored or attacked as it is taken for granted. In fact, many nineteenth-century Liberal thinkers

asserted that the good of the whole society could only be attained by allowing each individual to seek his own self-interest.⁹ The Liberals' great preoccupation is to combat excessive or unjust authority. Their target is any external constraint placed upon the individual beyond what is absolutely necessary for the protection of all the individuals in society.

Liberalism has assumed many varied forms in the past two hundred years. In eighteenth-century North America, the Liberal ideology crystallized around the attack upon absolute monarchy and foreign domination.* In eighteenth-century France and generally in nineteenth-century continental Europe, Liberalism fueled the revolutionary attack on absolute monarchy, the aristocratic classes, the church, and other social forms inherited from traditional medieval society.¹⁰ Liberalism was also normally linked to the fight for national unification and self-determination. In nineteenth-century England, Liberalism was largely preoccupied with economic questions centering on the desirability of freedom from mercantilist government intervention.¹¹ Though Liberalism has taken different shapes and struggled for different political ends, the common theme has been the central importance of the individual and the preservation of his freedom.

Liberalism

The pervasiveness in the twentieth century of a democratic form of Liberalism can tend to obscure the fact that in its origin and through much of its history Liberalism favored one particular social group—the propertied bourgeois male.¹² When leaders of the French Revolution proclaimed the right to liberty, equality, and fraternity, they did not understand these rights as applying to everyone. In the original Liberal social systems, the right to vote was bestowed on the wealthy man, the man of property.

* Liberalism in the United States has had a unique history. The customary antagonists of Liberalism—an entrenched aristocratic ruling class, a privileged clerical class, and a network of traditional social relations hallowed by centuries of history—were all largely absent in the colonies and the new nation. Liberal ideals such as freedom and individual rights therefore became deeply rooted in the mentality of the entire people, but the systematic ideological development which is born out of confrontation and opposition did not occur in the same way as it did in England and the European continent. Liberalism in the United States has tended to be equated with the American way of life rather than with a particular stance. This equation of Liberalism with the American way of life is the primary theme of Alexis de Tocqueville's classic, *Democracy in America* (1848; Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1969). For a helpful study of the primary tenets of traditional American Liberalism, the differences between them and the tenets of continental Liberalism, and their relationship to Roman Catholic teaching, see John Courtney Murray, *We Hold These Truths* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1960). Hannah Arendt in *On Revolution* (New York: The Viking Press, 1963) also distinguishes the principles and practice of the American Revolution from those of the French Revolution. Another Catholic thinker, Emmet John Hughes, takes a very different view of the American Revolution and American Liberalism, see 109–127, 180–202. For a general introduction to American Liberalism, see Hartz.

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Female suffrage was not even considered. The *Code Napoléon*, a model of Liberal jurisprudence, was the low point for “women’s rights.”¹³ This code removed the traditional protections and privileges women had enjoyed and made them completely subject to their husbands in the context of a functional society.¹⁴ As the nineteenth century progressed, the principles of Liberalism—once applied exclusively to a limited group within society—began to be claimed by a new group, the working class. In the past hundred years these Liberal principles of individualism and freedom have been extended further by various movements, such as the civil rights movement and the feminist movement. Nevertheless, this modern form of democratic Liberalism should not obscure the fact that Liberalism originated as the ideology of a particular class in society.*

In its attack on traditional forms of authority, the Liberal ideology has often taken an anti-Christian or at least an anti-church stand. This is particularly true of the Liberalism of the French Revolution. The writers of the Declaration of the Rights of Man also attempted to abolish Christian worship, secularize churches, and replace Christianity with the cult of reason.¹⁵ The enthronement of an ex-prostitute as the goddess of reason on the high altar of the Cathedral of Notre Dame was a symbolic act expressing the religious thinking behind early French Liberalism. Wherever this form of Liberalism advanced, it encouraged attempts to reeducate people away from Christian belief. Sometimes it even led to the establishment of explicitly anti-Christian legislation. In England and the United States, Liberalism tended to be less openly hostile toward Christianity.†

* As a historical movement, Liberalism has undergone significant changes over the past two hundred years. It began as a middle-class ideology dedicated to the reduction of government intervention, at least in economic life. As time progressed, the principles of freedom and individual rights were claimed by other members of society—the working class, racial and ethnic minorities, colonial territories, women—who were not originally included as equal participants in the Liberal vision of society. In many ways, this extension of Liberal principles to new groups is consistent with the inner logic of the Liberal ideology. Another adaptation occurred in the Liberal position at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, an adaptation that is not so consistent with the original Liberal position. At this time, many Liberals began to see the need for government intervention in economic and social life as a way of creating a more just society and protecting individuals from the rule of natural and human forces beyond their control. A new form of Liberalism which could be called “welfare Liberalism” began to emerge. Examples of this new form of Liberalism are found in the main policies advocated by the Democratic Party in the US since Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the New Deal. This is what most people today mean when they think of Liberalism. However, this form of Liberal ideology is not strictly consistent with the principles of the earlier Liberal position. In fact, it probably results from the influence of Socialist thought on the Liberal ideology. For a brief and simple discussion of “welfare Liberalism” in relation to classical Liberalism and Marxist Socialism, see Brinton, 191–193.

† The relative moderation found in the American and British Liberals’ approach to Christianity

Nevertheless, on the whole, Liberalism tended to follow the anti-Christian tendencies of the earlier Enlightenment ideology.

Socialism

“Socialism” is a second great ideology produced within Western technological society.¹⁷ The word “Socialism” here is used in a broad sense to apply primarily to Marxist and Marxist-influenced ideologies, including not only Communism but also Social-Democracy and many of the modern nationalistic “Liberation” movements. The term “Socialism” as used here can also refer to non-Marxian Socialism (e.g., Fabian Socialism) and to some aspects of Fascism. Even granting the historic antagonism and genuine differences between Socialists and Fascists, the Nazis were still National Socialists, and there are important similarities in the broad outlines of the Fascist and Socialist approaches to national social structure.* Nonetheless, Marxist Socialism will be the central concern. It is with Marx and those who followed him that Socialism developed as a powerful movement, and his thought may represent the dominant ideological influence on the modern world.

Socialism, like Liberalism, accepts the basic movement of modern society toward a technological way of life. Socialism may even be largely responsible for installing technological principles in a dominant position within modern society. In particular, the political success of Marxist Socialism—an ideology which teaches that the future of the working class lay in increasing technological development—has helped to make a positive view of technology dominant in Western society, and now in much of non-Western society as well.¹⁸ Socialism proves to be even more consistently functional and technological in its approach to human life than does

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can be at least partly explained by the fact that the church as a social institution was less of a threat to Liberal policies and aims in these two countries than it was in the countries of continental Western Europe. Nonetheless, even in Britain and the United States, Liberal ideology led often to a dismissal of traditional Christian teaching. The main difference between the continent and the English-speaking world was the intensity of the dispute between Liberalism and Christianity, not in its existence.¹⁶

* It is possible to argue that, from an overall perspective, the differences between Socialism and Fascism are more important than their similarities. And, in fact, there are major differences between the two ideologies. For example, Fascism emphasizes the preservation of national and racial heritage, whereas Socialism traditionally maintains a trans-national orientation in theory, and is usually willing to sacrifice heritage to economic production. Nevertheless, the differences between Socialism and Fascism are not relevant enough to questions concerning men’s and women’s roles to warrant full treatment here. In this area of social structure, the similarities between Fascism and Socialism are more important than their differences.

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Liberalism. An effective Socialist state will reconstruct almost every area of public life in accord with a functional principle. Social relationships that are not based on functional considerations are either eliminated or reduced in importance. While Socialist societies do not normally try to eliminate the family, they tend to be suspicious of it and to minimize its roles.* This radical consistency in applying the functional approach to all of society is the main difference between Socialism and Liberalism. Whereas Liberalism focuses on the principle of individual liberty, Socialism assigns chief importance to the society as a whole (the collective) and the common good. The Socialist goal is to form a unified society in which the individual is clearly subordinate to the corporate good, a society containing a coherent integrated structure that rationalizes social relationships and eliminates many of the conflicts caused by group and individual interests not in harmony with the overall good of society.

Modern Socialism, like Liberalism, seeks to free individuals from the obligations, commitments, and loyalties of traditional social relationships and groupings. However, Socialism, unlike the Liberal ideology, does not want these individuals as free as possible from the interference of society or the state. On the contrary, the Socialist ideal would have all individuals committed first to the welfare of the whole people and desiring only that freedom of action which furthers the collective life. Socialism detaches people from traditional loyalties and individualizes them not for the sake of personal freedom but to build a more united, integrated collective. Socialists talk a great deal about freedom, but their social goal is not individual liberty in the Liberal sense, but equality. In a truly Socialist society, each individual is treated equally, and differentiation is only allowable on the basis of competence. The Socialist model of society operates strictly in accord with the logic of a functional, technological approach. Consequently, Socialism receives greater acceptance as technological society advances.

Socialism describes itself as democratic. According to the definition of "democracy" which restricts the term to states which put supreme power in the hands of popularly elected officials, many Socialist states such as the Soviet Union or the People's Republic of China are hardly democratic.

* The approach of Marxist-Leninist and non-Marxist-Leninist Socialists tends to differ on this issue. Marxist-Leninist Socialists (usually the more radical party) have shown a consistent suspicion of the family unit, though they usually come to tolerate it as an essential element of society (that is, at least society in its present imperfect Communist forms). Non-Marxist-Leninist Socialists, on the other hand, seem much less suspicious. They often favor principles and policies which may weaken the family unit, but this is usually not their main purpose in holding such policies.

However, most Socialists define democracy as a system that governs society for the good of all its members, a system in which each individual receives his share of the benefits of social life, and where no group uses a position of power to gain advantages at the expense of other groups.* In this sense Communist states may be more democratic, at least in theory, than states in which the Liberal ideology is dominant and which value parliamentary practices. Totalitarian Socialist states sometimes appear even more successful than the Western Liberal democracies in stimulating mass participation in corporate decision-making. In theory and perhaps in fact, Socialist democracy is the democracy of a mass society.

Socialism

In Socialist societies, authority is ideally exercised in a collective rather than a personal fashion.¹⁹ This tendency can be observed even in those Socialist states which have a well-earned reputation for being authoritarian. In Communist countries in particular, the authority of the state is paramount and ruthlessly enforced. Power relationships among the top leadership of the state may be subject to internal rearrangements, but they are not subject to change by any other group. Nonetheless, even Communist dictatorships do not often exercise direct personal authority over people's lives. Individuals' "private lives" are in theory and in practice largely outside of the authoritarian intervention of the state, with the notable exception of those "dissidents" who need to be reeducated or suppressed.²⁰ This does not mean Socialist governments exercise little control over their people. Rather it means that they exercise control in a bureaucratic fashion, without issuing individual personal directives. The tools they use are regulation and propaganda. Instead of directing individuals, the state regulates society by instituting policies, laws, and procedures which either apply to everyone or to everyone in a particular category. It also forms the thinking of individuals through strict control of the opinion-forming organs of society, and through mass education. This type of control is especially pronounced in Marxist Socialist states.²¹

Another important feature of Marxist Socialism is its dialectical view of history. Marxism builds upon a dialectical view of historical development

* Once again, Marxist-Leninist and non-Marxist-Leninist Socialists tend to disagree about the meaning of the term "democracy." The position discussed in this paragraph is the Marxist-Leninist position. Most modern non-Marxist-Leninist Socialists usually advocate something approximating the modern welfare state, which includes the democratic political institutions familiar to the Western World. For a few clear descriptions of the Marxist-Leninist approach to democracy, see V. I. Lenin, *State and Revolution* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1917); Mao Tse-Tung, *On People's Democratic Dictatorship* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1952).

that Marx learned from Hegel and Hegel's followers. In Greek philosophy, "dialectic" originally referred to the process of argumentation by which an opposition of opinions (thesis and antithesis) produces a fuller, more comprehensive and adequate view (the synthesis). Applied to historical development by Hegel and his followers, dialectic means that the primary pattern of historical development involves a conflict of cultural forces which is resolved in a fuller, more comprehensive and adequate cultural life. Marx interpreted the dialectic in social and economic terms, but he preserved Hegel's basic dialectical understanding of history. In the Marxist view, history will evolve through a dialectical process until the advent of the Communist society. The good of humanity lies in following the dialectical process until industrial society reaches maturity and all contradictions are resolved in the full synthesis of Communist society, a society which will be both technologically mature and socially harmonized and integrated.

Marx's dialectical view of historical process provides the key to understanding certain features of Marxist strategy which are especially evident in situations where their party does not hold overall political power. The dialectic places a principle of conflict at the heart of the Marxist approach to social life and political discussion. Marxists deliberately attempt to exacerbate conflict, increase anger, and set people at odds. Behind this strategy lies the view that the only way to progress is to increase contradiction until it culminates in a dialectical resolution. Marxists have developed effective techniques for "raising consciousness" among people about their condition of "oppression" so that they become more dissatisfied and more "revolutionary." The Marxist goal is to make people more eager for change, more willing to fight for it, and more ready to regard as their enemies those who represent contradictory social forces.²² Also, many Communists have interpreted the dialectic as giving them freedom to lie and propagandize with little concern for "truth."²³ Their ethics are not based on absolute norms, but are historically conditioned. Marxists feel free to do whatever is necessary to advance the Communist society—the society in which justice will prevail. What is true at one stage of the dialectical process or from one perspective in the dialectical conflict is not necessarily true at another stage or from another perspective. Marxists do not entirely reject the concept of objective "truth," but they define and apply the term in a way that differs drastically from its definition and application in Christian morality. For a Marxist, lying can be permissible—even necessary.

This dialectical approach to ethics and truth highlights a final characteristic of Marxist Socialism—it is anti-Christian. The anti-Christian

tendencies present in Liberalism are further developed in Socialism. In fact, Marxist theory condemns all theistic religion, and many anti-religious policies have been formulated and implemented in Communist states. There have been some Christian Socialists, and today one can even find some Christians who consider themselves Marxists, but nonetheless the main currents of Socialist thought over the past century and a half have been anti-Christian.

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The Romantic Reaction

As soon as rationalistic Enlightenment thought and the first stages of industrialization began to influence society, a reaction to rationalism and the functionalization of society appeared. This reaction, which emphasizes the non-rational and the emotional, has continued as society has become more technological. This reaction is not properly speaking an ideology, but is instead a collection of ideas that assumes diverse forms. Nonetheless, it resembles an ideology in the way it shapes the thinking of people in technological society, especially in regard to personal relationships and the roles of men and women. Historically, the reaction to technological society has been associated with Romanticism, because the Romantic movement arose as the first embodiment of the reaction. However, to simply identify it with Romanticism would be inaccurate and overly narrow. According to most definitions, the Romantic movement has long disappeared, but the reaction to technological society maintains a thriving force. The reaction as a whole is not a defined movement in the same sense as the Romantic movement, nor are all the elements of the Romantic movement present in the modern reaction. Still, since its main lines of thought can be traced back to Romanticism, this chapter will speak of the “romantic” reaction (with a small *r*) to identify this modern stream of ideas.

At the heart of the romantic reaction is a concern for the authentic expression of emotion, feeling, and human impulse, and an attack on those things which confine the human personality or genius. The romantic reaction emphasizes experience and intuition rather than reason; it prizes subjectivity rather than objectivity. In effect, it emphasizes all the aspects of human life that find little place in the functionalized modern environment: the emotional, the expressive, the spontaneous. In a way only fully possible after the development of technological society, it sees the personal element in humanity as especially evident in the human capacity to feel and to express feeling, a capacity which should be ideally cultivated as much as

possible. All forms and structures which unnecessarily stifle emotion and human spontaneity are seen as undesirable. In summary, the romantic reaction prizes emotional authenticity and immediate experience, and rejects rigid structures and rationalistic, mechanistic approaches to human life.²⁴

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The romantic reaction can be traced historically as far back as the Middle Ages, but it first emerges as a developed and popular set of ideas at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries.²⁵ The initial stage of the Romantic movement was mainly a reaction against the rationalism and the formalism of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. However, as industrialization advanced and affected the shape of nineteenth-century society, the romantic reaction was also directed against the impersonality and inhumanity of the developing social conditions. Romanticism as a movement is usually seen as ending around 1850, but the popular reaction to rationalism and to technological society has continued to manifest itself in various forms. Such twentieth-century developments as Fascism, existentialism, and psychoanalysis all display various aspects of the romantic reaction. Other contemporary phenomena which show manifestations of this reaction include modern humanistic psychology and personalist philosophy; the music, art, politics, and lifestyle of the "counterculture" in the 1960s and '70s; and the recent popularity in Western countries of various versions of Eastern mysticism.²⁶

The romantic reaction has been linked with a diversity of approaches to ethics and social structure. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries some of those involved in the Romantic movement held traditionalist views of society.* They saw themselves as the defenders of the old social order which was being destroyed by a technological social order and an Enlightenment ideology. Others involved in the early Romantic movement were Liberals, and traces of the influence of the romantic reaction can also be seen in some nineteenth-century Socialists and Anarchists.† The early romantic reaction did not yield one distinguishable ideological position, but tended to influence the approaches of people of diverse ideological stands.

The recent manifestations of the romantic reaction, though not confined to one ideological camp, offer a more consistent attitude toward eth-

* Walter Scott is an example of a romantic who was also a traditionalist. Some traditionalists, though not full-blown romantics, displayed many romantic characteristics at an early date. Joseph de Maistre and Edmund Burke fall within this category.

† Many of the early romantics were Liberals. Byron and Blake are two examples. Examples of romantic Socialists and Anarchists are more difficult to find, for these political movements had not gathered momentum until Romanticism as an identifiable movement had almost dissolved. William Morris and Michael Bakunin show some signs of romantic influence.

ics and social structure. Where the early romantics were reacting primarily to Enlightenment thought, the modern romantic reaction has been aimed at the actual functionalized social conditions of technological society. The target of the romantic reaction is the functional principle of technological society, which requires modern human beings to subordinate much of their personality to task-oriented considerations. The romantic reaction seeks to allow full expression for all the emotional and personal needs that are unacceptable in functionalized groupings. Humanistic psychology, personalist philosophy, and the other manifestations of this reaction urge that an individual's feelings and unique identity should become the basis for personal relationships. They see both traditional social forms and modern functional forms as rigid and constricting, forces which inhibit the spontaneous expression of one's emotions and the authentic display of one's true personality. Thus the romantic reaction's approach to personal relationships and social morality tends to be anti-structural. The chief values are informality, spontaneity, and authenticity, rather than commitment to roles and standards.²⁷

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Romantic
Reaction

The anti-structural social thought of the most recent forms of the romantic reaction often leads to a disregard for broad social structural concerns. Rather than proposing serious social reforms or fundamental changes in the nature of the social structure, the modern romantic reaction tends to express its greatest concern for the individual and his conduct within his sphere of personal relationships.* Indeed, the anti-rational and anti-functional aspects of this reaction lead to a mistrust for sweeping social blueprints. Such plans and programs seem intellectual, functional, and impersonal—further manifestations of technological society. Instead, the modern romantic reaction concentrates on the quality of private personal relationships and the cultivation of spontaneity, expressiveness, and emotional authenticity in the individual.

The romantic reaction as manifested in the twentieth century is a product of the division in technological society between the functional and the personal spheres of life.²⁸ In traditional society, all relationships are personal in the sense that both functional and personal considerations are integrated in an extensive set of committed, structured, personal relationships. Emotions are part of these relationships, but they are subordinate to the relationship itself and its structure. In technological society, a division

* Fascism is an exception to this individualistic approach in the modern romantic reaction. Fascism is, however, a semi-Socialist ideology rather than a romantic movement. Nonetheless, Fascism uses a romantic mystique of the nation or people and its history as an important source for drawing support and for founding its ideology.

is introduced between the functional and personal spheres, so that “personal” relationships become primarily unstructured relationships with a dominant emotional element, as opposed to the structured, impersonal, functional relationships of the world of work. The most modern version of the romantic reaction accepts this division as a social necessity. Its program is to make sure that the two spheres remain separated, and to redress what it sees as an imbalance between the emotional/personal sphere and the functional/impersonal sphere.²⁹

American Liberation Movements

A fourth ideological view of importance is the thinking behind some contemporary liberation movements that have origins in the United States, chiefly women’s liberation and gay liberation.* These American liberation movements should not be confused with nationalistic liberation movements in other countries, most of which take a Marxist ideological approach, or with “liberation theology,” an intellectual current which originated in Latin America and which is likewise primarily Marxist in origin and content.³⁰ Instead, the American movements represent a distinctive amalgam of the American left embodying elements of both the romantic reaction and Liberal and Socialist ideology. The thinking behind these movements does not have the same intrinsic importance as Liberalism and Socialism, but it is nonetheless important because of its great influence on the material written on men’s and women’s roles since the 1960s.

At the core of the American liberation movements is an approach drawn from the Liberal ideology. Like Liberalism, these movements appeal to the interests of a particular group within society. Also, like Liberalism, they emphasize individual rights and maximum freedom of operation for the individual rather than the common good of society. However, this core of Liberal ideology is fused with elements of both Socialist ideology and the romantic reaction. As in much modern Socialism, these liberation movements stress “equality” in the sense of the need to treat each individual in an identical fashion.† More significantly, these movements, especially

* Feminism itself did not begin in the United States. There have been currents of feminism in Europe in both the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. What is being discussed in this chapter under the heading “American ‘Liberation’ Movements” is the distinctive form the feminist movement has taken in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, and its various offshoot movements.

† In theory, this approach to equality has been true of most Liberal thinking since the advent of universal suffrage.

women's liberation, often employ a dialectical pattern of thought and tactics.* History, social structure, and social change are viewed in categories of oppressors and oppressed. The strategy for attaining goals is often influenced by the Marxist dialectical approach. It involves the fomenting of conflict and discord between "liberated" people and those who "oppress" them, between men and women, and between "radical women" and those of more traditional orientation. Those within these liberation movements will often use consciousness-raising techniques geared to produce greater dissatisfaction, motivation for change, and hostility toward those who "stand in the way."³¹ They also sometimes use propaganda with a disregard for factual truth that is characteristic of a Marxist dialectical approach to ethics.

American
Liberation
Movements

The point of view of these American liberation movements also contains many elements of the romantic reaction against the functionalization of society. A key feature of the women's liberation argument has been the final appeal to the authority of personal experience.³² They also tend to argue that the functional structures of technological society are the products of male social dominance, and they seek a more informal, personally oriented social arrangement through a reduction of relational structures (such as those within the family) and an increased participation of women in public life.³³ Like the modern version of the romantic reaction, the women's liberation movement devotes little attention to overall questions of social structure and corporate welfare. Its advocates seldom attempt to relate their goals to the possible future course of society.³⁴ This emphasis on personal experience criteria and dislike for a social structural perspective, both characteristic of modern forms of the romantic reaction, are probably behind the movement's advocacy of abortion, homosexuality, and unrestrained sexual relationships. In short, the modern American movements for "liberation" are an amalgam of several ideological perspectives which appeal to a particular interest group.

Significance of Ideologies

Ideologies are of great importance in the modern world. They underlie most discussions of the significant ethical, political, and social questions of the twentieth century, and have special relevance to modern discussions

* Marxist influence is not only discernible in the contemporary manner of discussing men's and women's roles, but also in the discussion of other important issues. Conflict and pressure tactics and the use of propaganda are becoming the normal ways of conducting public debate.

of men's and women's roles. Ideologies also have important characteristics that often go unnoticed.

First, modern ideologies have implications for structuring society. Certain fundamental principles are developed into a systematic approach to social organization. Behind what looks like a philosophy, an abstract system deduced from some ultimate ethical principles, is really a program for social restructuring. For example, the full meaning of the principles of freedom and equality is not always apparent and cannot be grasped without a social analysis. Many people freely use ideological principles in modern discussions without adequately appreciating their ideological background or their social implications.

Secondly, modern ideologies present ideals of what social relationships should be like. They do not merely offer practical recommendations for specific social and political changes, but they also describe an ideal for social relationships. Of course, practical concerns have dominated in the development of most social arrangements, especially in pragmatically oriented countries such as the United States and Britain. Nonetheless, the way these concerns are formulated and implemented is influenced greatly by ideological ideals. Even in the United States, an ideology (Liberalism) has had a molding power that is not negligible. Social ideals drawn from the modern ideologies play a key role in discussions of social structure and social relationships.

Thirdly, modern ideologies involve definite ethical positions. Though an ideology may actually represent the interests of a particular group in society, it does not function as an expression of desire but as an expression of conscience. The slogan "liberty, equality, fraternity" may have originated in the bourgeoisie's attempt to gain power at the expense of the privileged noble and clerical classes, but the slogan nonetheless rang out as a moral watchword. It struck men with all the force of an "ought," an ethical imperative. Modern ideologies appeal to people's consciences, and those who reject an ideology must rely upon the force of an alternate ideological or moral position or contend with the guilt which results from rejecting the ideological appeal. This is why it is so important for Christians to be able to recognize non-Christian ideologies. If they cannot, they are defenseless against their moral appeal. Christians are among those most susceptible to ideological influence, precisely because of their high level of moral sensitivity.

Fourthly, the ideologies common in technological society are strikingly different from the patterns of thought and belief found in traditional

societies.³⁵ Modern ideologies are predominantly secular. By contrast, the ethical and social systems of all traditional societies are rooted in a religious perspective of human life. Modern ideologies are also numerous and competitive. Most traditional societies have one clearly unified approach to social life, with room for some variation and divergence. However, in modern society a plurality of ideological movements compete with one another and exercise various degrees of influence in different places.

Significance
of Ideologies

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, modern ideologies demonstrate a consciousness of social life and social change that was absent in traditional society. Only technological society has developed an extensive consciousness of social patterns and the means to reshape them—in other words, a technology of social change.³⁶ Hence it is now possible to think of radically repatterning society in ways that would have been impossible in traditional societies, which were largely shaped by economic and social forces and by inherited patterns. Modern ideologies are both an expression of this consciousness of social life and social change and a means of awakening it in groups that do not have it, creating in them a dissatisfaction with their position in society and a willingness to work for a particular type of social repatterning. This is a new development in human history. Traditional societies did not know secular, pluralistic systems conscious of social change and capable of achieving it.

Ideologies and Men's and Women's Roles

Modern discussion of the roles of men and women can be viewed most usefully against the background of modern ideologies. Since ideologies represent approaches to the structuring of society, they will influence the roles of men and women—an important aspect of social structure in all human societies. Therefore, ideological positions influence how people approach and think about men's and women's roles. When someone speaks of the equality of men and women, they are expressing a view of equality derived from a modern ideological view of how society as a whole should be structured. When someone uses words such as "discrimination" or "sexism," their terminology and viewpoint is rooted in a modern ideology which embodies a particular moral stand. Those who use such terms and hold such positions are often unaware of the broader ideological framework of their views. Nonetheless, their understanding of men's and women's roles is determined by a modern ideology.

It is especially important to see the modern discussion of men's and

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women's roles against the background of modern ideologies because the current discussion often proceeds without a great deal of clarity about the consequences of changes in this aspect of social structure. The roles of men and women are frequently approached as if they could be changed without substantial alteration in the rest of society. Certain ideological conceptions are appealed to without a consistent ideological approach being followed. As a result, much polemical pressure is devoted to changing certain aspects of men's and women's roles, while comparatively little effort is devoted to developing a consistent view of society within which those changes might be successfully implemented.

A responsible approach to structuring the roles of men and women must begin with a larger view of how society as a whole should be structured. This approach must then develop a realistic program for how a new society could constructively handle family life, childrearing, care for the aged, the differences between men and women, and other crucial human realities. The roles of men and women should be understood as integral elements in a social system, and ideological ideas used in discussions of men's and women's roles should be understood in terms of the broader ideological systems where they originated. In short, the discussion of men's and women's roles as a whole should be conducted in terms of an overall approach to the organization of society.

The Christian Response

CHRISTIANITY first emerged in a world vastly different from that of the twentieth century. For seventeen hundred years it developed and matured within the context of traditional society. In Europe and the Americas it became a key element of society. It encountered rival religions and internal disagreements, but it never confronted anything like a modern ideology. Then, after centuries of learning to survive and flourish in a familiar environment, Christianity witnessed the unprecedented set of changes which led to the development of a new type of society—a technological society. This new type of society posed great challenges. Powerful new attacks were directed at traditional Christian teaching and traditional Christian institutions. New social problems arose—problems created by the new type of society being forged. At the same time new solutions were being proposed—solutions destined to become the major ideologies of the modern world. Christians were unclear about the response they should make

to these challenges, yet the stakes were high: They involved the extinction or survival of Christian life.

Challenges to Christianity

One of the historical facts which called for an effective Christian response was the repudiation of Christianity by Western society as a whole. In sociological terms, Western society in the early eighteenth century was a Christian society. Society as a whole upheld Christian doctrine and theoretically accepted it as a final point of appeal. Many historians have even called traditional Western society by the term “Western Christian society” (mainly to distinguish it from Byzantine Christian society and from other historically less significant societies like Abyssinian Christian society).³⁷ Christianity was the dominant cultural force, and Christian teaching exercised considerable influence on daily life. This does not mean that traditional Western society was a model Christian society. Non-Christian forces deeply influenced the development of Western society. There is much substance to the view that Western Christianity never completely assimilated the barbarian societies which invaded the Roman empire. The mixture of Greco-Roman, Germanic, and Christian cultural influences may explain much of the instability and mobility of Western Christian society. Nevertheless, it is still sociologically accurate to consider traditional Western society as a part of “Christendom” until the eighteenth century.

The era of Western Christendom was the second of three great stages in Christian social history.³⁸ The first stage began with the founding of the Christian church, and continued until the conversion of Constantine in 312 AD. This stage could be called the period of diaspora Christianity. During this stage Christians constituted a minority of the Roman and Parthian and Sassanid empires. Christians understood themselves as occupying the same social position as Jews living outside the land of Israel, dispersed from their homeland and yet still a nation, living as resident aliens and in exile (1 Pt 1:1; 2:11; Heb 11:8–16; 13:14; Phil 3:20). The early Christians enjoyed great social cohesion. They were able to maintain a different culture than those around them because they understood themselves to be a different people. The fact that most people in the surrounding society lacked belief in Christ did not weaken the early Christians’ faith or destroy their ability to live a different kind of life. Instead, the opposition of the larger society only strengthened the Christians’ resolve and motivated them to be more disciplined and committed.

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The conversion of Constantine and of the king of Armenia brought a great change to most of the Christian churches. Within a century and a half after the conversion of Constantine, the Roman Empire was officially Christian and most people had some type of faith in Christ. In sociological terms, the majority of the Christian people were no longer a community within a larger society—they had become a Christian society. The church as a social institution now became identified with the whole people. Except for carefully defined relationships with pagan and Jewish minorities, Christians associated in daily life exclusively with other Christians. The social dynamics of Christian life underwent a revolutionary change in this second stage of Christian history. How much genuine Christianity was adequately preserved in the process is a debated question, but it is at least clear that the social form of those people who accepted Christian doctrine underwent a major change.

The third stage of Christian social history began with the eighteenth century. In this century Western Christian society came under the influence of Enlightenment thought and began to repudiate Christianity.³⁹ The repudiation was not always openly stated. Many Enlightenment thinkers and their successors were purportedly Christian teachers and theologians. They often claimed that they were preserving Christianity by saving its core (normally a version of morality in accord with the prevailing Enlightenment or Liberal ideas) and by freeing the faith from unenlightened elements (usually the heart of Christian belief as expressed in the traditional creeds and the teaching on atonement and redemption). However, the repudiation of Christianity was sometimes articulated with great clarity and force. The French Revolution explicitly substituted a deist cult of reason for Christianity and tried to suppress Christian worship. In the twentieth century, Marxism made an atheistic stance an integral part of its program. The movement to “de-Christianize” society did not succeed overnight, but its initial forms in the eighteenth century had a significant impact.

The leaders of the main churches reacted to these hostile forces by attempting to preserve Western society as a Christian society. These Christian leaders had inherited a Christendom mentality, and they thought it crucial for society to be authentically Christian. In fact, they were as committed to society as a whole as they were to the Christian people, for in Christendom there was no differentiation between the two. However, their response was also based on the need for Christian survival. The supportive Christian environment was society as a whole; therefore, when society weakened in its Christian commitment, the life of the Christian people

weakened. There was no special community in which the Christian people could be strengthened. Nineteenth-century Christian leaders witnessed the erosion of Christian faith as society became increasingly de-Christianized. They knew of no alternate way to preserve Christianity.

The struggle over Christendom lasted throughout the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century. The ultimate result was a massive de-Christianization of Western society. The de-Christianizing process moved more slowly in countries where Christianity had a firmer hold on society and among groups of Christians who had been persecuted. For example, the Catholics of Ireland and Poland managed to survive with some degree of vitality, as did the dissenter sects in both Protestant and Catholic countries which had long been organized to survive against the hostile influences of the dominant society. Likewise, the immigrant churches in religiously mixed countries such as the United States were more successful in holding their own. Nonetheless, the trend in society was toward de-Christianization. This trend received further impetus from the social changes occurring within technological society. Relational groupings like the family and the neighborhood began to lose their strength, and the influence of mass education, the media, and other tools of social control made it more and more difficult for Christians to pass on their faith to their children.

The repudiation of Christianity is only one of several modern challenges to the church. The development of technological society, described in Chapter Eighteen, brought into existence a social environment unlike anything Christians had to face in the past. The stable, structured, relational groupings of society which once formed the basis of daily Christian life began to crumble. The new social environment consisted primarily of functional groupings, mass institutions, unstructured friendship relationships, and independent individuals. New social problems also arose. Training of the young and care for the old became more challenging. Women's domestic role diminished in significance as family functions narrowed, the kinship network weakened, and family groupings played a less vital role in public life. Increased urbanization and mobility brought their own constellation of problems. Thus, the new social environment of technological society posed a challenge to the traditional social teachings of Christianity, and demanded a response.

Christians also needed to contend with the emergence of the ideologies. From one perspective, the Christian response to the ideologies seemed obvious. The ideologies were not Christian. Their origins and principles

derived from sources other than Christian revelation. Ideologies often led the campaign to repudiate Christianity. The leadership of many Liberal, Socialist, and Fascist parties were frequently anti-Christian and commonly passed laws limiting or suppressing Christianity upon gaining political power. However, from another perspective, the proper Christian response to the ideologies was not at all obvious. Never before had Christian teachers and thinkers needed to answer the fundamental questions about the shape of society and the social order that the ideologies posed. The questions were new because the ideological positions were new, but also because the circumstances of society were new and the social problems were unprecedented. Furthermore, the belief systems and ethical imperatives of the ideologies did not always obviously contradict traditional Christian teaching; at times these systems were phrased in such a way as to seem compatible with Christianity. What, for example, should a Christian think about the slogan “liberty, equality, fraternity”? Thus the emergence of such ideologies as Liberalism, Socialism, and Fascism raised new issues demanding a Christian response.

The repudiation of Christianity, the new social environment, and the challenge of the ideologies were all intimately related. Ideology played a major role in both the societal repudiation of Christianity and the rise of technological society. The rise of technological society advanced the ideologies and weakened traditional Christianity. The repudiation of Christianity weakened the traditional order and made the rise of technological society and its ideologies possible. The Christian responses to these three challenges were similarly related. In particular, the failure of most churches to cope adequately with the new societal attitude toward Christianity weakened their ability to respond adequately to the extremely difficult questions which technological society and the new ideologies had raised. The Christian people were no longer an identifiable community in which a specifically Christian approach to modern society could emerge. Instead, the lines between the Christian people and the non-Christian society were blurred, and it became more and more difficult to formulate a distinctively Christian response.

Societal Influences and the Christian Response

The new challenges of modern society called for a clear, distinctive, and authentically Christian response. However, the very forces which challenged Christianity also inhibited its ability to give such a clear response. The

repudiation of Christianity, the rise of technological society, and the emergence of modern ideologies all combined to confuse Christians about their approach to the new circumstances of modern society. Consequently, many of the responses offered by Christians were not essentially “Christian,” but were instead reflections or adaptations of ideas present in the society as a whole. Sometimes Christians consciously copied these secular responses, but more often they quietly and unconsciously assimilated secular principles. Many Christians thus lost a vision for a distinctive Christian model of society, and increasingly adopted the functional ideals of technological society and its ideologies.

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One response among Christians to the new conditions and challenges of modern society was conservatism. This response was especially strong in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Many of those who remained authentically Christian at this time of intensifying de-Christianization sided instinctively with the defenders of the traditional order because they were more friendly to Christianity. However, these were also the defenders of feudal or economic privilege and people who sought to preserve a model of society that fit less and less with the developing conditions of technological society. Christians who adopted the conservative response were often unable to distinguish the defense of Christianity and a basic order in society from the defense of the status quo and traditional privilege.

A second response among Christians was patterned after the romantic reaction. Like the romantic reaction, it was strongest in the nineteenth century, though it continues to exercise considerable influence in the twentieth century. This response defended Christianity as an alternative to the functionalism and inhumanity of technological society. It appealed to emotion and an instinct for “something higher.” This appeal tended to inject an element of sentimentality and unrealism into the Christian life and mentality. Moreover, the romantic response did not help Christians deal with the real social issues of the day. The romantic solution, when there was one, tended to be a nostalgic return to a more primitive social order.

A third response made by many Christians to modern conditions involved a complete acceptance of the modern ideologies: first Liberalism, then Socialism, and then Nationalism, Fascism, and all of the other ideological currents of Western society. This has been perhaps the most significant response among Christians of the second half of the nineteenth century and then the twentieth century. Christians who have adopted one of the modern ideologies have usually rejected the ideology’s most

blatant anti-Christian positions, but they have also usually accepted the ideological teaching about social order and personal relations even where this opposed the traditional Christian teaching on these matters. In fact, such Christians have tended to identify the ideological teaching with the “real” Christian position. American Christians have been known to speak of the principles of bourgeois individualism as the fundamental Christian principles for ordering society, even though these principles cannot be found in the New Testament; Christians in 500, 1000, and 1500 AD all lived and taught without these principles; and these principles originated in a non-Christian ideology. Many German Christians similarly adopted Fascist principles under the Nazis. Many Christians are currently taking a similar approach toward Marxism, claiming that Marxist principles are the truly Christian principles in the twentieth century.*

Many Christians have consciously and explicitly adopted conservative, romantic, or ideological positions over the past two centuries. However, one can only measure the actual influence of modern ideological currents on Christian thinking by examining the principles held inarticulately or unconsciously by the majority of Christians. A Christian who may never think of identifying himself as a Socialist may still be greatly influenced by a Socialist approach. A Christian may know little and care less about the origins and development of Liberalism as a modern ideology and still hold several key Liberal principles as self-evident axioms of Christian life. From a Christian point of view, one of the most important features of the modern ideological currents of thought is the considerable impact they have had on the beliefs, values, and assumptions held by the general body of modern Christians.

It is these secular movements of thought, whether consciously adopted or unconsciously assimilated, which usually dominate modern Christian discussions of men’s and women’s roles. Many of the most serious objections to the scriptural teaching on men’s and women’s roles are drawn from modern ideological principles and represent a functional ideal of society. Perhaps the strongest objection to scriptural teaching on men’s and women’s roles flows from the observation that the scriptural approach involves treating men and women differently. In the modern formulation, the objection is that scriptural teaching treats women “unequally” or “without

* It is often embarrassing for many Catholics today to read about the struggles of the popes in the nineteenth century against the influence of the various ideologies, and to read their encyclicals condemning the various ideological currents that these same Catholics now hold as the only defensible Christian positions, e.g., Pius IX’s *Syllabus of Errors* (1864).

the same rights.” Behind this objection is the modern notion of equality in which consideration of talent, gift, or ability is the only legitimate basis for treating people differently.⁴⁰ The scriptural teaching on men’s and women’s roles is thus branded as “sexist” and morally wrong. However, this objection is not based on Christian revelation, but on a principle drawn from Liberal/Socialist ideologies—ideologies that accept and further the functionalization of social relationships. In fact, this principle of equality does not really forbid all discrimination between people. It only forbids discrimination on any basis other than the functional criterion valued by a technological society.

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Another ideologically based objection to the scriptural teaching on men’s and women’s roles is the attack on the personal subordination that underlies the scriptural teaching. According to this objection, the husband’s headship over his wife (or the elders’ headship over the personal lives of Christians) constitutes a form of oppression or domination. Once again, this objection is not based on Christian revelation, but instead is an expression of the aversion to personal subordination and personal authority found in most modern ideologies. This principle does not really forbid the exercise of authority over other people’s lives. Instead, it forbids the kind of authority that grows out of a personal relationship, allowing the type of authority that relies upon the bureaucratic regulation and mental influence which is the normal means of social control in a technological society.

The point here is that neither the modern notion of equality nor the aversion to personal subordination are truly Christian principles. Both of these ideas are fundamental to the contemporary dislike for the Christian teaching on men’s and women’s roles, and many Christians use them as though they were Christian principles. But they are not Christian ideas. They derive from modern ideologies whose aim is to replace a social order based on stable, committed relationships with a social order based on functional relationships among people who have been individualized so they can fit where they are most functionally useful.

This domination of a Christian discussion by secular ideals is a good example of how difficult it has become for Christians to formulate a Christian response to modern conditions. All too often the responses Christians have offered are mere reflections of the responses offered by the surrounding society. The distinctive Christian ideal for social life has often been obscured by the influence of non-Christian thought systems, systems which often embody a functional ideal of society.

Distinguishing Christian and Non-Christian Ethical Systems

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Not all Christians have allowed their response to the challenges of modern society to be shaped uncritically by modern secular thought. Some have at least partially succeeded in the effort to formulate a genuinely Christian response to the new circumstances.⁴¹ A genuinely Christian response involves first of all a faithfulness to traditional Christian teaching, doctrinal and social, and a refusal to adopt modern ideological principles when they conflict with revealed Christian principles. It also involves a recognition that a mere clinging to past structures and customs is insufficient as a way of approaching modern society, and instead attempts to apply and adapt the traditional Christian approach to modern conditions. A genuinely Christian response will not immediately discard ideological principles, but will evaluate them according to their usefulness and their consistency with revealed Christian truth.

One can begin to formulate such a Christian response to modern society only by learning to distinguish between Christian and non-Christian ethical systems and between ethical principles deriving from these two types of systems. The ethical principles and the broader ethical systems of the modern ideologies have had great impact on Christian attempts to respond to the challenges of modern society. Christians tend not to treat these principles as pieces of secular wisdom that may or may not be helpful in applying Christian truth to a new situation, but instead they regard them as moral imperatives that have at least as much authority as revealed Christian ethical principles. Therefore, many modern Christians are not free to dismiss or modify the modern ethical principles when they conflict with revealed Christian principles. Christians need a clear understanding of the differences between Christian and non-Christian ethical systems and of how to approach the two systems if they are to hold distinctive positions in the midst of the moral pressures of the surrounding society.

Christians will frequently decide that an ethical system is Christian if the majority of Christians accept it. This approach has value only if there is no authority in Christianity that is over and above the trend of opinion among Christians, whether that authority is found in scripture or creeds, or in some living human beings (like a church teaching authority), or both. But if such an authority does exist, then no census of Christians can guarantee that a popular ethical position is actually a Christian position. After all, a large number of Christians can be unfaithful or deceived, as scripture frequently indicates (see Gal 1:6; 3:1; 1 Cor 5:1-2; 10:1-13; 1 Tim 1:6-7; 4:1-3). Such a decisive Christian authority does exist. Thus,

the term “Christian ethical system” will be reserved here for ethical systems that have been derived in large part from Christian revelation and in which the principles of Christian revelation are more authoritative in shaping the system than any other principles. The ethical systems of modern ideologies are clearly not Christian ethical systems. They may include elements that a Christian can use, but they are not in themselves Christian.

A failure to distinguish between Christian and non-Christian ethical systems and principles has especially hindered a genuine Christian response in the area of men’s and women’s roles. Many ethical principles derived from non-Christian ideological systems are appealed to as authoritative, either because Christians mistakenly consider these ideas to be grounded in Christian revelation, or because they consider them clearly superior to the traditional Christian principles. Five of these principles are worth citing briefly—the principles of: (1) equality, (2) freedom, (3) developing full potential or achieving self-fulfillment, (4) authenticity, and (5) being a “full person.” Most of these positions have already been discussed in earlier sections of this book, but it will nonetheless be helpful here to review them together and to compare them with the teaching of the scripture:

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1. *The principle of equality.** As discussed earlier, this principle states that all individuals should be treated identically, except for differences in ability or interest. This principle is primarily derived from Socialism, but it makes its way into other ideological systems as well. Sometimes the principle of equality is phrased as an attack on anything that would make one person be regarded as “inferior” to another. This principle militates against social roles ascribed according to age and sex and also against personal subordination.

Scripture also teaches a principle of equality, but it is a principle of equal care for all members of the body.[†] The scriptural principle is compatible with social roles and personal authority. It is not based on the individualizing of people for a functional society, but is instead based upon a communal life and personal relationships.

2. *The principle of freedom.*[‡] There are many varieties of this principle in the modern world, and the Liberal and Communist views on the

* On equality, see pp. 341–345, 526–527, 608–613.

† Though the only ideal of equality recognized in scripture is an ideal of equality of care, there are other concerns related to equality. There is a significant focus, especially in Johannine literature, on the equality of the Father and the Son, for instance. Trinitarian formulations, such as the Athanasian Creed, often use the formulation of equality. The concern is whether they are in fact equal—that is, identical in essence—not on how they should be treated.

‡ On freedom, see pp. 341–345, 522–523.

subject are not easily compatible. The Liberal principle of freedom is the one which surfaces most often in discussions of men's and women's roles. This principle states that each individual should guide his or her own life and make his or her own decisions independent of the thoughts or "interference" of others. This principle considers all forms of social control other than state-authorized bureaucratic or educational forms as morally wrong, and it regards them as forms of oppression or domination. Personal subordination is evil and degrading. Underlying the Liberal principle of freedom is an individualistic notion that the highest good resides in the greatest degree of personal autonomy and freedom of movement.

Scripture also teaches a principle of liberty, but it is the liberty to be the sons and daughters of God and freedom from all that opposes this status—especially the world, the flesh, the devil, and sin. The type of freedom scripture describes is compatible with a strong commitment to a body of people and with the acceptance of personal subordination. In fact, scripture sees corporate commitment and personal subordination as aids to freedom.

3. *The principle of developing full potential or achieving self-fulfillment.** This is an individualistic principle closely related to the principle of freedom. Self-fulfillment and full potential become ideals under conditions of little social cohesion where each individual feels the need to watch out for himself. This principle also has a strong functional orientation: It emphasizes individual gifts and abilities rather than personal relationships.

A principle of self-fulfillment cannot be found in the scripture. The scriptural teaching presumes a cohesive communal lifestyle, and sets forth an ideal of servanthood. The scripture allows Christians to seek a reward, but the criterion for action is love, that is, laying down one's life for the Lord and the brothers and sisters.[†]

4. *The principle of authenticity.** The principle of authenticity derives from the romantic reaction to functional society and social structure. It states that each individual should express his or her true feelings and preferences at all times so that one's "authentic" personality might

* On full potential and self-fulfillment, see pp. 44–45, 529–532.

† Self-denial is not a scriptural goal either. Both self-denial and reward have a role in the scripture. Christians must deny themselves to follow Christ. In following Christ, their reward will be great. But a Christian does not make his own self-fulfillment the criterion for his action.

‡ On authenticity, see footnote on pp. 500–501, and pp. 529–530, 605–606.

develop and be seen. Closely related to the principle of authenticity is the notion that each person should express his or her unique personality and gifts as fully as possible. The ideals of authenticity and uniqueness lead to a dislike for the type of social structure taught in scripture. To accept a role which does not fit one's feelings or preferences would be inauthentic.

While scriptural teaching allows for individual differences it does not idealize them, since sin finds authentic and unique expression in the lives of most people.

5. *The principle of being a "full person."** This principle has two common formulations. The first formulation rejects personal subordination as a sign of immaturity or incompetence. In the social structure of technological society, the main forms of personal subordination hinge upon some deficiency in the subordinate—his youth, or occasionally a disability like mental illness. After children grow into adulthood, they are expected to make their own decisions and form their own opinions. To treat adults as subordinate in anything other than functional relationships is to treat them as deficient people. Thus a "full person" is someone who is free from personal subordination, and is subject only to the bureaucratic forms of social control used in technological society.

The second formulation of the principle of being a "full person" grows from the romantic reaction to functional society. This formulation states that all human beings should be considered primarily as "persons," that is, as unique, individual centers of intentionality. To treat someone in terms of a social or a functional role is to treat that individual as an object rather than a person. For example, to treat a woman in a particular way simply because she is a woman is to treat her as a thing.

The scripture also teaches that each person has value, but the ideal of treating each individual as a "full person" is not present in the New Testament. Instead, it allows for personal subordination of adults and various social roles. In fact, one's status as a "full person" is less exalted than one's status as a son or daughter of God or as a Christian father or a Christian mother.

These five ethical principles exert a powerful influence over Christian discussions of men's and women's roles. Yet none of them are intrinsically Christian principles and none of them derive from a Christian ethical system.

* On being a "full person," see pp. 44–45, 531.

Evaluating Modern Ethical Principles

The New
Intellectual
Environment ▶
Ideology and
Christianity

The fact that these five principles are not intrinsically Christian and are not found in scripture does not mean that they are totally useless. In fact, Christians have tended to accept the ethical systems of the modern ideologies because they have increasingly perceived that traditional social approaches are unable to cope with technological society and its social problems. The choice is between a good technological order and a bad one, not between a traditional order and a technological one. The need to respond to a new functionalized social environment has forced Christians to explore the secular wisdom of the ideologies for workable approaches to daily life. This is not an error in itself. A non-Christian ethical system is not always wrong or opposed to the ethics of the gospel. To develop an authentic Christian response to the challenges of the modern world, one must learn to distinguish between Christian and non-Christian ethical systems, between authoritative Christian teaching and secular ideological wisdom. But this does not mean one must necessarily reject every idea deriving from the non-Christian systems.

In fact, these five ethical principles can help in understanding how to approach life in a technological society, especially in a non-cooperative technological society with great social problems. Some principle of individual self-reliance is probably necessary in an individualistic, competitive social environment. Individual freedom may be an ideal of great value when the alternative foreseen is the rule of a dictatorial government. To form one's own opinions and make one's own decisions is an important value when there is no corporate body or authority that one can look to as trustworthy. An emphasis on the equal dignity of all individuals with no consideration of social role may be an essential way of coping with an unstructured technological society which makes the weak vulnerable to exploitation by the more powerfully placed. A stress on treating individuals as "full persons" has value in a social environment where people relate to one another primarily in terms of specific functional concerns, and, for example, care little whether they are giving their money when shopping to a person or a machine. None of these principles can be found in either scripture or Christian tradition, and they cannot be called "Christian ethical principles" in the sense of being part of an authoritative and distinctive Christian ethical system. However, they still have some value as modern wisdom for dealing with a technological social order.

Nevertheless, these principles must always be clearly distinguished

from those which are derived from scripture and Christian tradition. For example, the Christian teaching on loving one another or loving the brethren refers to a committed relationship in the body of Christ. It is not teaching about how to love within a purely functional relationship involving no personal commitment. The modern idea of treating others equally and as persons is helpful in functional relationships, and may be the most ethically sound approach. It may even be the approach most in accord with the mind of Christ for such a situation. However, this idea does not come from scripture or revelation. It needs to be distinguished from teachings which do come from scripture, so that when a conflict arises between modern principles drawn from non-Christian ethical systems and the scriptural teaching, one is able to adjust or reject the modern principle and not reject the teaching that has scriptural authority.* If Ephesians 5:22–33 seems contrary to the modern notion of equality, one may have a reason to limit the application of this modern notion, but not a reason to reject the teaching of Ephesians.

Evaluating
Modern
Ethical
Principles

This is why an ability to distinguish Christian and non-Christian ethical systems is so important for an authentic Christian response to the challenges of modern society. Non-Christian principles may be of some use, but they should never be grounds for rejecting principles drawn from Christian revelation. A failure to distinguish between ethical systems is often the basic error made by Christians who embrace non-Christian ideologies or ideological principles. Do they see the ideology as helpful wisdom for a new social situation, but wisdom that is subordinate to scriptural teaching? Or do they regard the ideology as a social approach that is superior to scripture, of greater value and authority? It is one thing to accept the need for an approach to technological society and learn from a secular ideology. It is quite another matter to accept a non-Christian ideology with all its ethical claims, and still another to consider it the essential Christian position. Perhaps a Socialist or Liberal structuring of society would be in certain respects more beneficial for a technological

* Sometimes there is a confusion caused for Christians by a too easy equation of analogous ideas. “All men [people] are created equal” is similar to “All people are created by God in his image and likeness.” Both statements point to reasons for valuing and respecting each human being. Some modern people would probably even say that the two statements articulate the same basic principle. For many practical situations in technological society this may be the case. Nonetheless, their origin is different, the social ideal behind them is different, and the intent of them as they were first written is different. When Christians begin to treat “All men are created equal” as an authoritative Christian truth, they are opening themselves up to assimilating unreflectively an ideal and an approach that is not scriptural. Such Christians will then be unable to follow the teaching of the scripture when it conflicts with a modern Liberal or Socialist principle.

society than the alternatives. Nonetheless, it is a great mistake to think of Liberal or Socialist principles as the only right and moral course and the way things always should have been, and to view the scriptural and traditional Christian writers as participants in an earlier primitive stage of Christian revelation who had not progressed to the higher Liberal or Socialist morality of today. It is a great mistake to raise Liberal or Socialist teaching to the same level as the teaching of Christ. When “All men are created equal” has the same authority for Christians as “Love one another as I have loved you,” then something is radically wrong.

Christians should be cautious in their use of non-Christian ethical systems because these systems represent an important aspect of what the New Testament calls “the world.”* The Christian people need to become free of “the world,” that is, the values and way of life of the non-Christian society around them. If they do not, they will be unable to follow the Lord and do his will when this conflicts with the prevailing currents of the surrounding society, as is often the case. The world affects Christians not only by holding out pleasure to them, but also by exerting ethical pressure. The world frequently tells Christians that it is right to do something and wrong to do something else. Such ethical appeals are often ways of inducing Christians to ignore Christian teaching. It is a mistake to think that the dominion of darkness is entirely devoid of ethics. Not only can Satan quote scripture, he can quote ethical principles. But even more, he teaches his own ethics, so that people can actually feel that it is wrong not to obey him. Christians have to be solidly established in the Lord’s teaching, fully aware of the differences between Christian and non-Christian ethical systems, if they are to adequately confront a worldly ethical system and maintain a clear conscience.

It is difficult to formulate a genuine Christian response to the challenges of the modern world. The dissolution of Christian community and the social and ideological pressures of technological society conspire against such a response. However, such a response is a vital necessity. The first step toward a genuine Christian response is to learn to distinguish Christian from non-Christian ethical systems.

Ideology and Christianity

Widespread acceptance by Christians of non-Christian ideologies and their ethical claims leaves Christianity defenseless against the influence of

* On the New Testament approach to “the world,” see pp. 281–285.

modern culture. Many Christians are losing the ability to make an overall critique of modern society and culture from a Christian perspective. Many Christians do critique modern culture, but they do so selectively and partially, as much from a Liberal or Socialist perspective as from a Christian perspective. Since they have completely embraced the principles and presuppositions of modern culture, they are only able to make an internal critique. Increasingly, many within the Christian people are being assimilated to technological society and modern culture with no ability to form an alternative. Because they have lost an environment of their own, a community in which they can support one another in an independent Christian life, and because they have no adequate approach to technological society, they are at the mercy of whatever wave or current passes through modern society.

Ideology and
Christianity

A remarkable example of this phenomenon is the influence the women's liberation movement has exerted on the church in the 1970s. This movement has influenced the Christian church as much as it has influenced any other institution in society. Christians not only accept the specific program of women's liberation but also its underlying ideological principles. They often discard centuries of Christian consensus on the subject as misguided and morally inferior to a new secular ideology with its new ethical system. The Christian church thus begins to resemble more and more the modern culture in which it resides, rather than offering a distinctively Christian alternative.

Concluding Observations

THESE last two chapters have considered the social and ideological environment of the modern world as a necessary step toward an application of Christian social teaching for Christians today. By necessity, this treatment has been sketchy. The development and character of technological society is a major topic which, like so many others in this book, could easily occupy the attention of a full volume. Modern ideological thought is a topic of similar proportion. Nevertheless, both topics are indispensable to an adequate understanding of the Christian approach to men's and women's roles today. Though the treatment is sketchy, there are certain broad conclusions that can be drawn safely from these chapters.

First, contemporary Western society has a very different social environment than the societies in scriptural times. Social roles follow a different dynamic in technological society. Few groupings still have a network of

committed structured personal relationships. Most relationships are either functional, or else informal, unstructured, and emotionally based. There is little “space” for an expression of men’s and women’s roles. Role differences in technological society can find expression only in the family, which cannot survive when following simply a functional principle. But precisely because it is a non-technological remnant in a technological society, the family unit is weakening and losing significance. In short, it is becoming increasingly difficult to express a traditional approach to men’s and women’s roles without appearing ludicrous or out of place. Today’s social environment is extremely inhospitable to traditional social roles. Any attempt to apply traditional Christian teaching must confront this fact.

Secondly, the trend of modern society is currently irreversible. More and more of society will become technologized and functionalized, and more and more people around the world will be drawn into the patterns of technological society. This does not mean that Christians should fail to evaluate the development of technological society. However, though Christians can critique technological society, they cannot ignore it as a pervasive feature of life. The irreversibility of the current trend also does not rule out the possibility of a major breakdown of technological society in the future. The system might collapse as a result of war, domestic social turmoil, economic failure, or resource shortages. Still, there is no indication that society as a whole would accept a consciously engineered stoppage of the development of technological society. God might intervene, but technological society seems beyond the reach of Christians who might want to reverse the trend. Thus, Christians should not merely assume a conservative posture and complain about the direction of the modern world. They should either deal constructively with technological society, or they should withdraw, like the Amish and the Hutterites, and create a society of their own based on non-technological principles. In short, any realistic Christian approach to men’s and women’s roles in the modern world must accept technological society as a given.

Thirdly, technological society can at least be called problematic. Even if the final evaluation of technological society is positive, this society still has one major problematic feature: It is not currently suited for the development of human community. Stable personal relationships can be sustained only with difficulty in technological society. The technical-productive sector dominates society, producing a functionalized social system that leaves little room for natural human social structure. The human dispositions toward family-communal structures based on age and sex differences have

little “space” in which to be expressed. The lack of stable social relationships also causes problems for the raising of the young and the care for the old, and may very well contribute to a higher incidence of psychological and emotional disorders. Stable social relationships are more important for human life than most contemporary people realize. If we cannot reconstruct stable personal relationships, and if human values continue to be consistently sacrificed to functional values, then the human race will be greatly impoverished. It will have lost some of the most valuable elements of its social existence.

Concluding
Observations

Fourthly and finally, Christians now face a twofold challenge: (1) they must find a way to preserve a specifically Christian pattern of thought in faithfulness to Christian revelation, and (2) they must devise a way to fashion a community life that expresses God’s purposes for the human race. Christian life cannot survive without some form of Christian environment. There must be enough environmental support to allow Christian life to withstand a non-Christian society. Christianity must also guide its life according to a set of principles derived from Christian revelation. If Christianity loses its distinctiveness and originality, if it merely reproduces secular ideology in religious language, then it will lack the substance needed to draw people and to hold them together in the face of an indifferent world. Any adaptation of Christianity to the modern world that is unfaithful to Christian revelation is self-defeating. It is simply a Munich agreement in the face of the demands of modern society. It buys short-range acceptability at the cost of a long-range loss of direction and ability to preserve Christian identity.

APPLYING SCRIPTURAL TEACHING

THIS CHAPTER brings into focus the issue of faithfulness to the teaching of Jesus and his apostles—faithfulness here and now in the twentieth century. A Christian is a follower of Jesus Christ, and a Christian's life, as a part of the body of Christ, is built upon the foundation of the apostles. Faithfulness to Jesus involves more than being faithful to his teaching and to the teaching of those he commissioned to be his apostles; but it does include being faithful to that teaching. To claim to be a faithful follower of the teacher and then to set aside his teaching is to fall far short of the faithfulness which Jesus called for. Yet one must learn to be faithful to him in some circumstances very different from those of the first century. Life in a technological society seems far removed from life in the time of Jesus. The teaching of a man who never traveled farther from his home than three to four days' journey by foot may appear to offer little in the way of practical guidelines for the lives of men and women who can fly quickly and easily from continent to continent. Men and women of today need a faithful restatement of Jesus' teaching which shows them how it applies in their own lives. Formulating such a restatement requires a clear understanding of scriptural teaching and of God's intentions underlying that teaching.

To understand the scriptures in such a way that their teaching can faithfully be applied in different circumstances involves more than merely understanding the meaning of the words on the page. In one way, the distinction often made between explaining the text of scripture (exegesis) and relating the text of scripture to our particular circumstances (application) is a helpful one. It is analytically possible to distinguish the various operations one performs in explaining the text, such as translating the Greek or Hebrew into a

modern language or studying the customs which make it possible to grasp the significance of various scriptural statements and actions, from the operations one performs in applying the text, such as understanding the contemporary situation and its requirements. Because this distinction between exegesis and application can be made, certain questions of applicability arise which can best be treated separately from exegetical questions.¹ There is, though, another way in which this distinction is not only artificial but misleading. If the scripture is God's teaching, if it contains his word to us, then whatever it says is directed to us. God intends his commandments and counsels to form our lives. We do not really understand the words of scripture unless we know what God is saying to us through them. The world's greatest and most scholarly exegete could easily misunderstand the scripture completely if he failed to grasp what he was expected to do with what God has said.*

Observing the artificial aspect of the distinction between exegesis and application helps to clarify something that is obvious in scripture study: Other than mere technical observations on language and history, it is rare to find anything which might merit the term "pure exegesis." In the very way the text is explained, most "exegesis" betrays the exegete's own understanding of how one should respond to the text. By its very nature as God's word, scripture calls forth a personal response from those who encounter it. Even in the most scholarly exegesis, the exegete's own stand as a person before God is normally visible. This is simply a manifestation of a more fundamental reality: Scripture is addressed to contemporary man personally, and therefore cannot be properly understood as merely an ancient text or a specimen for the history of religions.[†] There is no

* To say that something is "the meaning" or "the *real* meaning" of a scriptural passage normally involves making the covert claim that the way it would be comprehended by those who first heard it, or by the human author, is of higher value or more faithful than any other meaning. Even to distinguish between "its meaning for then" and "its meaning for now" would be most easily understood as implying that "its meaning for now" is not something really "in" the text, but something we are adding to it. Christians have traditionally believed that the primary author of scripture is God, and hence that scripture was not fully comprehended even by its human authors. If this is so, the meaning for now (if we can discern it) is just as much its real meaning as its meaning for then.

This chapter does not directly raise the issue of typological and spiritual meanings of scripture (except in the footnote on p. 572). Such approaches to interpretation, however, further question the validity of the claim that the human author or his original audience were the ones who understood "the real meaning" of the text.

† The statement that the words of scripture are directed to us today should be qualified by the observation that certain parts of scripture's teaching are addressed directly to one group within the Christian community rather than to another. For example, the teaching addressed to children is not directed to parents, nor is the instruction for married couples directed to single people. Yet most of the teaching in scripture is intended for all Christians, and those parts addressed to certain groups within the Christian community are still intended to speak to those groups today.

“neutral” interpretation of scripture, acceptable to Christian and pagan alike, which succeeds in fully understanding the scripture.² The study of scripture cannot be approached adequately in the same way as the study of secular history or biology. It is the study of God’s word to his people. In studying scriptural teaching it is not enough to be attentive to what was said to Christians of the first century. We must also listen carefully to what God is saying to us here and now.

What Is Its Meaning for Now?

It was observed in the previous chapter that three elements should be considered in the formation of any approach to the roles of men and women: (1) the human reality (how human beings operate, both in their common humanity and in their differences as men and women); (2) the circumstances in which any approach is to be lived out (varied circumstances will often require some differences in shaping men’s and women’s roles); and (3) the ideal which shapes our approach to personal relationships. (The first two elements—the human reality and the circumstances—do not completely determine our approach to the roles of men and women; we could form those roles differently depending upon the ideal we have.)

The first two parts of this book treated the scripture and its teaching about men’s and women’s roles. Scripture gives us an ideal for these roles, as well as authoritative teaching about God’s intention for them. It gives us a vision of God’s purpose for the human race, his understanding of personal relationships in the body of Christ, and his pattern for the roles of men and women. The third part of the book began by considering the human reality. A review of modern research indicates some real differences between men and women—differences corresponding to the vision for the human race which scripture presents, but differences which a modern technological society often fails to take into account, thereby neglecting an important element of the human reality. The two chapters which followed this review of modern research considered contemporary circumstances within which Christians must live their lives and form a good approach to the roles of men and women—circumstances formed both by the development of technological society and by modern ideologies.

The present chapter takes up the question of scripture interpretation, namely, how to approach the difficult task of faithfully interpreting and applying the ideal presented in scripture in a vastly different set of cir-

cumstances. One should not underestimate the differences between our world and that of Jesus and Paul. The change from their times to ours has been drastic. Consequently, our modern circumstances pose a major challenge to applying much of the scriptural teaching. It is not only on the isolated issue of the roles of men and women that this challenge is felt. Rather, contemporary circumstances challenge any attempt to apply scriptural teaching in a way that would shape a distinctively Christian life. The problem of scriptural application is heightened by the fact that the social environment poses an obstacle to adequately taking into account many elements of human nature, such as age and sex differences or the need for stable relationships, which would need adequate expression even if one did not have scriptural teaching.

What Is
Its Meaning
for Now?

Application of scriptural teaching is even further complicated, however, by the misconceptions which many Christians have about what is entailed in applying that teaching. People often presume that the only possible kind of application is one which is uninterpreted and unadapted, such as the application one would make of the commandment "Thou shalt not commit adultery." People often presume that the teaching found in scripture must be expressed and lived out in the twentieth century in a way identical to how it was in the first. This sort of application appears to impose a set of traditional practices upon twentieth-century society which no longer make sense in the modern social framework. Because applying scripture in this way can seem both unreasonable and undesirable, many modern Christian thinkers reject such an application of scriptural teaching on men and women. In doing so, however, they often presume that various elements of the scriptural teaching (such as roles of men and women, or the order of relationships) can therefore not be applied at all, or that only certain selected elements of the scriptural teaching can be applied (for instance, the fundamental equality of men and women). Some also assert that the Lord does not intend them to be applied. Most of those who pursue this sort of approach say that it is necessary to look to the present reality of life in the modern world in order to discover which scriptural teaching is to be accepted and which is to be rejected.

Four of the most significant arguments presented in support of the view that the scriptural teaching on the roles of men and women is inapplicable are (1) "the gap between the centuries," (2) "the signs of the times," (3) "the development of doctrine," and (4) "the current practice of the Christian churches." While these arguments are often used against making any application, or for making only a very selective application, of these passages,

they need not be taken as such. Rather than indicating that the passages should not be applied, these arguments instead point to the need for the right kind of application—one which takes various important factors into account. Before more fully considering the question of application, these four arguments should be examined in order to clarify what they actually do and do not mean.

Applying
Scriptural
Teaching

The Gap between the Centuries

The phrase “gap between the centuries” summarizes a line of thought in scripture interpretation which is applied to many areas, including the roles of men and women. According to this line of thought, one of the most significant results of “scientific” history in the nineteenth century was to make modern man aware of how very different the present age is from that of Jesus, or from any other period of history. Too much has happened in history for it to be possible to return to the times of Jesus or to reproduce his times today. The modern mentality, modern circumstances, and modern culture simply make it impossible. Nor is it even desirable. History, according to this approach, is God’s history. Or, the history of the church is God’s history. If God has formed a new age, we ought to accept that age and live within it. It would be mere Biblicism or Fundamentalism to attempt now to do exactly what the scriptures direct. We cannot play “First Century Bibleland” or “First Century Semite” as though we were identical in mentality and situation to the people whom Jesus and Paul addressed.

This approach can be taken in two fundamentally different ways. One way points toward developing an understanding of how to apply the scriptural teaching so that, realistically taking into account our changed circumstances, we do not proceed as though what the scriptures taught were framed to speak immediately to our situation or to a situation that was precisely like ours. The second way, however, ultimately uses “the gap between the centuries” and the need for using “hermeneutics” to say that modern man should not apply various elements of the scriptural teaching at all.³ Someone who takes this second way reads the New Testament passages on the roles of men and women and develops “hermeneutical problems” which prove to be insuperable, and which relegate the passages on the roles of men and women to the category of interesting Christian history.⁴

At the risk of oversimplifying positions that are frequently stated in highly complex formulations, it is helpful to understand the second way of using “the gap between the centuries” as the view of those interpreters

of scripture who do not wish to be found in the position of attempting something in a technological society which was more harmonious with traditional societies. In part, these interpreters wish to avoid that position because such an endeavor seems to them a very difficult, if not impossible, task. In part, they wish to avoid that position because they have accepted the ethical principles of modern ideologies and can no longer accept certain scriptural principles. More specifically, they are commonly conditioned by the principles of the dominant academic culture of modern society and by what is deemed acceptable within that culture.

The Gap
between
the Centuries

The difficulties these interpreters have with different elements of scripture extend beyond the questions of social structural teaching in the New Testament, reaching at times to very fundamental questions of doctrine. But it is especially in the social structural teaching—in fact, in most of the New Testament teaching on personal relations—that this second use of “the gap between the centuries” determines the interpretation which many people give to the scriptures. Social structure is an area where it is clear that a commitment to the basic principles of modern society and culture forces people to ignore scriptural teaching, or at least to find a way of reading it without feeling that they should actually apply it. In effect, to approach questions of social structure according to the second use of “the gap between the centuries” is to say that Christians should be converted to the thinking and behavior of the present age and culture with respect to these questions, rather than that people in the present age and culture should be converted to Christian teaching. Because this position was more fully treated at the end of Chapter Eleven, here it is enough to say that, while the truths highlighted in observing “the gap between the centuries” may point to the need for adaptation of scriptural teaching to a new age and new circumstances, they do not establish the Christian validity of conversion to that age, nor of setting aside the scriptural teaching.

To deny that “the gap between the centuries” points to setting aside scriptural teaching is not to deny that it has real significance. Its significance, however, is to be found in its first meaning, mentioned above: to highlight the importance of developing an understanding of how this first-century teaching is to be applied in twentieth-century society. Once the intention of that teaching as it was given in scriptural times is understood, one must still face the challenge of following it today in some markedly different circumstances. Mastering that challenge is not an easy task. For instance, Paul’s teaching on justification was addressed to a controversy caused by the difference between Jew and Gentile in the early

church. Can this teaching be applied directly to a late medieval controversy over faith and works, or to a modern controversy about activism and spirituality?⁵ Even when we understand what Paul originally meant at the time he taught, do we know how to use his teaching in our modern circumstances? In the present case, how does Paul's teaching on the roles of men and women actually apply to us today, and how can we apply this teaching so that we will not be doing something which God never intended? Questions such as these must be taken into account very seriously in the study of biblical teaching in any area. A correct use of "the gap between the centuries" alerts us to such questions, and points to the need to specify the differences between the original context and our present circumstances. Specifying these differences can then enable us to gauge both the situation of application and the adaptations needed in order to faithfully follow the scriptural teaching today.

In summary, "the gap between the centuries" points toward the need to take our drastically altered circumstances into account when applying scriptural teaching. When understood properly, however, it should not lead us to dismiss the scriptural teaching or selected aspects of it as inapplicable today because they are at odds with the social principles of modern society and culture.

The Signs of the Times

Another principle which is sometimes used as an objection to any application of biblical teaching on the roles of men and women is "reading the signs of the times."⁶ The phrase itself is drawn from Matthew 16:3. It is often used today, however, in a manner quite unlike the way Jesus used it in that scripture passage. Its three most common meanings are:

1. observing what is taking place in the world so that we can deal with it effectively; being familiar with what is happening in our society and with what things may indicate societal trends;
2. seeing the major movements and trends in our society as being indications of God's will, or of what we should accept; deciding that we are being "spoken to" by the movements and currents of opinion in our times ("spoken to" in the sense of being told what we should accept and follow);
3. searching human history and experience for prophetic signs of God's will; discerning God's plan through spiritual signs—which is often

a way that goes against contemporary movements and currents of opinion.

The third meaning most accurately describes what Jesus meant by “the signs of the times” in Matthew 16:3. “Reading the signs of the times” was a matter of prophetic interpretation. Only those with faith and spiritual discernment could perceive and understand a sign. Many people today, however, cannot distinguish among these three meanings of “the signs of the times.” Since they do not know how to distinguish between the mere observing of societal trends and the actual discerning of prophetic signs, they are unable to see how the third meaning differs from the first or second.

The Signs
of the Times

The second meaning or approach is the dangerous one. If the disciples of Jesus had accepted the second approach, they would have become either Zealots or collaborators with the Romans. Looking at the social movements and currents of opinion in our times as “signs of the times,” as messages from God that we should accept and follow, is a way of bestowing authority on society and modern culture and of destroying the Christian’s ability to judge whether he should go along with his culture and society or go against them. In the final analysis, it leaves Christians helpless to avoid society’s sins, or at least society’s overall unfaithfulness to God. Those who use this second sense of “the signs of the times” as a guideline for applying the scriptural teaching on men and women actually end up accepting the judgment of modern culture and society as their authority, and submitting scriptural teaching to contemporary societal standards. In the light of those standards, many reject the attempt to apply scriptural teaching to the present times, holding that because the times have changed, the Christian understanding of men and women and their roles must change correspondingly. They also assert that this is God’s will.⁷

People who have adopted the first meaning of “the signs of the times” have suggested that we might identify the current feminist movement as a sign from God for the church.⁸ The feminist movement, they point out, does not come from nowhere. It is motivated by some genuine needs. Its rapid growth indicates that there is “fertile soil” for its development in the needs of women today, soil that Christians must understand and approach in the right way. Clearly, they say, simple traditionalism no longer works in a technological society.

Those who make these observations have a real point. Observing such needs in society and noting what responses these needs are evoking can be

very helpful. While one can profit from these observations, it also becomes clear at this point that the first approach to “the signs of the times” is inadequate as a total approach. Having noted certain societal patterns and trends, and having recognized genuine needs which those trends express, this approach provides no way of determining what we as Christians should do in response to those needs. It is often at this point that people slip unobtrusively into the dangerous second view of “the signs of the times,” that is, they accept the general societal response as a sign from God. Yet reading God’s prophetic signs is primarily a matter of spiritual discernment, not sociological observation. This is strikingly true in regard to modern social trends in the area of men’s and women’s roles. The feminist movement, viewed from a spiritual perspective, is a good case in point.

To begin with, the feminist movement is a societal movement. Christians who get caught up with women’s liberation or with women’s rights organizations, or who are simply influenced by the broad currents of feminism in our times, are coming under the sway of non-Christian ideologies and authorities. It is not difficult to discern in many “Christian feminists” a tendency to identify more with the feminist movement than with the body of Christ. Their primary commitment is to convert the body of Christ to feminism, not to convert the feminists to Christ. This is not true of all Christians who support the feminist position, but it is the case with a large number of them.

Secondly, much that is born of the feminist movement, especially the more radical sectors of it, is straightforwardly immoral from the Christian point of view. The feminist movement provides much of the active support these days for abortion, homosexuality, “sexual freedom,” and legislation that is destructive of family life. Is that fact purely coincidental, or are the principles behind the movement so fundamentally hostile to God and his order that the same principles which lead to a denial of the roles of men and women lead as well to abortion and sexual immorality? A study of the arguments used in the movement to deny sex roles and arguments to justify sexual immorality reveals, more often than not, that the same principles are invoked.⁹ The lack of respect we have previously noted for both the facts of scripture and the scientifically established facts of men-women differences is, perhaps, an indication of the spirit from which much of the movement comes. So, too, is the remarkable tendency in some feminist exegesis to justify Eve and identify with her in her course of action in the Fall.¹⁰ There are, in short, indications that should make Christians hesitant about seeing the current feminist movement as a sign produced by God, even when they can see the needs which give rise to it.

Trends in society, even when based on responses to real needs, are not necessarily “from God.” One can learn much from observing the view which scripture itself takes to trends in its first-century society—a view which corresponds with the third meaning of “the signs of the times,” that of spiritually discerning God’s prophetic signs. Many contemporary Christians pass over important elements of the scriptural view and thus leave themselves unable to spiritually discern the trends of modern society. Paul makes the following statement about the pagan society of his day:

The Signs
of the Times

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse; for although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles.

Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever! Amen.

For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. Their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error.

And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a base mind and to improper conduct. They were filled with all manner of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. (Rom 1:18–31)

According to Paul, the denial of God leads to immoral conduct. Since our current society is likewise characterized by an increasing unwillingness to acknowledge, honor, or give thanks to God, we might expect immoral conduct to follow. A similar statement is made in 2 Timothy about the characteristics of the last days:

But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of stress. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligates, fierce, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding the form of religion but denying the power of it. Avoid such people. (2 Tm 3:1–5)

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Such elements would all qualify as indications by which we can spiritually discern what is happening today in our society in general, and in societal approaches to the roles of men and women in particular. Recognition of these elements does not have to lead us to a total rejection of our society as if it were thoroughly evil, with no redeeming features or values. But if we are unable to perceive these elements and to recognize that we are dealing with a non-Christian society—one whose products are mixed in their origin and mixed in their result—we will regularly be deceived.

Recently, a major American company produced a book on population control which was used in a number of schools until it was withdrawn under threat of a lawsuit.¹¹ The book contained suggestions that the Pope be tried for crimes against humanity because of his opposition to abortion and sterilization. Presently, there is enough protection for Christians in the United States to handle such a blatantly hostile attack on Christians for holding their own moral positions. But it is worth observing and being warned by the kind of hostility that exists. This hostility is surely one of “the signs of the times” that Christians need to notice. A non-Christian society cannot be expected to preserve Christian values. Until recently, enough moral sense had been inherited from the time when Western society was part of Christendom that Christian values could still be honored. That time, however, is rapidly passing. If Christians persist in seeing worldly movements and currents of opinion as “signs of the times”—as signs of God’s will, worthy of as much attention as authoritative Christian teaching—Christianity will not last long in modern society.

“The signs of the times” must be read and discerned from a spiritual perspective. This leads to a better understanding of the times and circumstances in a way that allows the scripture to be more faithfully and effectively applied in a different situation than that for which it was written. However, to read “the signs of the times” in a way that causes scriptural teaching to be ignored or eliminated is to seriously misread the signs of the times. It is a way of missing the purpose of God (Lk 7:30).

Development of Doctrine

Another principle often cited in rejecting any application of scriptural teaching on the roles of men and women is the principle of the development of doctrine.¹² Those taking this approach observe that Christian doctrine has developed, that it is not stated or approached in identically the same way now as it was in scripture. If doctrine has developed throughout history, they reason, why should there not be a further development of doctrine now which would allow us to see that the scriptural teaching on the roles of men and women no longer applies—indeed, that much of it must simply be set aside as belonging to an earlier stage of doctrine? As new circumstances have arisen, they say, we have reformulated doctrine about men and women. Therefore, we are no longer bound to its earlier formulations which insisted upon certain practices.

Development
of Doctrine

Those who use the development of doctrine in this way often combine that principle with a particular way of interpreting scripture's teaching on the roles of men and women. They attempt to distinguish the "core" or "timeless" elements of the scriptural teaching (such as the equality of men and women) from the conditioned application of it (such as role differences in first-century society). This is a hazardous approach to interpretation which can subtly lead to various pitfalls (see Chapter Fifteen).

The idea of the development of doctrine received its classic formulation by John Henry Newman as a tool to distinguish between true and false developments of Christian doctrine.¹³ Newman observed that various Christian practices, institutions, and teachings had changed a great deal in the course of history. Even the most literalist contemporary interpreter of the New Testament sounds very different from the New Testament itself, and the modern church and Christian life look very different from their first-century counterparts. Newman observed that living things tend to develop: The mature tree looks different from the sapling, but it is still the same tree. Similarly, Christian doctrine had developed as it confronted new languages, thought forms, intellectual problems, and social problems, and also as people pondered it and saw its implications more clearly. Christian doctrine has to develop in order to stay alive and meet the challenges of new conditions and new opponents. In fact, doctrine has to develop in order to stay essentially the same in changing circumstances. In Newman's view, such development is inevitable, healthy, and to be expected.

Newman's approach to development of doctrine, however, and that of modern writers who would ultimately set aside the scriptural teaching

on the roles of men and women are two different matters.¹⁴ Development of doctrine is one thing; reversal of doctrine is quite another. The theory of development of doctrine as expounded by Newman concerns the reformulation of doctrinal statements and their application to new circumstances. It is a theory that explains how a doctrinal position can evolve while remaining essentially the same. Newman, in fact, expended much effort trying to state criteria for distinguishing developments that preserve the original doctrine from ones that corrupt it (e.g., continuity of principle, preservation of type, logical sequence, etc.).¹⁵ Development of the scriptural teaching on the roles of men and women may be possible, or even inevitable, in Newman's sense of the term. But one cannot speak of a "development" of doctrine if Christian teaching at one point in history directly contradicts authoritative Christian teaching of an earlier period. If Christian teaching at one point stated authoritatively that *only* men should hold the governing authority in a Christian community and that the husband was the head of the family, it cannot later hold that women, too, may be heads of the Christian community or that the wife may be the head of the husband (or that a family does not need a head). Such a fundamental change in authoritative Christian teaching would not be a development of doctrine, but a reversal of a previous position.*

As well as reformulation of doctrinal statements for new circumstances, development very often involves translation from one conceptual system or mentality into another. Scriptural teaching need not be bound to a Hebrew mentality or to the mentality of a traditional society. There is, however, a fundamental difference between faithfully translating what the scripture says into a different mentality or thought pattern and actually changing the message to make it more readily acceptable to those who have a different mentality because they disagree with what the scripture teaches. Some writers speak about "de-patriarchalizing" the scripture (or the Genesis account or particular doctrines in scripture)—that is, translating it into terms which are free of all "patriarchy."¹⁶ On the face of it, this idea may sound acceptable. But when people approach scriptural teaching with the idea that it should come out a certain way (for example, free from patriarchy), they run the risk of determining their results from the very beginning. The scripture itself must indicate whether or not a particular element is

* The teaching of the church Father Vincent of Lérins exemplifies the understanding of development of doctrine which expects development, but opposes a reversal of doctrine:

Let there be growth . . . and all possible progress in understanding, knowledge and wisdom, whether in single individuals or in the whole body, in each man as well as in the entire church, according to the stage of their development; but only within proper limits, that is, in the same doctrine, in the same meaning, and in the same purport. (*Commonitorium* 23.1; *PL* 50:640)

essential to its message. Scripture does not enjoin the social order of the times of the patriarchs, nor even the order of traditional society *per se*. Yet it does enjoin certain approaches to roles and social order which some people label “patriarchy.” To eliminate those approaches is not to translate (and thereby develop) scriptural teaching. It is to change it.

Language is a form of life. Much of the Christian message needs to be translated in order to be understood. But at the same time, as in many other areas, people encountering Christian teaching need to learn a new language in order to understand all that is being said because they are encountering new realities and a new way of life. To give an example from a different area, someone who wants to learn how to be an electrician has to learn a new “language” in order to be able both to communicate about a new way of doing things and to master a new area of reality which was previously unfamiliar. For someone in twentieth-century technological society, learning to understand the scripture can be furthered to an extent by having scriptural teaching “translated” well. At times, however, learning to understand the scripture is more like learning a new language, because it involves learning a new way of life. In other words, translation is not the only approach to meaningful communication or to explaining scripture. Conversion and exploring new terrain are also essential.¹⁷

Scriptural teaching can undergo various sorts of changes. Some teaching can be dropped for the present in some societies because there are no longer circumstances in which to apply it (for instance, the teaching on slavery). The understanding of some teaching can be developed in an attempt to apply it in circumstances which differ from those in which the teaching was originally given. The understanding of scriptural teaching can also be developed as new questions or new thought forms are encountered, and that teaching needs to be translated or reformulated. But there is a great difference between development or reformulation of doctrine and reversal of position. Going from the view that Jesus is Lord and the Son of God to the view that Jesus was a great religious genius may have pleased some Hegelians, but it was not a development or reformulation of doctrine. It was a fundamental change in teaching and a shipwreck of faith. To stress the point made earlier, to maintain now that wives can be the heads of their husbands (or that families should have no head) or that women as well as men can govern the Christian community (or that the Christian community should have no governors), would much more adequately be described as a reversal of the scriptural teaching than as a development of it.

When it is correctly understood and applied, the idea of the development of doctrine can be very valuable. It can lead to a helpful reformulation

Development
of Doctrine

of doctrinal statements for new circumstances which often involves translating the teaching of scripture into our very different modern mentality. Yet when people invoke development of doctrine as a principle which allows them to reverse or eliminate significant portions of authoritative Christian teaching, they are seriously abusing that principle, and are in danger of undermining the authority of scripture.

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The Current Practice of the Church

A fourth argument which is often brought against any application of scriptural teaching, and which often moves toward rejecting all applicability of that teaching, is based upon the current practice of the Christian church.¹⁸ The argument runs as follows: With current Christian practice so much at variance with the scriptural teaching anyway, why should we choose the scriptural teaching on the roles of men and women as a place to hold the line? In other words, why should we vigorously object to the leveling of role differences between men and women when so many other chapters of scripture are already either a “dead letter” or are very embarrassing if someone should make the mistake of reading them aloud in church?

Among the scriptural teachings that most Christians are not following (and do not seem about to follow) are:

- ▶ Christians should have no contact with a fellow Christian who has fallen from the faith or has been guilty of serious sin. (1 Cor 5:9–13)
- ▶ Christians should not go to law with one another before non-Christian judges. (1 Cor 6:1–11)
- ▶ Christians guilty of serious and unrepented sin should be expelled from the congregation. (1 Cor 5:1–5)
- ▶ Christian women should not be adorned in an expensive way, wearing costly jewels, etc. (1 Tm 3:9; 1 Pt 3:3)
- ▶ No one should be chosen an overseer, elder, or deacon whose children have not been raised to be good Christians and to be obedient. (1 Tm 3:4; Ti 2:1–2)
- ▶ Intercession should always be made for the governing authorities. (1 Tm 2:1–2)

These are a few of the scriptural teachings which are so concrete that one can easily tell whether or not they are being followed. There are other

prescriptions which, though less concrete, are often more serious, but are also not being followed. These include the teachings that the Christian people should be of one mind and of the same judgment (Phil 1:27; 2:2), and that they should provide for one another's material needs (Acts 4:32; 2 Cor 8:1-15).

This "current practice" argument is also used when other issues are raised. In the following quote, a Gay Liberation writer applies the same argument to a different issue:

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Church

Christian theology has changed in the last nineteen hundred years. Let's look at some of the things forbidden or sanctioned by our churches at the present time. I quote from the King James Version of the Scriptures. We read in 1 Timothy 2:11-12, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection." Also, "a woman is not to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." If the church began a crusade against women teachers based on this scripture, what would happen? How many female Sunday school teachers and missionaries, women preachers, and evangelists, would the church lose if it followed 1 Corinthians 14:34-35? Will the church turn away hatless women from its doors, following 1 Corinthians 11:2-16? Should the church reconsider its position on slavery, remembering that the apostle Paul commanded servants to "obey in all things your masters" (Col 3:22)?

My list could go on and on, and few of us would disagree with the church's lack of a strict interpretation of the scriptures in such incidents. Yet, I wonder how theologians can overlook entire passages, passages that pertain to the majority, while seizing upon a few verses in the Bible that condemn the homosexual minority.¹⁹

Here, the writer is arguing that if many other church practices do not square with scriptural teaching, the passages forbidding homosexual practices should not have to be applied now, either.

There is a specifically Roman Catholic version of this argument. This version is expressed in the view that since the Roman Catholic Church has already deviated from scriptural injunctions concerning the roles of men and women, there is no reason not to expect further changes in the future.²⁰ Two examples of this deviation which are sometimes given are the practice of now allowing women lectors in the liturgy, and dropping the requirement of headcoverings for women in church. Those who make this argument see both changes as being in conflict with Pauline injunctions.

Whether or not they actually are in conflict with Pauline injunctions is a debatable question, but that is not the question here. The immediate concern is with the “current church practice” view which holds that if the (Roman Catholic) church, in its highest pastoral authority, allows deviation from the scriptural norms, this deviation must be seen as a precedent which justifies further deviation.

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The key issue at hand is how to approach the current practice of the Christian churches. On one level, the answer is simple. While every Christian church understands the scripture to be the canonical (i.e., normative) word of God, every church recognizes its current practices as reformable.* Even the Roman Catholic Church, which has many leaders and members who tend to approach its history as if every decision expressed in its official legislation were guided by the Spirit, does admit to the possibility of reforming that legislation so as to bring it more into accord with the sources of scripture and tradition. Those who would advance current Christian practice as an argument for actually setting aside the teaching of the scripture are approaching the variance between the two from the wrong end. Current church practice may point to the need for (and may often represent) a faithful adaptation of the scripture’s teaching to present circumstances, an adaptation which avoids rigid and senseless legalism. However, current practice should not be taken as grounds for dismissing scriptural teaching. Rather, it should be easy enough to assert that current Christian practice is reformable and ought to be reformed.

To some degree, reforming current Christian practice might be an answer to the conflict. However, few serious Christians today would see that as a solution. They know instinctively that Christian church life in the modern world would not allow such an approach. They know that there are some important underlying reasons why the passages cited earlier are not currently being applied. To take one example, the teaching that Christians should not go to law with one another before non-Christian judges simply cannot be taught and lived in most Christian churches. Most Christian churches are not set up in such a way that a Christian, living a normal life in society, would know who else in society is a practicing Christian. Neither do churches often have judicial procedures of their own for settling grievances or disputes among their people. Not only is there

* In making such a statement, a distinction should be made between those elements of current church practice which are doctrinal and those which are customary or disciplinary. Doctrinal elements would normally be regarded as being of divine order, or as bearing such authority that they cannot be changed. Disciplinary elements can be reformed; yet to assert that such current practices are reformable is not to deny that the church has authority to make disciplinary decisions.

no way for people who are “wise enough to decide between members of the brotherhood” (1 Cor 6:5) to exercise that kind of role, but the idea of doing so would normally not even occur as a possibility. One reason for the difference between the New Testament pattern and the current pattern is the changed situation in the modern world. For historical reasons, modern Christian churches, sociologically speaking, function more like religious service institutions in a technological society than like a people or a community. Most Christian churches have long ago given up their systems for “deciding between members of the brotherhood”; and their court systems, when they have them, are simply for deciding matters within the church institution.

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In order for the churches to make use of many of the passages in scripture, more is needed than a mere decision to want to conform to scripture. The life of the Christian people must change in order for the scriptural passages to make sense. Modern Christians would have to live the kind of life which the early Christians did—that is, a communal life, a life as a people. As they would do so, more and more of the scriptural passages would be perceived as practical, helpful advice, not direction that could be followed only in a legalistic way because it no longer applies or makes sense.

Unfortunately, most people end up viewing the scriptural passages which Christians do not currently follow as an argument for not following other passages as well, or they follow scripture legalistically in defiance of other Christians. However, the current church practice of not following those passages would be more accurately viewed as an argument for changing the life of the Christian people so that “space” can be provided where scriptural teaching can be reasonably and faithfully applied, and so that the life of the Christian people can become the truly communal life which the Lord meant it to be when he first called people out of the world to be his body, a people, a consecrated nation. Rather than changing the current practices of the church or arguing about which passages in scripture we “have to” follow, the task should be seen more as one of renewal of communal life in the church.

The Intent of Scripture

WHILE “the gap between the centuries,” “the signs of the times,” “the development of doctrine,” and “the current practice of the church” should not lead someone to dismiss the scriptural teaching on the roles of men and women as no longer applicable and therefore not to be followed, it seems

clear that each of these four arguments raises genuine objections against an application of that teaching which is inadequately designed for modern circumstances. Even though these objections are often framed imprecisely or incorrectly, and certain unjustifiable conclusions are drawn from them, they do express a very real concern. We must resolve the significant question of applying scripture to our present circumstances: When should we accept and adjust to our current situation, and when should we view it as an obstacle to our obedience, and overcome it?

The question of scripture's applicability surfaces a variety of issues. One issue is whether or not certain scripture passages can be applied to us at all. The issue is clearly raised by a passage such as Deuteronomy 23:1 (the exclusion of eunuchs from the assembly of the Lord). This regulation, which was binding under the old law, is superseded under the New Covenant—as prophesied in Isaiah 56:3–5, and as seen in Acts 8:26–29.

A second issue is whether an entire passage is applicable, or whether only certain of its elements can be applied. For example, with certain Old Testament purity laws (such as in Lv 15), the element of “being holy” continues to apply to Christians today, although the ritual prescriptions need not be followed.*

A third issue is, can a given passage be applied directly or only by analogy in the life of the Christian people? This issue is squarely raised in considering the passages addressed to masters and slaves. Because the institution of slavery no longer exists in our society, these passages cannot be directly applied. On the other hand, they might be validly applied in an analogous sense. For instance, they could be applied to employer-employee relationships, insofar as services are required and rendered in a relationship that is often not freely chosen.

A fourth issue is whether or not a particular passage requires interpretation in order to be applied. “Interpretation” here refers to the process of finding and stating the twentieth-century equivalent to the first-century

* New Testament writers and the early Christian Fathers would probably not have accepted these first two categories as described here. They probably would not have thought that any Old Testament passage would be without application for Christians. In order, however, to establish their position, they would have had to use typology, allegory, and other types of interpretation that are not commonly used today (e.g., 1 Cor 9:9–10; Ep. Barn. 5–16). They also would not have been inclined to say that only certain elements of Old Testament passages would be applicable today. They would have said that the holiness laws were fulfilled in Christ and their reality is observed today by Christians even though the more ancient forms are not used (cf. Col 2:17; Heb 10:1). Traditional Christian teaching would make a stronger point about applicability than is made in this chapter. It would say that all the scripture is applicable (2 Tm 3:16). This chapter simply uses some illustrations that would be the normal contemporary Christian approach to the Old Testament.

teaching. For instance, 1 Peter 2:13 exhorts Christians to be subject to the emperor. Because today there is no emperor, the intent of the passage must be interpreted in order to determine its application. Most Christians would teach that this passage is intended to apply not solely to emperors (which would leave Christians under a president free to be insubordinate), but to all sovereigns. Using the word “interpretation” carries with it some problems, as there is an important sense in which all scripture needs interpretation. Yet there is a further level of interpretation required by “Be subject to the emperor” (when there is no longer an emperor) that is not needed for a passage like “Children, obey your parents” (when there are still both children and parents).

A fifth issue is that of adaptation. Some passages must be adapted in order to be applied (or to be applied well), while other passages need no adaptation. An adapted application of a passage might be illustrated with Galatians 6:6, “Let him who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches.” This passage probably means that students should provide their teachers with food, clothing, etc. In our days, students would be more likely to pay their Christian teachers, who would then buy “all good things” for themselves. Most Christians would say that such an adaptation allows the meaning of the passage to be carried out more effectively in modern circumstances, and is a good application of the passage.²¹

A sixth issue is whether a given passage can be applied in our present circumstances, or if circumstances must be changed and a “space” created in order to make the application. For instance, Hebrews 10:25 exhorts Christians to gather together with other Christians, but there are Christians in some places today who could not apply this passage without either creating a body of Christians with whom to meet (that is, without evangelizing), or moving to another city or village.

Varieties of Passages

In view of these issues, we can distinguish six major types of scripture passages according to how they are applied. (1) Some passages simply do not apply any longer; we do not really need to consider obeying their literal meaning in our present circumstances. The passage from Deuteronomy 23:1 mentioned above would be an example of such a passage. (2) Only certain elements of some passages can be applied today. This would be the case with certain Old Testament purity laws. (3) Some passages are only applicable by analogy. The master-slave passages mentioned earlier

illustrate this type of passage. (4) Some passages must be interpreted or adapted in order to be correctly applied. At times, what is needed is interpretation (as with 1 Pt 2:13 above), while at other times, an adaptation should be made (as with Gal 6:6 above). (5) Some passages which should be applied once they are interpreted (or perhaps even without interpretation) cannot actually be applied until we change our circumstances. The example from Hebrews 10:25 is relevant here. This fifth type of passage will be considered more fully below. (6) Some passages apply today just as they stand—in a direct, uninterpreted, unadapted way. For instance, the commandment “Thou shalt not commit adultery” is to be applied as immediately today as it was in the days of Moses. Exegesis might be needed to clarify the meaning of “commit adultery”; teaching might be needed as to how to obey the commandment well; but no interpretation or adaptation is required in order to apply it in our modern circumstances.* One is still not permitted to have sexual intercourse with a person married to someone else, nor are married people allowed to have sexual intercourse with others besides their marriage partners.

In the preceding discussions of “the gap between the centuries,” “the signs of the times,” “the development of doctrine,” and “the current practice of the church,” it was noted that many writers oppose applying the scriptural teaching on the roles of men and women as though all of it had to be applied in a direct, uninterpreted, unadapted fashion (the approach to the sixth type of passage mentioned above). In rejecting this sixth approach, they generally advocate the first or second approach, which would say that the passages either no longer apply at all, or that only certain elements of them can be applied. They argue that scripture passages on the roles of men and women are inapplicable as written because the social structures which made sense of them no longer exist. We cannot, they say, apply these passages directly, nor should we try to do so any longer. According to such a view, unless we feel called upon to remake society and to reverse the trend of technological society’s social change, we must acknowledge that the scriptural passages are no longer capable of direct application. In other words, having rejected what they might call a “literalist” or “Fundamentalist” or “Biblicist” approach to the scripture, they conclude that little if any of the scripture in this area can be applied today.

* This does not rule out the existence of interpretive issues connected with the commandment (e.g., whether concubinage violates the commandment, whether or not the commandment also comprehends lust or other kinds of *porneia* [Mt 5:27–30]). Nonetheless, there is a clear area in which the commandment applies without the need of interpretation or adaptation—in a way that is not true of 1 Pt 2:13 and Gal 6:6.

Unfortunately, those who distinguish only two alternative methods of application—“Fundamentalist” and “little if any at all”—end up obscuring some important issues (and in the process misuse the term “Fundamentalist”). First, they fail to recognize some of the other important types of application mentioned above, such as application by interpretation or adaptation, which responsibly take into account the context and intention of the passage, the change in circumstances from the first century to the twentieth, and other such important factors in applying scriptural teaching.

Secondly, their dichotomy completely overlooks the issue presented by the fifth approach to application: changing our circumstances in order to apply the teaching in scripture. There is, in short, a major additional option, often not considered—namely, changing the lives of Christians so that the passage can apply. However, this option raises a further question: If our drastically changed modern circumstances present serious objections to applying a passage from scripture, how do we decide when we should obey a passage by overcoming those circumstances, and when we should acknowledge that a passage no longer applies, or that only certain elements of it apply, and leave it at that? After all, we do not want to find ourselves piously restoring the institution of slavery so that we could again apply the passages on slavery.

The choice of a criterion raises the question of authority and obedience. Those who believe the authority of scripture to be supreme and submit themselves to it will find the answer in scripture itself as far as scripture gives guidance.²² They will see the issue first of all as a question of the intent of the commands and instructions in the scripture. If we hear our father say, “Do not cross the street,” we must ask whether that command was intended for this particular street (because it has a great deal of traffic) or for all streets. But also, if we hear our father say that he wants us to save money, and we do not have any money at the moment, we must ask whether our father’s command can be disregarded since we have no money to save, or whether involved in his command is the command to make some money so that we can save money.

If we are going to be obedient, we must accept the principle that the one who gives the command is the one who determines what the command means and what constitutes obedience to it. We may not always be able to ascertain what the person who gave the command actually means, but once we do, we must abide by it—if we are going to be obedient. Were we to say to ourselves, “My father clearly meant that I should never cross streets because I am not ready for that; but I want to cross this street; now

I have to decide whether to cross it or not,” we would not be acting in obedience. The question should already be decided for us by our father’s command. In short, we should discern whether or not something in the scriptural passages on the roles of men and women is applicable to our circumstances (and whether we should accept our circumstances or seek to overcome them) by following the intention of those passages. Scripture may not always clearly show the intent behind the command, but when it does, the issue comes down to a question of whether to obey or to put another standard over that of scripture.²³

The fact that the question of the applicability of scripture is frequently an issue of obedience is often not adverted to by those who make the dichotomy between “Fundamentalist” application and “little if any” application. This is the case because they do not hold that scripture is to be obeyed. Many of these people would hold that even if one were able to clearly understand the meaning of scripture and recognize that it can indeed cover our circumstances, one would not have to follow it. Many of them would maintain that our culture, or the principles of our society, or perhaps Marxist ideology, should have a higher authority for us than parts of the New Testament. Some would hold, for example, that no matter how clear the scriptural intentions concerning homosexuality might be, Christians today are not obliged to obey them. Perhaps, they would say, these passages should be seen as *containing* some truths, maybe the truth that homosexuality is not ideal, but it is not necessary to obey them—even though the apostle Paul clearly meant that all Christians until the end of time should avoid homosexual acts.

In order to accurately grasp the intention of the scriptural passages on the roles of men and women and their applicability to our current situation, we have to be sensitive to the different kinds of scriptural material involved.

The question of scriptural interpretation is to be taken differently when we are talking about something (1) presented as a fact, or (2) described as a significant event, or (3) taught as instructional material, or (4) given as a

* Those who do not think that many areas of scripture should be followed today frequently use the term “Fundamentalist” as the other half of their dichotomy because the term has a disparaging connotation. They use it vaguely to designate anyone who seeks to apply the scriptural teaching today more than they do. In fact, however, one does not have to be a Fundamentalist to believe that scripture is the highest authority, to be followed whenever its intent covers the circumstances. This is official Roman Catholic and Orthodox teaching, as well as the official teaching of most Protestant churches. See the discussion “Is This Fundamentalism?” in Chapter Fourteen, pp. 352–357.

prophecy. When we interpret a fact in scripture (such as the relationship of Jesus to the Father) or an event (such as the resurrection), our interpretation is more a matter of understanding what happened and seeing its significance for us than of “applying it.” Or, when we interpret a word which God spoke to an individual or a group (for example, Jeremiah’s words to Zedekiah before the fall of Jerusalem), we are trying to see how God dealt with a particular situation in the past, and to ask whether it can give us some insight into how he will deal with a similar situation in our lives. We might describe this process of “interpretation” as discerning how the particular prophecy “applies” to our lives, but “application” would be used here in an analogous sense. However, when we are dealing with instructional material that concerns our way of life, whether that material includes specific commandments or simply teaching about the wise or good way of living, then we can ask about the applicability of that material in the proper sense of the word “application.” We can ask whether such teaching applies to our situation and, if so, how it applies. Theories of interpretation (hermeneutics) can often be confusing because they lack clarity about the different ways in which the nature of scriptural material affects the process of interpretation.²⁴

Varieties
of Passages

Characteristics of New Testament Teaching on Roles

The New Testament material on the roles of men and women can be more fruitfully discussed with these distinctions in mind. The first nine chapters of this book laid out the New Testament pattern of roles. They also laid out the teaching behind that pattern, and discussed its intent. This material does not need to be repeated, but it will be helpful to summarize here some of the essential characteristics of the New Testament teaching on the roles of men and women. This will help clarify scripture’s intention, and prepare for a resolution of the issue of application raised earlier: When do Christians accept their circumstances and acknowledge that the scripture no longer directly applies, and when do they seek to overcome obstacles presented by our circumstances in order to obey the scriptural teaching?

1. *The New Testament teaching on the roles of men and women is clearly a teaching.* It does not consist merely of facts or events (such as the fact that Jesus chose only males to be his apostles, or that both Priscilla and Aquila instructed Apollos), or of some patterns (for example, that only men were chosen for the presbyterate in the early church). The

New Testament also contains a good deal of teaching. This teaching contains some directives in the form of apostolic rulings or instructions. It also contains some fundamental doctrine concerning God's intention for the human race and his purpose for men and women. In other words, the New Testament teaching contains some more or less clear directives and a statement of God's intention.

Applying
Scriptural
Teaching

2. *The New Testament teaching is also exemplified in a pattern of relations between men and women.* That pattern is visible for both husbands and wives and for leadership roles in the early church. It contains some variations, but it also contains some fundamental uniformities. We are dealing, then, with a structure to the life of the early Christians which was universal in certain features, but flexible.
3. *The New Testament teaching on the roles of men and women is not merely a collection of "timeless truths," but it is closely linked with God's purposes.* The New Testament recognizes that at times, for example, when "hardness of heart" prevails, the Lord allows something to happen that is not in perfect accord with his intention. But God's intention always remains. Hence, although in some ways it is possible to extract from the New Testament teaching on men and women some universal principles for relations between the sexes, the New Testament teaching is linked to God's purpose and intention for the human race. When human beings accept God's will and receive power from him to fulfill his will, they will move toward forming a body in which the life of humanity as God intends it to be is visible, and in which men and women relate to one another as God desires.
4. *The New Testament teaching on the roles of men and women concerns something which is human and not simply something which is related to a particular historical situation.* It is a teaching on sexual differentiation, something God created into the human race because of his purposes for humanity. This fact is clear in the New Testament teaching on the roles of men and women. The New Testament teaching gives directions not for one particular era or situation, but for all time—for men because they are men, and for women because they are women. The New Testament teaching is confirmed in this respect by modern study of the differences between men and women. Family life and sex differences may have to be lived in some very different circumstances in the twentieth century, but technological society has not effaced the reality of sexual differentiation. The New Testament teaching concerns something which has not changed, both in the sense that the

reality of sexual differentiation remains despite the societal changes, and that the teaching concerns God's purpose for the human race as sexually differentiated. It is not merely a teaching about handling the way sexual differentiation affected life in the first century AD.

We are confronted with a situation today in which circumstances make it difficult to apply the scriptural teaching on the roles of men and women. But we are also confronted with a teaching in scripture which presents itself to us as applicable as long as we are still men and women and as long as we want to correspond faithfully to God's purpose for the human race. We may need much wisdom on how to apply it so that it is life-giving and so that God's intention can be truly accomplished. But if we are truly going to submit ourselves to scripture and allow the scripture itself to instruct us as to how it intends itself to be taken, we have to seek a way of applying it. The real issue is not *whether* to apply the scriptural teaching, but *how* to apply it.

Characteristics
of New
Testament
Teaching
on Roles

Some Principles of Application

THE arguments opposing any twentieth-century application of the New Testament teaching on the roles of men and women that were discussed earlier in this chapter are not good reasons for setting aside the teaching itself. They do, however, raise important considerations for any application of the New Testament teaching. "The gap between the centuries" does not indicate that Christians should do whatever our culture or times believe is right, but it does mean that they must deal with the difference in historical circumstances. "Discerning the signs of the times" does not mean that Christians should allow contemporary social trends to signal to them that scriptural teaching no longer needs to be followed, but it can legitimately mean that societal currents and trends should be observed as indicating what factors should be taken into account or dealt with. "The development of doctrine" does not mean that Christians can change scriptural teaching to fit in better with their new circumstances, but it does mean that they must find a new way of understanding and teaching it so that it takes adequate account of the new circumstances and modern mentalities. "The current practice of the church" does not mean that Christians should fall into line with the way Christians are not yet reaching full faithfulness to the Lord's teaching, but it should indicate that the life of the church has

to be changed in order to provide “space” to apply many of the scriptural teachings. In summary, these four arguments should not lead Christians to set aside the scriptural teaching, but they do clarify the task of applying that teaching.

Applying Scriptural Teaching
 Being faithful to the New Testament teaching involves developing what could be called a pastoral approach to applying that teaching. A pastoral approach includes understanding what the New Testament is teaching, understanding the differences in circumstances between then and now, and developing a way to state and follow the teaching in different circumstances. A pastoral approach is more than a matter of understanding what the scripture is saying. It is also a way of responding to what it says. The following elements should be included in a pastoral approach to applying the New Testament teaching on the roles of men and women today:

1. *We need to create a space* within which it is possible to follow the scriptural teaching on the roles of men and women today.*

We cannot, without experiencing a great deal of trouble, begin to live those roles by simply and directly obeying the scriptural teaching in our existing circumstances. A Christian who attempts to do so will experience a lack of support—increasingly so as technological society develops along its present course. Moreover, Christians will often find it difficult to express the Christian teaching on the roles of men and women because they spend most of their lives with people who neither understand nor accept the scriptural approach. Even in the family, it is often the case that a husband or a wife cannot count upon the other to accept the same approach. Christians face the choice of accepting the way others do it or seeming to look and act very strange.

Of course, this is not only the case for the scriptural teaching on the roles of men and women. It holds true also for basic Christian sexual and business morality, and for many other Christian teachings on personal relations. Even Christian churches cannot decide simply to follow the scriptural teaching on the roles of men and women without deciding to do more—that is, without deciding to reshape their lives in a fuller way. If they fail to do more while trying to hold on to the scriptural teaching,

* “Space” often means “social environment,” but it has a broader meaning. We need to see that the conditions are present for an intelligent application of scriptural passages. For applying passages on men and women, the right social environment is needed (because roles are social), but certain social structures are likewise needed.

they will find themselves holding literally to scriptural prescriptions in a legalistic way that does not make sense to people. Moreover, they will constantly come up against cases of application for which they have no clear criterion, such as what constitutes the kind of teaching that women cannot do.

To properly interpret and adapt the teaching of scripture for modern circumstances can be important steps in solving these problems. But in themselves they are not enough. Of primary importance is creating a space within which it is possible to live the Christian teaching. To put it in a more scriptural way, a space must be created within which it is possible to become a Christian *people*, a people with a life together and with a social structure. Living the Christian teaching on the roles of men and women means more than just keeping a few rules of order. It means preserving, or developing, a way of life which uses the differences between men and women positively, as an advantage to human life. It means restoring some elements to Christian living that are more natural to the human race than some of the patterns developed under the influence of technological society. It means becoming a people who are able to determine what their way of life should be like, rather than being a people who are formed by the influences of society because they cannot hold out against them. Living the scriptural teaching on the roles of men and women should involve, first of all, living the scriptural teaching on being a new humanity.

Principles
of Application

2. *The scriptural teaching on the roles of men and women should be applied primarily within the Christian community rather than within society as a whole.*

One of the “decisive arguments” sometimes directed against maintaining the early church approach to the roles of men and women is the argument that it is impossible to apply such an approach—or, much more to the point, to get such an approach accepted—in modern Western society. Some people would say that there is a close relationship between the position of women in the Christian community and the “emancipation” of women in society. Accordingly, if we accept the view that women should be “emancipated” in society, then we should adopt the same principles among Christians. Such a view, however, rests on the underlying assumptions of a Christendom mentality.²⁵ In this mentality it is assumed that Christian teaching is teaching for society as a whole because, it is argued, society *is* the Christian people (everyone is, or ought to be, Christian). But it is

no longer the case in the West today that society is the Christian people. Neither is it true that modern Western society accepts Christian principles and Christian teaching.

Yet it is true that the New Testament teaching on the roles of men and women is not solely “for Christians.” Like almost everything else in the New Testament, this teaching is God’s purpose for the entire human race. Moreover, the New Testament teaching on roles is founded in the teaching on creation, and not solely in the teaching on the new age begun in Jesus. However, the New Testament at no time assumes that non-Christian society could be expected to follow even the basic moral law, much less the kingdom morality of the Sermon on the Mount, without first turning to God the king and accepting the Son whom he sent (Ti 3:1–7). While in one sense Christian teaching may be for everyone, Christians should not expect the world to accept Christian principles without being Christian. To place such an expectation on society only makes sense in Christendom.

Applying
Scriptural
Teaching

Instead of assuming a Christendom mentality which no longer applies to our society, we would do well to observe and learn from the example of the early church. The early Christians realized that they lived in a society which did not accept Christian principles. They recognized that the “world” and the Christian community were two distinct realities. Christians were supposed to live *in* the world, but were not to be *of* it. Neither were Christians to be surprised if they became a target of hostility from the world (Jn 15:18–25). Rather, they were to expect to operate on a different set of principles inside the Christian community than they would use outside it.²⁶ There is a different set of principles for personal relations among brothers and sisters (the brethren, *adelphoi*) than for outsiders (Col 4:5; 1 Cor 5:9–13), much as any family has a different set of principles for “the family” than for outsiders. In fact, many New Testament teachings on personal relations are practical only when applied in relationships with others who accept the same principles. To take one example, the principle of fraternal correction will function successfully only among those who accept this principle. (If one reproves someone who does not understand or accept reproof as a way of dealing with wrongdoing, that person will experience reproof as insult or criticism.) On the question of the roles of men and women, the early Christians expected to differ from both the Pharisaic Judaism of their Palestinian homeland and the Greeks of the Hellenistic environment in cities of Asia Minor. In the same way, Christians today should be ready to differ from the people around them on the roles of men and women.

There is a further reason for differing from the approach of modern society to the roles of men and women. Contemporary society is structured primarily along functional-technological lines. Vital community life, however, is never successfully structured along those lines. Community, in the Christian sense of the term, is formed around relationships, and it accepts principles of age and sex as good human principles for structuring role differences in society. Every real community in modern Western society, no matter how good it may be at living among modern Western people and sharing many of their cultural expressions, will have to be different in many basic principles of personal relationships. Otherwise, the members will be forced to give up much of the health of their community. It is not beyond the ability of human beings to follow a different set of principles in one situation than in another. Members of minority groups do so, as do most workers who live according to different principles at home than those they work by in the office. It is simply a matter of training in what is appropriate for a given situation. Christians can certainly acquire this kind of training.

Principles
of Application

3. *The approach to the roles of men and women has to be adapted to the circumstances of the modern environment, and to the individual cultures within which that approach is lived out.*

Christians must be both faithful to the basic teaching and approach of scripture and realistic about the situation in which they live. Either they have to leave technological society and form special enclaves that operate according to a different socioeconomic system (like the Amish), or they have to learn how to live as a people within technological society itself. If they choose the latter, they must, even in their family and Christian community life, adapt themselves wisely to their secular environment. Adapting to modern circumstances, however, is not the same as accepting or being formed by the principles of modern technological society. The fundamental shape of Christian community life must be determined not by “the world” (in this case, modern technological society), but by the teaching of scripture. Yet twentieth-century Christians, even when they are faithful to scriptural teaching and know how to preserve a way of life and a community that are distinctive, will look different than first-century Christians. Their way of life in community will need to be lived in a way that is viable within a modern technological society. Faithfulness and adaptation depend on many specific decisions which need the wisdom and

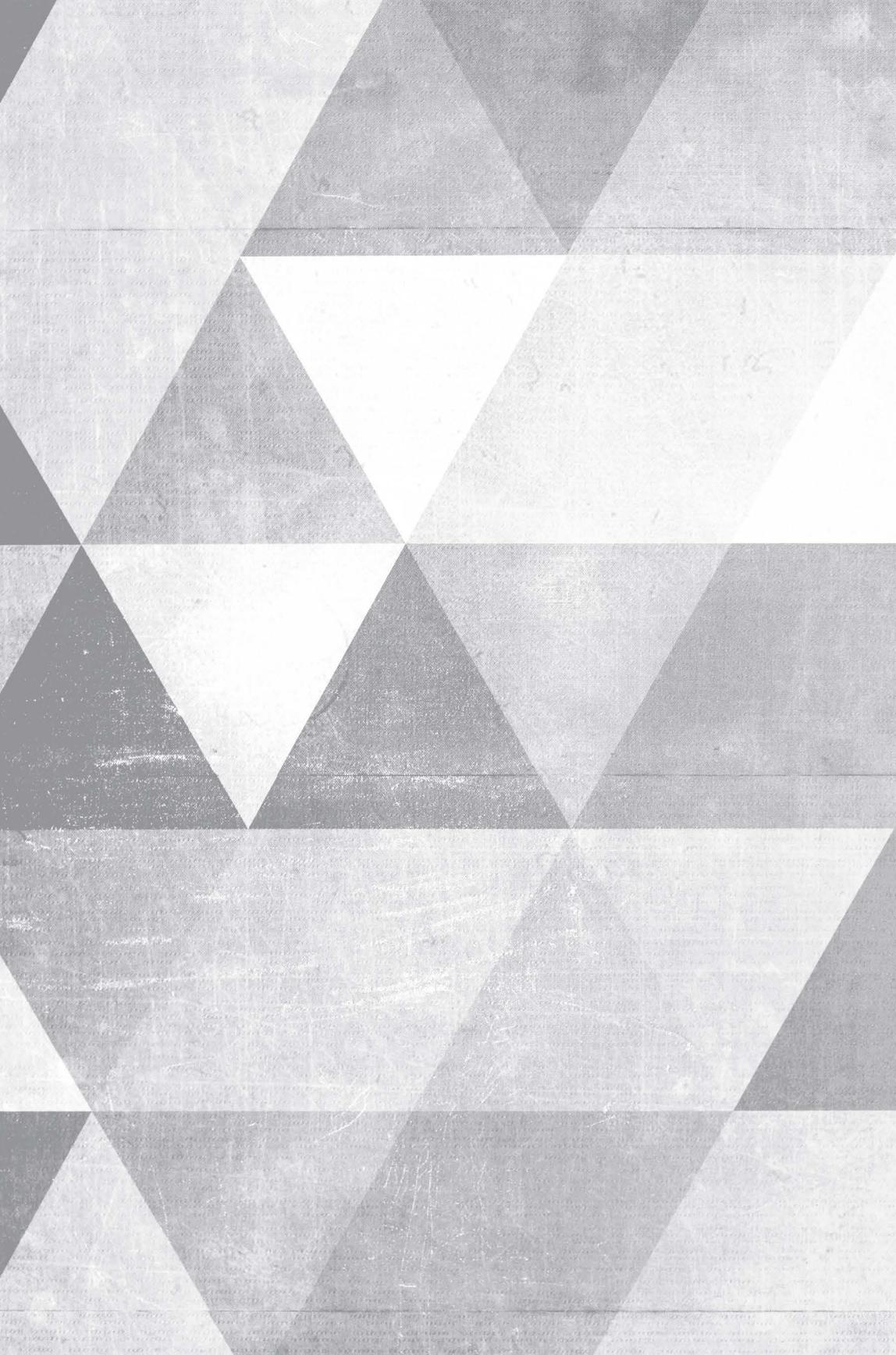
Applying
Scriptural
Teaching

the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Neither scripture itself, nor scripture and tradition together, can provide all the needed guidelines as Christians face new situations, especially in a rapidly evolving technological society. The Christian people also need leaders who know how to lead them under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. These leaders must be able to teach with genuine faithfulness to the Lord's own teaching, and teach with wisdom and discernment about how to be faithful to the same scriptural commands in different circumstances.

4. *Today's approach to the roles of men and women has to be incorporated into pastorally shaped teaching.*²⁷

The word of the Lord was not only for the first century—it is contemporary. Genuine Christian teaching concerning the roles of men and women does not mean educating Christians in the first-century life. Christian teaching is not a history course or an antiquarian pursuit. The very teaching of the Lord's word must embody its application. It should include the wisdom which can make faithfulness to the scripture life-giving, not a constrictive legalism. Genuine Christian teaching, even genuine Christian teaching of the scripture, is not exegesis in the sense of simply stating what the scripture meant for those who first heard it. It is teaching which comes not only from the written word of God, but also from the present revelation of the Holy Spirit. Genuine Christian teaching is not merely God's word for then. It is God's word for now.

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A Christian Approach for Today

4

► THE PREVIOUS PART OF THIS BOOK TREATED THE “gap” that exists between the times of the New Testament and the modern world, and laid the foundation for applying the scriptural teaching in the lives of Christians today. The concluding part develops a sketch for how Christians should approach the roles of men and women in the midst of the contemporary situation. This sketch could be seen as a pastoral proposal for how Christians can both be faithful to scriptural teaching and live viable and effective lives in the modern world. The concluding part begins with a chapter which sketches in the basic components of the pastoral approach. The next chapter presents more specific guidelines. Chapter Twenty-Three deals with certain issues involved in implementing the proposed pastoral approach. The final chapter treats some special areas of concern and the way in which the pastoral approach would touch upon those areas. ►

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THE BASES OF A CHRISTIAN APPROACH TODAY

LIFE IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY poses many complex and challenging questions for the Christian people. Perhaps the primary question involves the issue of fidelity to scripture and Christian tradition. What is the proper response to the biblical teaching on morality and social structure? Should this teaching be applied in the modern world? However, even when one answers this question positively, many further questions still arise. It is not always easy to apply the teaching of the scripture to a modern technological society. What, in fact, is the Christian approach to living in the midst of a highly functionalized social environment? The Christian people are in great need of wisdom about how to follow the purposes of God in the modern world. The rest of this book will address this need.

The approach to social structure and men's and women's roles that will be presented in the following chapters is designed primarily for Christians living in a technological society. However, not all of the human race lives today in circumstances created by a technological society. Some people even live in primitive societies. Christians living in societies that are more traditional face a different set of problems with men's and women's roles and will probably not find these chapters very helpful. Their problems more likely derive from a traditional view which defines and values strict roles for men and women, but perhaps not in a fully Christian fashion. Nonetheless, in most of the world, technological society is currently transforming traditional social patterns and producing a new kind of life. The approach developed in the following chapters will be helpful for a particular social situation to the degree that that situation is dominated by or coming under the influence of technological society.

Many of the elements of the approach to social structure and men's and women's roles that will be presented in the following chapters are also designed primarily for a group of Christians living a corporate life according to the teaching found in the New Testament, what could be described as a full Christian community.* Underlying this approach is the understanding that the biblical social teaching requires a restored social fabric in order to be applied fully. Therefore, many of the practical recommendations found in these chapters on such matters as social roles and offices in the Christian community presume the context of a defined Christian communal environment. The practical scriptural teaching on social structure makes most sense when viewed against the background of a communal social ideal.

Though these chapters primarily point to the need for a genuine Christian communal life, they also have much to say to those who currently do not experience such life in a full way. First, the following chapters present a scriptural ideal of the restoration of humanity in Christ that should be grasped and moved toward. God's aim in creating and redeeming the human race is to form a people; to the degree possible, all Christians should live in a grouping of Christians that functions as a people. Secondly, these chapters discuss principles of communal life which are natural to the human race and can be applied in many social situations. These principles should not be applied rigidly outside of a community context, but they can be understood and applied in modified form. Finally, some of the issues discussed in these chapters do bear directly on the lives of all Christians regardless of the nature of the Christian groupings they belong to. These issues include family life, male and female character, and men's and women's roles in the occupational world. To be sure, the full Christian ideal depends upon the establishment of a corporate life in Christ, but those presently unable to belong to such a grouping of Christians should move toward living as much of the ideal as their situation allows.

This chapter will present the basic perspective that Christians should

* The term "community" is used here and elsewhere in this book to refer to a social environment with some real stability and cohesiveness. The term "community" is sometimes reserved to refer to smaller groupings of people who live together (in communal dwellings as on communal plots of land) and/or who own all property together. Here the term is used more broadly to refer to a social environment, that is, one in which people interact on more than a functional basis. However, the scriptural approach to the corporate life of the Christian people presupposes a particular type of social environment, namely, one in which the relationships among Christians have the kind of commitment that embraces the whole of a person's life. Such commitments are more like modern family commitments than like modern functional relationships where commitments are limited and often contractual. Hence a full Christian community or full Christian communal life refers to a corporate life involving a stable cohesive social environment based on commitments embracing the totality of people's lives, but not necessarily involving living together or common ownership of property.

take toward applying the New Testament teaching on social structure within modern technological society. The first component of this perspective is the vision of God's purpose for the human race: the communal restoration of humanity in Jesus Christ. The second and third components of this basic perspective are the fundamental elements which allow this new humanity to maintain a communal life: Christian relationships and Christian social structure. Finally, this chapter will distinguish the Christian approach to corporate life from other rival approaches. From this basic perspective, the subsequent chapters will offer specific guidelines and address specific issues.

Becoming a People

THE first step in applying Christian teaching on social structure in the modern world is to grasp the vision for human life contained in the scripture. As discussed in Chapter One, God created the human race to be united in such a way that it could act as a single person. This person, this human, was to be his son, formed in his image and likeness, created to serve as his representative over his visible creation.* Men and women alike were to be fully a part of the human race and of the divine sonship. Both were to share the image and likeness of God and both were to share in ruling over creation corporately on God's behalf. They were created male and female so that the human race, the human community, could increase and fill the earth. When God sent his son Jesus to repair the damage from the Fall, his intent was to restore the human race to its original purpose by forming a new human race, a new creation, that could live as God's son, the body of Christ on earth. God's purpose in Jesus was to create a new humanity in which the image of God is restored and through which God is served. This new humanity consists of men and women who are united in Jesus. God's purpose is to form a new community—the new human race.

The new community has its own way of life. This way of life is not drawn from the surrounding peoples, nor is it simply inferred from a study of human nature or developed as an accommodation to the environment and circumstances. The way of life of the body of Christ originates in the nature and character of God himself. The new humanity is formed in the image and likeness of God, so it must look like him. It is holy as he is holy, because it is his own people. Christianity is not only a matter of doctrine

* See Chapter Two, pp. 36–39, for background to this section.

and morals, but it is a way of life, a way of life that reflects the very nature of God himself. In particular, this way of life involves a special quality of relationship. The New Testament teaching on personal relations does not have an incidental place in the scripture. It is the very center of God's purpose in giving the New Covenant, in writing his law on human hearts. "Make love your aim" (1 Cor 14:1).

The Bases of
a Christian
Approach
Today

The first step in applying the Christian teaching on men's and women's roles, then, is to understand God's purpose for the human race. Christians whose sole goal is to avoid the punishment of hell and gain admittance to heaven, to believe the basic doctrines and avoid breaking the essential commandments, cannot yet fully receive and adequately respond to the scriptural teaching on men's and women's roles. An adequate response requires an understanding of God's full purpose: the creation of a new human race, a new community which lives according to God's will and teaching. Any attempt to follow scriptural teaching on men's and women's roles apart from such an understanding of God's purposes will suffer from the danger of legalism.

It is possible to say that the Christian people are already the new human race, the body of Christ, a new community. From this perspective, Christians do not have to "become" the new community because they have already been joined to it through their spiritual position in Christ. Such a perspective has value and truth. If the basic reality has not already been established in Christ, it can never happen in our lives and in our world. It can only be a human imitation of a divine plan. Nonetheless, it must also be recognized that the Christian people today frequently do not look like the kind of humanity they have become in Christ. They often show few traces of the type of unity that would allow them to function as a body. Just as the appropriate instruction for an individual Christian is often to "be what you are," "put on Christ . . . who is your life," so the appropriate instruction for the Christian people today is to be the body of Christ, to commit themselves to God's vision for his people—that they might live in reality as a new human race, united as one person and able to act accordingly.

If Christians are to live as the new humanity, the body of Christ, they need to pay a certain price. They need to commit themselves fully to Christ and to one another, and they need to invest enough of their personal lives in their life together as a Christian people that a cohesive community life can be established. Some form of personal subordination must be part of this commitment. Christians must subordinate their lives to the larger

body of Christ if that body is to have any unity, and they must be personally subordinate to those responsible for representing that body and drawing it together. Without such subordination, the Christian people cannot form a social grouping that can live as the body of Christ. Christians should also be separate enough from the surrounding society that they can actually become a new people. Christians who identify primarily with the surrounding society and accept its authority as higher than any Christian authority will never become significantly different from non-Christian society. They will look more like the old Adam than the new. In short, the ideal basis for living the Christian teaching on men's and women's roles is to form a social grouping within which that teaching can be applied and within which those following it can be supported.

Becoming
a People

In a predominantly non-Christian society, the body of Christ must live as a social grouping distinct in some way from the rest of society. However, there are still places in the world where an entire town or district or other social environment is Christian, in the sense that everyone professes Christian belief and perhaps even belongs to the same church. Christians in these places who want to live a full communal life may have to follow a slightly different approach. In such situations, forming a separate body within the society may not be the best strategy for living the life of the body of Christ. With the right circumstances, the entire environment could possibly be transformed into a full Christian community. Nonetheless, even in such situations Christians must have a clear consciousness of the difference between the Christian people and society as a whole so that they are not unknowingly formed by the influences of the broader non-Christian world. They must also be conscious of building the body of Christ, the new human race, with sufficient commitment and acceptance of Christian authority to allow the formation of a fully Christian life as a people. The dynamics may be somewhat different in an area where all or almost all the people are willing to acknowledge themselves as Christian, but the goal has to be the same.

Though ideally forming a distinct community with its own way of life, the new humanity intended by God is not totally separate from the surrounding non-Christian society. Under the Old Covenant, God's people were supposed to be totally separate from surrounding peoples—a nation with its own language, land, and political institutions. However, under the New Covenant, God's people live among every nation to witness to the new life in Jesus, to offer all peoples the opportunity to live for God in the body of Christ. Therefore, the Christian people must always maintain

close enough contact with non-Christian society that it can effectively proclaim God's message of reconciliation and new life. However, though close enough to society to be an effective messenger, the way of life of the body of Christ must also be distinct enough to accurately reflect God's nature and purposes. The new community will be neither "new" nor a "community" unless it maintains its distinct identity as God's people and maintains a unique authority over its members.

This is God's full purpose for the human race—a restoration of corporate life in Christ. However, circumstances in modern society and in much of the modern church make it difficult to realize this ideal in a total way. To overcome these circumstances, some Christians have developed special Christian communities in the midst of the modern world. Though a challenging and difficult task, this approach has definite advantages as a strategy for realizing God's purposes for human life.¹ Many Christians may be unable to participate in such communities, but all Christians are called to grasp God's total vision for human life, and to move toward it in whatever way possible.

Restoring Christian Relationships ▸ Relational Groupings*

THOSE who attempt to establish authentic Christian corporate life in the midst of technological society must recognize two fundamental aspects of the Christian communal lifestyle: Christian relationships and Christian social structure. These two aspects of communal life are essential for a full realization of God's purposes for the new humanity. They are also both largely absent in the functional structures of technological society and the social models of modern ideologies. Any authentic Christian community must be built upon a pattern of Christian relationships and a Christian social structure.

To be a body that is healthy and strong, the Christian people must have a pattern of personal relationships that operates on principles other than the modern functional principle. They must have a pattern of loving, committed personal relationships that is able to meet the needs of a body of human beings in their life together. The basis of any restoration of the corporate life of the Christian people has to be the restoration of Christian relationships. Christians must learn how to have loving, committed per-

* See Chapter Eighteen, pp. 483–491, for background to this section.

sonal relationships as brothers and sisters in the Lord, and how to pattern these relationships so that all the needs for personal support, childrearing, and care of the older members of the body are met effectively. Many Christians in the twentieth century capture something of the vision of the new humanity, the corporate life of the body of Christ, and proceed to try to establish Christian community without understanding the inner dynamic of this communal life—Christian personal relationships. Most of these attempts to build Christian community either fail quickly or run into painful difficulties over time as human realities reassert themselves, and the wisdom of the Lord for each relationship-area of human life is missing.

Restoring
Christian
Relational
Groupings

The restoration of Christian relationships implies a restoration of relational groupings. Only in such groupings can a pattern of personal relationships be established which fits the ideal lifestyle of the Christian people. As discussed in Chapter Eighteen, the social fabric of traditional society consisted almost exclusively of a pattern of interconnected relational groupings: the conjugal family, the extended kin network, the village, the neighborhood, the guild and other groupings formed on the basis of profession and class. These groupings combined a consideration for personal life with a concern for productive labor and task accomplishment. The functional and the personal spheres of life were not clearly demarcated, but were instead integrated in one set of committed personal relationships. The special needs of the young, the poor, the infirm, and the elderly were ordinarily cared for within such groupings rather than in large institutions. The early church, and, in fact, the Christian people throughout much of its history, followed a similar pattern. Evangelism, religious instruction, and charitable service were all integrally tied to the household, the basic communal grouping. Relational groupings were able to perform so many diverse functions and meet so many communal needs because they were founded on a network of personal relationships that were stable, committed, and loving (at least within the Christian community, if not always in society as a whole). It was this pattern of loving relationships which enabled the body of Christ to possess a close communal life.

As discussed in Chapter Eighteen, relationships in modern technological society follow a very different principle. The relational groupings found in traditional society have been greatly weakened and often destroyed. In their place has arisen a pattern of relationships which involves on the one hand functional, limited, contractual, “impersonal” relationships, and on the other informal, nonpurposeful, unstable, emotionally based “personal” relationships. The nuclear family is one of the few relational groupings

which is still part of most people's lives, but the family's isolation from a broader relational context poses severe challenges to its continued success as a relational unit. The advancing functionalization of social relationships and social groupings leaves many human needs unsatisfied. The old, the young, the sick—all who are not fully competent or capable by the standards of technological society—are left to the care of functionally organized institutions which are largely unable to meet their needs effectively. The functional and emotionally based relationships that characterize a technological society also fail to meet the need for stable community and committed love felt by even the strongest members of society. The undermining of relational groupings has led to a loss of the sense of communal relationship and also to the loss of a setting in which the fundamental personal needs of human beings can be satisfied.

The functionalization of society has deeply affected many of the Christian churches. Many modern churches have lost their communal life and instead become religious organizations. Personal and communal needs are attended to primarily by committees, programs, and specialized personnel rather than being met within the daily relationships of the community. This is especially evident in such areas as religious education, evangelism, charitable service, and care of the needs of the sick and the elderly. In addition, the relationships among members within a particular church often lack commitment and stability. They frequently bear little resemblance to the type of personal relationships that exist in relational groupings. As a consequence of the social changes brought by the development of technological society, many of the churches have lost the pattern of personal relationships which is at the basis of communal life.

In order for the Christian people to live as the new humanity, the body of Christ, genuine Christian personal relationships must be restored. Such relationships are essential for the establishment of authentic Christian communities. This does not mean that the social life of the Christian people in the twentieth century should be identical to that of Christians in past centuries. Some distinctively modern functional structures are necessary and useful for life in the modern world. For example, the modern development of Christian schools, hospitals, and charitable institutions (none of which actually originated in technological society) need not undermine the communal life of the Christian people.*

* As mentioned in Chapter Eighteen, p. 496, Christian service institutions such as hospitals and orphanages antedate the rise of technological society by many centuries. Their existence did not disrupt the communal life of the medieval city, but instead supplemented the relational

The use of programs, rallies, and the media in evangelism can also have some value. Nonetheless, a functional approach to social life should not govern the overall life of the body of Christ. If the Christian people are to regain their communal life and identity, then the primary place of service and support should be the restored personal relationships of Christian relational groupings.

Restoring
Christian
Relational
Groupings

It is helpful to observe that the type of personal relationships which need to be restored if the Christian people are to live as the new humanity, a true community, are relationships which are needed by everyone in modern society, not just by Christians. The functionalization of social life in technological society has left many basic human needs unsatisfied. However, Christians are in a better position than non-Christians to restore loving, committed relationships to human life. An authentic commitment to Christianity involves everything in a person's life; it therefore provides one of the few adequate bases in modern society for full human relationships. The longing for community felt by many people in the modern world is never enough to bring them together in real relationship, because it does not provide enough basis for forming their lives together. The restoration of relationship in Christ is therefore not an antiquarian retreat to "First Century Bibleland" or traditional society, but is instead a fidelity to the Bible that also meets one of the greatest needs of the twentieth century.

In order to adequately understand and apply the biblical teaching on social structure—on authority relationships and social roles—one must recognize that the restoration of Christian relationships is fundamental to all the social teaching of the New Testament. The New Testament teaching on men's and women's roles and authority and subordination presupposes a certain set of relationships between men and women both in the family and the community. The scriptural directives in these areas of social structure are intended to give order to a set of loving committed relationships. The order presupposes the relationships. It is not enough to merely try to establish the husband as head of the family or to insist that children obey their parents. The entire Christian family relationship must be reestablished and Christian childrearing restored before the directives about governance and obedience can serve as the Lord intended. It is not

care systems of the various familial and extrafamilial groupings. However, it must also be acknowledged that the Christian service institutions of the twentieth century are very different from those of earlier centuries. The modern Christian service institutions have (perhaps of necessity) adopted many of the organizational and therapeutic techniques found in secular institutions. As a result, the modern Christian service institution is more functionally oriented than its predecessors.

enough to merely maintain the governing role of men as the elders of the Christian community without restoring the communal relationships that allow that governing role to function as the Lord intended. There needs to be a restoration of relationships of brotherhood and sisterhood, of a network of families committed together to support and care for one another, of a whole lifestyle based on relational groupings and able to meet the various human needs of individuals within the body. Christians cannot obey the few clear scriptural directives about order in personal relationships and live in every other respect according to the functional relationships of the modern world and still expect to experience the scriptural directives as an unqualified blessing. In fact, bare submission to legal commands may not even be genuine obedience if it does not also understand and respond to the intention of the command—in this case, to establish order in a particular set of loving committed relationships.

The main focus of the social teaching of the New Testament is on love, not on authority and subordination. Teaching on authority clearly exists. The New Testament Christian community is a community drawn up “in subordination,” and the Christian church followed the same pattern in the first centuries of its existence. Nonetheless, the main focus of the New Testament and early church teaching on relationships is not on subordination, but on love—on the service of one another modeled on the example of Christ as he laid down his life on the cross. The content of this teaching consists primarily of instruction in Christian character and on how to meet the many situations that are trials for love. The focus of early Christian teaching, then, is on establishing the loving committed relationships of brothers and sisters in the Lord (*philadelphia*). The focus is on creating a body of people who care for and serve one another, who put away resentment and hostility and self-seeking, who are firmly committed to one another. It is this body of people who can effectively appropriate the Christian teaching on order and obedience.

Thus, the Christian task in the twentieth century is to reestablish truly Christian relationships. This task faces all Christians, not just those attempting to build Christian communities. Therefore, Christian leadership in the modern world must be understood in the light of this task. Many Christian leaders today take their models of leadership from the recent past when “Christendom” was still a usable term and when the social life of the churches and society as a whole was relatively stable. They see their role as primarily teaching and leading worship services and other ritual situations. Many Christian leaders have also added some new functions taken from

contemporary technological society: the administrative functions that any leader in a modern institution must fulfill, and the counseling functions modeled on the modern helping professions. These functions leave out an essential aspect of Christian leadership in the twentieth century: creating and maintaining genuine Christian relationships among Christians. It is no longer enough to teach, lead services, administer, and counsel while taking the social situation as a given. The social circumstances of technological society are currently eroding the communal relationships which are at the basis of the way of life of the body of Christ. Unless Christian leaders know how to build relationships among Christians, how to establish social situations which are more conducive to Christian life, they will be unable to combat the erosion of the corporate life of the Christian people.

Restoring
Christian
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Restoring Christian Social Structure ▸ Social Roles

THE third step in applying Christian social teaching in the modern world, after grasping the vision of God's purposes for the human race and understanding the need for a restoration of Christian relationships, is the application of the biblical teaching on social structure. A Christian social structure is an essential aspect of the full communal life of the body of Christ. It is true that such a structure cannot compensate for the absence of genuine Christian personal relationships. However, it is also true that these personal relationships derive much of their direction, strength, and order from authentic Christian social structure.

Every social group needs some type of structure. Every group needs a way to order relationships, divide responsibilities, handle problems, and govern its life. There are three main types of social structure, each corresponding to a type of social grouping.* In real human groups these three types of structure often overlap, but one type will almost always predominate. First, there is the functional social structure which appears in functional groupings. Most modern political, economic, and service institutions are ordered according to this model. Functional groupings are organized according to clearly defined tasks and positions. Roles and responsibilities are explicitly delineated, and one qualifies for a particular position by demonstrating one's competence. Secondly, there is the informal social structure found in informal groupings. This type of structure is

* For some background on these three types of structures and groupings, see Chapter Eighteen.

particularly common in the emotionally based “personal” relationships of technological society and also in instances of social dislocation in traditional society. It characterizes most modern friendship groupings and even some modern marriages. Roles and responsibilities in informal groupings are fluid and flexible, and depend upon the changing preferences of the individuals in the group. Such groupings usually lack a definite purpose other than the satisfaction of the group’s members. Finally, there is the relational social structure which is found in relational groups (the basic groupings of traditional societies as well as relational groupings like the family that still exist in technological society). The social structure taught in the New Testament is a version of this type of social structure.

Effective Social Roles

Social roles are the fundamental elements of the structure of relational groupings. They are the main patterns of stable behavior in these groupings. Though many people in modern society raise various objections to social roles, it is nonetheless true that effective social roles are responsible for much of the strength, depth, and durability of genuine personal relationships.

The term “social role” has several different meanings. First, the sociological literature often applies the term to key elements in the structure of every society or grouping, whether the grouping be functional, informal, or relational.² Since leadership and childrearing patterns are found in every society, there is always something that could be described as the “social role” of leader or parent. This is true even if the “leader” is only the person who exercises the most influence on the group in an unacknowledged way (as in an informal group), or the “parent” is only the person who this year is taking responsibility for a group of children in a communal childrearing setting (as in a strictly functional group). A second and more restrictive definition applies the term “social role” particularly to clearly defined roles as found in clearly defined institutions. Under this definition, the term is sometimes seen as applying mainly to functional roles, and is even at times contrasted with the stable personal relationships of a genuine community.³ A third use of the term, the one adopted here, limits “social role” to those stable roles which structure personal relationships in relational groupings. This definition highlights the important differences between relational roles and functional or informal roles, and at the same time indicates that the relational roles are the only ones which make relational social structure possible.⁴

Social roles are considerably different from functional roles. A functional role defines a set of activities or tasks that an individual regularly performs within a functional grouping. A functional role can be formulated in terms of a job description, as in the position of assembly line foreman. Many functional roles involve a certain amount of social interaction, but the interaction is functional; it is geared explicitly to the accomplishment of a limited specialized task (as with the foreman) or to the alleviation of a defined localized need (as with the worker in a modern service institution). A functional role does not require a full personal commitment. The relationship structured by the role is limited and contractual in nature. All roles in functional groupings are primarily functional roles, though they sometimes display elements more characteristic of social roles, as in the roles found in a modern doctor-patient relationship or a teacher-student relationship.

By contrast, a social role cannot be formulated in terms of a job description. Its main purpose is not to structure a set of activities, but to provide a stable order for relationships involving a broad-ranging personal commitment. For example, the role of father in a family is not defined adequately by the specific tasks he performs—working forty hours per week, paying for needed commodities, driving the family car, coaching a little league baseball team. The tasks that a father performs are expressions of his role as a man in relationship to a wife and a group of children; the tasks do not define the father's role. The tasks may vary, but the role remains the same. In fact, a father's tasks—his job description—change greatly over time. He acts differently toward a newborn baby son, a ten-year-old son, an adult son with a family of his own, and a middle-aged son who is caring for him in his old age. The tasks differ from stage to stage, but the relationship and role should remain through all the changing functions. In an important sense, the father's role as father is sustained from the point when he cares for the newborn son to the point when the middle-aged son cares for him. In technological society, the role of father is assuming more of the aspects of a functional role, so that the relationship between father and son now often ceases to be actively expressed when the son reaches adulthood.* However, when a social role such as the role of father is fully expressed,

* A pressure is exerted against all social roles in technological society, with the result that many traditional social roles begin to look more like functional roles. The father-son relationship is one example. Another example can be found in the role of the Christian pastor. One reason that modern Christians have a difficulty in understanding the meaning of "elder" or "pastor" in the New Testament is their tendency to see the position as a set of functions to be performed in a social institution rather than as a role of leadership and care in a communal relationship.

it gives form and structure to a stable committed personal relationship which cannot be defined in functional terms.

Social and functional roles can also be distinguished in terms of ascription and achievement.⁵ Almost all functional roles are achieved roles, that is, positions that an individual can assume because he has displayed some ability or accomplished some goal. For example, the position of corporation executive is normally an achieved role because the executive obtains the position by demonstrating his or her competence. On the other hand, most important social roles are ascribed roles, positions that are given and not earned. For example, family roles are normally ascribed—a son is a son regardless of what he has done to obtain the position. Roles associated with age and sex are also ascribed rather than achieved. Not all social roles are ascribed. Many leadership positions in genuinely communal groupings are achieved roles. An example is the position of elder in the early Christian community. Nonetheless, the most important social roles are ascribed, and for an important reason: True relationship is rarely earned or deserved, but is usually just given. The ascribed nature of many social roles can be understood mainly in terms of both the realities of human relationships and the importance given in community (especially Christian community) to people as they are born, before and apart from any competence they display.

A structure based on functional principles prefers achieved roles to ascribed roles. Since efficiency and production are the main concerns of the system, positions tailored according to competence have obvious advantages. Nonetheless, such a social structure fails to provide for many essential human needs. The human realities involved in family, reproduction, childrearing, and personal (rather than technical) formation cannot be structured successfully according to achieved functional roles. Age and sex are central concerns in these human realities; any social structure that provides for these realities adequately must rely at least partially on ascribed social roles. A failure to develop effective ascribed social roles causes the breakdown of genuine community and weakens family life. The neglect of ascribed social roles also leads to problems in childrearing, the care of the elderly, and the development of secure and confident human personalities. A human community will be impoverished if it is not structured according to age and sex. In *Male and Female*, Margaret Mead writes:

If any human society—large or small, simple or complex, based on the most rudimentary hunting and fishing or on the whole intricate interchange of

manufactured products—is to survive, it must have a pattern of social life that comes to terms with the differences between the sexes.⁶

The same remark could be applied to differences based on age. Human life is not improved by neglecting fundamental human realities for the sake of greater functional efficiency.

To be effective, social roles must have several characteristics. First, they must be stable. Social roles provide the kind of long-term enduring consistency of expectation and relationship that gives an underlying peace and strength to people's lives. Constant role change reduces the solidity and vitality of communal life. Secondly, social roles must be clear. They must be defined clearly enough so that each individual can understand them and know in various situations what is expected of him or her. An ambiguous social role can be more difficult than no social role at all. Thirdly, effective social roles must be uniform through a particular culture or communal grouping. To be strong, social roles need the support of a whole cultural grouping. Social roles also supply the larger grouping with a basis on which it can relate together without learning a new way of life. As clear parts that all can learn allow the spontaneous performance of a communal dance or song, so a uniform set of social roles provides a group with a way to come together for communal events without the need for lengthy practice sessions. Fourthly, effective social roles must be flexible. They should be able to accommodate the normal range of human relationships, and thus should have a built-in ability to make exceptions or adapt as needed.

Social roles are primarily ideals for personal relationships; they are not merely collections of laws, rules, or instructions. Some imperatives are connected with social roles. Children must obey their parents. Parents must care for and teach their children. But the role of father or mother cannot be reduced to a set of rules or instructions. In fact, social roles are taught more by example than by rules. Knowing five good fathers and watching them relate to their families is more helpful than reading five good books on the principles of fathering. A social role is a way of being in a relationship, a way of being for other people. A social role is more of an ideal of how to relate to others than a set of rules or a set of specifications.

Social roles are ideals, but they are also usually embodied in teaching which the communal grouping regards as authoritative. This teaching, whether in the form of oral tradition or written documents, provides the necessary authoritative foundation for the social structure. For Christians, authoritative teaching on social structure is to be found in the Bible, the

Effective
Social Roles

writings which represent the highest revelation of God's plan for human life. To downplay these teachings or to dismiss this source of authority not only causes spiritual damage to God's people, it also severely limits their ability to live out a successful Christian social structure. The authority of scripture therefore has social as well as theological implications.

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Approach
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All of these characteristics of effective social roles illustrate the fact that social roles depend upon a living social tradition. A community passes on its way of life, and it is only when a way of life is passed on as "our way of life" that it has the authority to provide the basis for a successful communal life. Of course, a community can start a tradition and it can change its tradition. A social grouping can change its way of life. But a community does not have a way of life until its basic patterns are accepted as "our way" or "the way the Lord gave us" and are passed on with this type of authority. Social roles do not yet exist if one must go to class to learn about them. They should be experienced by people and transmitted by living together. Only then do social roles have the stability, clarity, uniformity, and flexibility needed to give peace and solidity to social relationships.

Objections to Social Roles

People in technological society raise many objections to social roles. Some of this negative response amounts to simple aversion: The idea of social roles makes many modern people uncomfortable. Other objections to social roles are more developed. They derive from ideological positions or from other views about the appropriate social patterns on which society should be based. These objections will be discussed here. First, objections to social roles in general will be discussed. Then more specific objections to social roles based on sex differences will be examined.

One of the more frequent objections to social roles in general is the view that social roles are limiting.⁷ They prescribe patterns of social behavior without consulting the preferences of the individuals involved and without allowing them the opportunity to take a previously uncharted course. Social roles *are* limiting, but they are limiting in the way any structure is limiting. The human skeleton limits the human body in its movement, but it also makes the human being stronger and more versatile than the amoeba. A highway limits the places a car can go, but the observance of that limitation allows the development of a travel network that yields far greater mobility than overland travel at will. Roles too are limiting. Moreover, social roles are more limiting than functional roles because

they are more stable, long-lasting, and affect almost every area of a person's life. As with other effective structures, though, the limitations imposed by social roles reap great benefits—in this case, the establishment of a stable and peaceful pattern of social life which allows communal life to flourish and which provides for the group's needs. Social roles do not have to be rigid, but they do have to be stable enough and uniform enough to provide a sound basis for personal relationships. Those who object to roles as being limiting do not understand the value of relational social structure in promoting communal life.

Objections to
Social Roles

Two other objections to social roles in general are often raised. They are similar to the objection that social roles limit the individual. The first rejects social roles as being inauthentic; the second argues that individuals should change their social roles as they see fit.⁸ Those who reject social roles as inauthentic object that they make an individual conform needlessly to the expectations of others. They force an individual to understand himself in relationship to others, rather than as a “real” person in his own right. They are imposed from outside, alien to the real inner person. As observed in Chapters Eighteen and Nineteen, this type of objection is partly a product of the dichotomy which technological society creates between the functional world with its highly structured relationships and the personal world, which ideally is supposed to be unstructured and spontaneous.* Most contemporary people have little or no experience of committed relationships within a large, cohesive, structured relational grouping, and they perceive such groupings as a threat to their identity. Another source of this objection to social roles is alienation from all traditional social groupings and relationships, often including the family and the church. This sense of alienation is produced in large part by modern ideologies whose goal is to form an individualized functionally efficient technological society.

Social roles may look “inauthentic” from the vantage point of technological society, but those in a genuine communal grouping do not experience them as inauthentic. Social roles do not suppress the “true identity” of the individual, but instead provide the stable social context needed for personal identity to develop properly. Human beings cannot establish identity as individuals, apart from personal relationships and membership in various social bodies. An individual search for identity independent of other people will be unending. True identity, like true personality, does not precede relationship, but is instead *produced* by relationship.⁹ The

* See Chapter Eighteen, pp. 498–500, and Chapter Nineteen, pp. 529–530.

common expectations defined by social roles can also be experienced as a great aid to communal life, not as a stifling bondage. Social roles free people from tensions which arise from the constant effort of working or living around differing expectations. Rather than being humanly inauthentic, social roles correspond to a genuine inner hunger in the human race for stable, committed personal relationships.

The second objection involves only a partial denial of social roles. This objection is raised by people who understand the need for some form of social roles, but who feel that each person or group should create these roles according to their preferences or needs. Such a view betrays the basic individualism inherent in at least the Liberal approach to technological society. This approach to social life does not aim at establishing communal relationships on a broad scale, but at creating a number of small independent groups, each following different principles of social life.

In reality, this approach is unworkable. Social roles cannot be successfully improvised or devised anew by every social grouping. To devise a successful set of social roles is a great challenge. Those who attempt to create social roles anew normally make serious "ecological errors," errors that arise because of the complexity of the system and the difficulty of fully comprehending all the relevant factors. Unfortunately, such ecological errors are not discovered quickly. For example, only after a generation has passed can a group discover the damage done by a new theory of childrearing. Moreover, the task of devising new social roles demands a great deal of creativity and a breadth of wisdom that few people possess, and almost no one possesses alone. It is enlightening to see how many primitive and traditional peoples can handle birth, death, and marriage, and all occasions of celebration and mourning in a way which cares for the people's needs and allows them to express their deepest thoughts and experiences. By contrast, people in technological society are often incapable of handling these occasions in anything more than a perfunctory manner that is traumatic or disappointing for those involved. The social roles and social structure needed for a successful corporate human existence cannot be devised anew by every social grouping.

There are two other major reasons for approaching social roles in a stable and relatively uniform way within a society or a community. First, there is a great advantage, especially in a technological society, to not having to constantly work at developing social roles.¹⁰ People in technological society spend much of their time in situations which call for a high degree of change and often creativity. They need an area of life where they can

rest from such effort, confident of stable support and commitment, with a clear understanding of how to behave in relationship to others. If social relationships are turned into as much of a task as work relationships are currently in our society, then much of their purpose and usefulness has been lost. Second, an isolated family or small group lacks the strength needed to develop a pattern of social roles different from the surrounding society. The family unit in technological society is not a total environment; it cannot singlehandedly resist the currents of society which influence its members through the school system, the work site, the neighborhood, friends, and the media. Social roles cannot be left to the discretion and ingenuity of each small societal unit, but must instead be developed and sustained consistently within a larger social grouping.

Objections to
Social Roles

In technological society, objections are raised to all types of social roles. Roles built on the parent-child relationship, the teacher-student relationship, the employer-employee relationship, and differences in age and sex are all dismissed or functionalized. Social roles based on differences in sex, in particular, evoke some of the most heated negative responses. Two types of objections to social roles in general arise especially in connection with men's and women's roles: that these roles are discriminatory, and that they foster stereotypes.

The idea that social roles based on sex differences are discriminatory has been vigorously advanced within the feminist movement.¹¹ Feminists have consistently attempted to equate racial differences and sex differences, and to say by analogy that making distinctions between people on the basis of sex is the same as making distinctions on the basis of race.¹² The term "sexism" has been coined to express this similarity. Feminists have thus been able to capitalize on the widespread social disapproval of racism by portraying distinctions between men and women as "racism" against women.

This equation of race and sex falsely presumes that the two issues are the same in all significant respects. However, racial distinctions occur *between* social groupings, whereas sexual distinctions occur *within* social groupings. Barring someone from a position solely on the basis of race is discrimination. It is a way of preserving an advantage for one's own social group. Barring someone from a position because she is a woman might be discrimination, especially in a functionally organized grouping, such as a modern business firm. However, within a relational grouping, a sexual distinction may well be a useful and proper attempt to establish an effective social structure through social roles. Such roles need to be ascribed rather than achieved. In relational groupings, where the primary concern

is for relationship and not function, the observance of certain distinctions between people on the basis of age and sex rather than competency is not necessarily discrimination. It is a way to maintain and strengthen social roles.

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The second objection often made to social roles based on sex differences is that such roles foster stereotypes.¹³ This objection also arises from the equation between race and sex. Stereotypes of different races often lead to discrimination or to the treatment of all members of a race as inferior. To be sure, there are stereotypes of men and women that are harmful and scientifically inaccurate. For example, an idea that women are deficient in intelligence or ability would be both disrespectful and false. As stated in Chapters Sixteen and Seventeen, the primary differences between men and women do not lie in ability but in their varying responses within personal relationships.¹⁴ However, the idea that women are primarily interested in family life and children should not be considered a stereotype. It strengthens a social role of great importance, and fits with much of the available scientific data. In effect, the attack on stereotypes of women is often an attack on recognizing the genuine differences between men and women and also an attack on the reinforcement of stable social roles.

Though many people in modern society object to social roles, such roles play an integral part in the formation of any truly communal life-style and in the authentic Christian approach to social structure. Social roles are the backbone of all relational groupings. It is no accident that where social roles are weak, personal relationship is weak. Social roles are an important way of bringing strength to personal relationships. In fact, community disintegrates when a purely functional or informal approach to roles prevails. If the Christian people are to recapture a communal life, they must learn to structure their life together as a people around relational groupings based on social roles.

Alternate Social Patterns > Traditionalism and Socialism

THE body of Christ is intended by God to be a people, a community, with a defined structure and way of life. Many people in modern Western society completely reject this social pattern. They reject social roles, advocate minimal social control, and take an informal “laissez-faire” approach to social life, rooted in Western individualism and Liberal ideology. This approach

is clearly inconsistent with God's purposes for the new human race. It lacks corporate vision, and leads ultimately to a type of social disorganization which prevents the development of communal life.

However, even given that God's plan involves the building of a people, the scriptural approach to personal relationships and social structure outlined here is not the only option. There are two other common approaches to the structuring of a people that differ considerably from the scriptural approach. One pattern could be called "traditionalist," the other "socialist." Though differing from scriptural principles on several counts, both of these approaches have been adopted by Christians in the past and the present. In order to accurately understand the scriptural principles of social structure, it is helpful to perceive how these patterns differ from the scriptural pattern.

The first pattern is called "traditionalist" because it represents the approach of traditional Western society and of most other traditional societies. This pattern includes social roles, and it orders society on relational rather than functional lines. Loyalty to the family or clan is of extreme importance, sometimes to the disadvantage of other wider communal commitments. The traditionalist pattern also accepts status considerations that come from birth and wealth. Thus a traditionalist society normally has privileged classes and privileged social groupings. The traditionalist approach is no longer a strong force in Western society. Those who defend it do so more as a way to maintain the status quo than as a vision for a restoration of traditional society.

A Christian approach to social structure based on the teachings of scripture differs from the traditionalist approach on several points. The scripturally based Christian approach values the family highly, but it places the family within the wider set of commitments of the body of Christ. Such an approach does not value the status quo for itself, nor does it defend a privileged class, a privileged social group, or the unmoderated accumulation of wealth. In fact, the scriptural approach to social structure articulates a significant principle of equality in goods and services. This principle runs counter to much within the traditionalist approach. "To each according to their needs" is a principle of Christian community (Acts 4:35), and applies especially to the sharing of material goods (1 Cor 8:14). Behind this sharing of goods is a kind of joint ownership (Acts 4:32) that means that everyone's goods belong to the brotherhood, even though each person will normally administer a certain amount of these goods as the steward of God and the community.

Traditionalism
and Socialism

The scriptural principle of equality does not mean treating everyone the same, but rather treating everyone according to their need, relating to all with equal care. Behind the scriptural principle of equal care is an understanding of the equal value of all the brothers and sisters in the Lord (1 Cor 12:21–26) so that it is normally the weakest who receive the greatest care and often special honor. In the Epistle to Diognetus, an early Christian writing from the first part of the second century, the teaching on equal care receives special attention:

Once you have grasped these truths, think how your joy will overflow, and what love you will feel for Him who loved you so. And if you love Him, you will become an imitator of His goodness. Do not be surprised that a man should be an imitator of God; he can, since God has willed it so. But happiness is not to be found in dominating one's fellows, or in wanting to have more than his weaker brethren, or in possessing riches and riding rough-shod over his inferiors. No one can become an imitator of God like that, for such things are wholly alien to His greatness. But if a man will shoulder his neighbour's burden; if he be ready to supply another's need from his own abundance; if, by sharing the blessings he has received from God with those who are in want, he himself becomes a god to those who receive his bounty—such a man is indeed an imitator of God. And then you will see, as you walk the earth, that there is a God who is operative in heaven; then you will begin to dilate on His mysteries; and you will know love and admiration for those who incur persecution by their refusal to deny Him. Then, too, you will see through the deceitfulness and error of this world, once you have found what it is to live the true life of heaven . . .¹⁵

Christian community, as presented in early Christian writings and in scripture, militates against class distinctions (Jas 2:1–7). This does not necessarily mean that the wealthy must give away all their wealth, but it does mean that they must relate to others in the body as their brothers and sisters and they must approach their wealth communally (*koinōnikos*, 1 Tim 6:17–19). The Christian principle of equality calls for a personal commitment of generosity and sharing from person to person on the basis of a committed relationship.

The second major approach to social structure is the “socialist” pattern, corresponding closely to the modern Socialist ideal for society. In the socialist pattern, relationships are highly functionalized. The group as a whole is treated as a collective of individuals. Equality is understood

as a principle of treating everyone the same. Leaders function primarily as policy makers and administrators, and social control is exercised in a collective fashion. The family unit becomes attenuated. Patterns of relationship and order are explicitly developed and people are educated in living according to these patterns. In short, the socialist pattern is based on a consistent application of a functional approach to society as a whole.

The scriptural approach to social structure differs considerably from the socialist approach.¹⁶ Rather than undermining the fundamental relational groupings of society, a scriptural approach builds its communal life upon these very groupings. The scriptural pattern values the natural human structures provided by age and sex, and puts priority on family life and social roles. It emphasizes personal relationships, not functional efficiency. Leadership is exercised in a personal relationship which involves subordination and individual direction. The scriptural principle of equality is also very different from the socialist version of the same principle. It does not undermine social roles or personal subordination, nor does it claim that all individuals should be treated identically except for ability or interest differences. The Christian principle of equality is preeminently a principle of equal love (equal care). It is not a principle that would collectivize and bureaucratize the community so that everyone can get a fair share even should the people not love one another. It is not a principle which eliminates social roles in favor of functional roles, but a principle which founds all social roles in personal relationships of brotherly love, care, and service.

One traditional Christian model of social structure, the monastic model, bears a certain resemblance to the socialist approach.* In a monastic community, all property is held in common. All activities are pursued collectively. A principle of equality based on equal treatment receives special stress. The basic unit of the monastic collective is the individual, rather than a familial relational grouping structured according to social roles. In all these aspects the monastic model of social structure resembles the socialist approach. This resemblance exists because a monastic community is designed exclusively for adult celibates, and therefore eliminates many of the elements of the scriptural approach to communal life which are associated with family structure.¹⁷

* The monastic communities gave rise to special "apostolic communities" such as the Dominicans and the Jesuits. These newer communities differ from the traditional monastic model in that they are formed for the purpose of fulfilling certain tasks of service within the church rather than merely for the purpose of living a way of life together. The apostolic community is a variation on the more basic model of the monastic community, and is not the major object of concern in these paragraphs.

Nonetheless, it is deceiving to draw too close a parallel between a monastic and a socialist model of social structure. Though monastic communities operate without family groupings and family structures, many of the relationships and roles within a monastic community are patterned after a familial design. The primary relationship among the members of the community is a brotherly or sisterly relationship involving a personal commitment. Its model is the relationship between brothers and sisters in a family. In much of monastic tradition, the older brothers or sisters (those who have seniority at the monastery) receive special honor regardless of their gifts or the functional importance of their role in the community. In addition, the pattern of authority in monastic groupings traditionally resembles a relational Christian approach more than a functional socialist approach. The abbot or elder or superior is not merely a representative of the collective will, but is one who exercises authority within a personal relationship that involves personal subordination on the part of those under his authority. Furthermore, monastic authority relationships have frequently been modeled on the traditional master-disciple relationship, a close parallel to the father-son relationship.* In short, the underlying dynamic of the monastic model of social structure is analogous to the dynamic of family life—but to the dynamic of traditional family life built on commitment and enduring roles, not to modern family life built on emotional intensity and limiting the exercise of authority to the adult-child relationship. The monastic model superficially resembles the socialist approach because it is designed for a community of celibates, but at root it is merely a variation of the Christian approach found in scripture.†

The Christian approach to social structure differs from both a traditionalist approach and a socialist approach. The body of Christ is intended by God to be a people, a community, based upon personal relationships of committed love, structured as a relational grouping with social roles, and

* While the father-son relationship is sometimes the model for the superior-brother relationship, this model is usually adopted only when there is an underlying view of the abbot or the elder as a master who is raising up disciples in the Lord. The more basic monastic model is that of a group of brothers or sisters living together, and many monasteries did not see the governor as an abbot (father). The spread of the father-son model within monastic groupings owes much to the influence of Benedict. Benedict took the word *abbas* (commonly translated “abbot”) from the master-disciple relationship and applied it to the head of a coenobium. Eastern monasticism tended to use less paternal titles such as “ruler” (*hēgoumenos*) and “superior” (*proestos*). The Benedictine usage may have arisen because Benedict envisioned the monastery as primarily for training and saw the solitary life as the goal for the more mature.

† Though the traditional monastic model is merely a variation of the Christian approach found in the scripture, it should be observed that there is movement among modern religious toward a more socialist approach and even at times toward a more informal “laissez-faire” approach.

ordering the flow of goods and services according to a principle of equal care. Christians in the twentieth century should adopt this approach rather than an alternate approach for two primary reasons. First, this pattern is taught in the New Testament and by the Fathers of the church as the approach which is in harmony with God's intention for the human race. Secondly, it is also the approach which best meets a need that technological society is incapable of satisfying. The Lord planted in the human heart a hunger for genuine family and community relationships. He intended to satisfy that hunger by sending his son Jesus to restore his creation and to form those who believe in him into a new people. If God's full purpose for his people in the twentieth century is to be fulfilled, the Christian people must understand and apply the scriptural teaching on community, personal relationships, and social roles.

Traditionalism
and Socialism

GUIDELINES FOR A MODERN CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO MEN'S AND WOMEN'S ROLES

AS STATED IN THE LAST CHAPTER, it is not enough for modern Christians to merely apply the scriptural directives on the roles of men and women. In order to fully live out the social teaching contained in the scripture, Christians need to have their basic way of life reshaped. Only then can the scriptural teaching achieve its original purpose: the ordering of the life of a body of men and women who are followers of Christ and who form in him the new humanity. A full and ideal application of the scriptural teaching on men's and women's roles must be founded on both an understanding of God's purpose—the formation of a new humanity in Christ—and on the establishment of committed communal relationships in Christ ordered by a genuinely Christian social structure.

The scriptural teaching on men's and women's roles presumes that this teaching will be applied within the context of a Christian body. It is true that some of this teaching, particularly the teaching on family life, can be applied even outside such a communal setting. Still, the scriptural approach to men's and women's roles can be expressed most effectively among a group of people who are living a communal life. Chapter Twenty-One set forth the basic principles of this communal life. This chapter will offer some practical guidelines on how to translate these principles into a living Christian body where the roles of men and women will find a meaningful place. These guidelines are derived from several sources. Some are presumed in scripture; some are explicitly taught in scripture; some derive from the need to adapt the scriptural teaching to modern social

conditions. Nonetheless, all of the guidelines have the same purpose: to set forth a specific, workable approach to the patterning of modern bodies of Christians so that they can conform to the intention of the scriptural teaching on corporate life and men's and women's roles.

Most of the guidelines in this chapter can be applied fully only within a Christian body that has a communal life. Thus the material in this chapter will be most directly relevant for those who can participate in such a body. For those not in this position, these guidelines will help to clarify the Christian teaching on men's and women's roles and its application in the modern world. Insight into God's plan is valuable even when it cannot be fully acted upon. Also, the final set of guidelines in this chapter should prove particularly useful to people who do not belong to such a Christian body. These guidelines point out the need for flexibility in living out the Christian teaching on men's and women's roles in the modern technological world. This flexibility is needed by Christian communities, but even more by those unable to participate in such communities.

This chapter contains four main sets of guidelines. The first lays out social prerequisites for a Christian communal approach to men's and women's roles. The second set of guidelines presents the main elements of the scriptural teaching on men's and women's roles in the family and the larger Christian community. The third set offers some suggestions for meeting certain needs peculiar to the social conditions of technological society. Finally, the fourth set enunciates some simple principles for relating the scriptural teaching on men's and women's roles to the surrounding society. These guidelines represent an attempt to distill from the first twenty-one chapters of this book a collection of succinct practical pastoral principles for approaching men's and women's roles in the modern world.

Basic Prerequisites for Men's and Women's Roles

THE first set of guidelines describes in practical terms basic patterns of life which are essential prerequisites for a community life in which men's and women's roles can be expressed. These prerequisites involve "brother-sister love" and the need for a family-household unit operating as an integral part of the community.

1. “*Brother-sister love*” (*philadelphia*) is the basis for all social roles and social relationships among the Christian people.*

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The basic relationship among members of the Christian community is the relationship that comes from their common identity as Christians born anew with the life of God—the relationship of brothers and sisters in the Lord. Those who belong to the Christian people are committed to one another as members of the same body. Each member—male or female, Jew or Gentile—is entitled to receive the full care and service of the brothers and sisters. Thus the fundamental principles which govern Christian relationships are identical for both men and women. These relationships should be conducted in kindness, patience, and humility, free of resentment, hostility, and lust. All relationships in the body of Christ should be built on committed love and should manifest the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

The importance of *philadelphia*, brother-sister love, in the Christian community also means that men and women in the community should relate to one another primarily as brothers and sisters in the Lord and not as members of the opposite sex. Christian men and women are first of all human beings redeemed by Jesus Christ and placed in the same family; and they should be able to express the love, affection, and loyalty of brothers and sisters. This does not mean that a person should relate exactly the same to men and women. Because human beings are sexual creatures, it is necessary to observe some rules of distance, of limited intimacy. However, such limitations need not diminish the expression of *philadelphia*. While there are some differences that should exist in the manner of relating to men and to women, these differences should not overshadow the sameness of love and respect shown all Christians simply because they are brothers and sisters in the Lord.

2. *The home should be a center of care and service.*†

The home and family have lost key functions in technological society, and hence the role of the household has diminished in significance. However, the home in the Christian community should be a center of social life, the primary place where people live their lives and serve and care for others.

* On “brother-sister love,” see Chapter Four, pp. 80–82, and footnote, pp. 80–81; Chapter Six, p. 158; Chapter Nine, p. 213; and Chapter Twenty-One, pp. 597–598.

† On the home as a center of care and service, see Chapter Three, pp. 48–49; Chapter Four, pp. 100–101; Chapter Five, pp. 114–115; Chapter Seventeen, pp. 429–442; and Chapter Eighteen, pp. 504–505.

Thus, in order to restore Christian family life and the roles of men and women, the family needs to assume a more prominent role as a center of Christian life, a place where many of the needs of the Christian community are met.

Many areas of service should be performed largely within a household setting. Childrearing is one of the primary responsibilities and services of the family household. A full Christian approach to childrearing involves more training and formation than is currently common in modern society, and this training should occur largely in the household. Also, the family unit can sometimes perform important community services by taking people in to live temporarily or even sometimes permanently. More normally, the household will provide community service by receiving guests, helping the needy, supporting community activities, evangelizing people outside the Christian community, and welcoming brothers and sisters in the Lord.

An approach which makes the family a center of care and service has two particularly significant benefits. First, it will usually improve the quality of the service. Childrearing, charitable works, hospitality, evangelism, and many other services are best performed within a network of committed personal relationships rather than through special institutions. Secondly, the woman's domestic role will become more significant in the community as the responsibilities of the household increase. This frees the woman from the typical modern female dilemma: whether primarily to take responsibility for the household and thereby assume a role that has less and less importance and interest, or to primarily pursue a career and thereby abdicate domestic responsibility.

3. *The Christian community should provide a supportive environment for family life.**

The forces of technological society have weakened the kinship network which traditionally provided a valuable supportive environment for the family. In technological society, the Christian community should assume those supportive functions once performed by the kinship network. The community should be like an extended family. It should not compete with the family for the loyalty of the individual (as sometimes happens in socialist societies). Nor should it operate according to principles completely different from those obtaining in the family (as is the case in most

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* On the family in Christian community, see Chapter Three; Chapter Twelve, pp. 290-302; Chapter Eighteen, pp. 502-505; Chapter Nineteen, pp. 525-526; and Chapter Twenty-One, pp. 599-604.

technological societies). Instead, the Christian community should be a larger fabric of personal relationships into which the family unit is tightly integrated. Existing extended family relationships which are still cohesive need not be weakened, but can be fit into the broader community support system. In fact, a Christian community can often help restore healthy kinship structures.

A Christian community can provide support for the family unit in many ways, most of which were once provided by the kinship network. The community provides the larger social environment which supports family relationships and family order by maintaining a consistent and uniform pattern of social roles. Like the members of an extended family, the brothers and sisters in the larger Christian community should recognize their obligation to aid each individual family unit in times of crisis and special need. The Christian community should also provide instruction on Christian family life. As in an extended family, this instruction should not be transmitted primarily through classes but through a network of personal relationships in which people can learn from those who are experienced in family life and have met the various life crises and life experiences in a Christian way. The Christian community should also provide supportive relationships among the men (husbands) and among the women (wives) in the community. These relationships should strengthen the men and women in their distinctive responsibilities and also prevent the women from being isolated in their nuclear family units. In general, the community should provide women with ways to be fully a part of communal life.

Many modern people, Christians and non-Christians alike, have attempted to strengthen the family by directly buttressing the nuclear family unit. In many ways this seems to be the most obvious course of action. However, the evidence from anthropology and social history indicates that the nuclear family is only strong when it exists in the context of a larger extended-family system. Such a system need not be completely built on lineage, but it must involve the commitment of the nuclear family to a larger social grouping.

Key Biblical Teaching on Men's and Women's Roles

THE following five guidelines summarize the main body of biblical teaching on men's and women's roles. They point to essential features of communal life that have been seriously weakened and sometimes elimi-

nated in modern technological society and in many modern churches. If Christian communal life is to be restored to full vitality in the modern world, these features must also be restored to their proper strength. The following five guidelines therefore have as their aim a type of restoration—not necessarily a restoration of elements altogether lacking, but a restoration of these elements to their original vitality and strength.

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4. *There should be a system for raising people in the Lord with men having primary responsibility for men and women for women.**

This guideline contains two main elements. First, there should be a system for raising people in the Lord. Children in the family and young or new people in the community should receive personal formation in the Christian life. This formation should involve training in character, personal relationships, and social roles, as well as the passing on of practical and useful skills. Secondly, this system for raising people in the Lord should place the main responsibility for the young men in the hands of other men, and for the young women in the hands of other women. This means that the father should primarily raise his sons and the mother raise her daughters, though the father-daughter relationship should be strong enough to give the daughter an experience of her father's love and protection. This also means that the mature men in the Christian community should raise the men who are younger in age and Christian experience in Christian living and service, and the more mature women should do likewise for the younger women.

This approach to personal formation is a constant feature of societies that have not been affected by the spirit of technological society. Modern technological society is probably the first human society to entrust the rearing of younger men primarily to women and to mix the sexes together indiscriminately and give them the same instruction and education. There is some indication that this practice could cause significant social problems.[†] At least it is clear that it will be more difficult for young men to grow into mature Christian manhood if they are not reared by mature men, and it will be more difficult for young women to grow into mature Christian womanhood if they are not reared by mature Christian women.

* On men being responsible for raising men, and women for raising women, see Chapter Three, pp. 64–70; Chapter Four, pp. 96–97; Chapter Five, pp. 121–122, 124, 135; Chapter Nine, pp. 215–216; and Chapter Twenty-Three, pp. 658–659, 664.

† This point will be discussed more fully in Chapter Twenty-Three, pp. 655–657, 660–661.

Roles must be learned if they are to function successfully. A full restoration of men's and women's roles will require a certain amount of role training. This training must occur within personal relationships among older and younger people of the same sex in which older persons teach younger ones how to live as Christian men or women.

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The model for raising people in the Lord followed in many modern churches involves women educating the children up to the age of ten or twelve years and men educating the adults. The women staff most of the earlier grades in catechism classes and Sunday schools, while the men, in their positions as ministers and priests, do most of the teaching of adults. This model, which is a fairly recent development, is not the ideal for Christian formation. Women should provide the primary care for both boys and girls during the first years of life, but at a certain point the men should take over the primary responsibility for the training of the boys. Similarly, the more mature Christian women in the community should assume responsibility for the care and training of the other adult women. Male pastors should not be doing all the adult training. In fact, close to half of the adult pastoral care, teaching, training, and counseling in the community—that provided for women—should ordinarily be done by women.

One important consequence of this communal approach to personal formation is that people's primary relationships should not mainly be with age-peers, but rather they should engage in significant relationships with people both older and younger than themselves. The daily life of the community should be in large part lived in cross-generational groupings, involving children, younger men and women, older married men and women, and older single men and women. Young people therefore do not spend most of their time in specially segregated age groupings, but are instead integrated into the adult world of the community.

5. *There should be different areas of responsibility for men and for women.**

In social systems that are uninfluenced by the spirit of technological society, men and women have distinct spheres of responsibility. The nature of these responsibilities varies from culture to culture, but the distinction between male and female spheres is always clear. This clear distinction of roles allows large social groupings to gather and function without extensive

* On different spheres of responsibility for men and for women, see Chapter One, pp. 22–23; Chapter Three, pp. 48–64; Chapter Four, pp. 95–101; Chapter Twelve, pp. 290–302; Chapter Seventeen, pp. 423–425; and Chapter Twenty-One, pp. 607–608.

organizational planning. The women naturally care for their responsibilities and the men do likewise. Normally there is also an understanding of precedence so that it is clear in any group who has the responsibility to take the lead. This type of clear sexual division of labor should exist in the Christian community. This pattern can be seen in scripture, although it is not described as explicitly as are some of the prescriptions for community order. However, this pattern of distinct responsibilities is one of the keys to developing a pattern of social roles for men and women that will strengthen the Christian community.

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A clear division of responsibilities between men and women has great benefits both for individuals and for the community as a whole. Such an approach to social life brings greater peace to men and women and to their interrelationships. A clear set of socially valued responsibilities promotes individual security and an assured sense of one's importance and value within a group. Distinct male and female spheres also reduces competition between the sexes, and makes it clear in concrete, daily terms that both sexes are needed in order for life to go well. Moreover, the sexual division of labor normally assures that certain crucial needs within the community will be met most effectively. In particular, when women take primary concern for direct service to people's needs, such care is normally of a much higher quality than when both sexes provide it equally. Charitable service, the rearing of young children, the training of other women, and the general daily management of the home as a center of care and service all work better when women take a primary concern for them.

A workable sexual division of labor is often difficult in the modern world, but such a division is an essential aspect of a full functioning of men's and women's roles. Some of the elements of the division of labor seem clear. Women are primarily responsible for internal house management and the work which directly serves people's immediate needs, such as the cooking and serving of food, care of clothing, and care of the living space. Men are responsible for heavy physical work, overall government, and seeing that the family is provided with food, clothing, and a place to live. However, it is not always easy to incorporate this division of labor into the daily life of a twentieth-century family. It is especially difficult to fully apply this approach in families where both the husband and wife work. A division of labor should still exist in such situations, but it should not mean that the women have to work twice as long and twice as hard as the men. Men should have their own set of household tasks so that the women do not have sole responsibility for household work. This applies especially to families where both husband and wife work outside the household

context, and in some measure also to families where only the husband works outside the family context.

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There is room for some flexibility in deciding which tasks are the man's and which are the woman's. However, there is no room for the type of flexibility which undermines the distinct line between male and female spheres of responsibility. The very fact that modern society largely fails to assign secure roles to men and women is a chief reason why Christians should be insistent on this point. A type of flexibility which eliminates distinct spheres of responsibility only increases confusion and insecurity. Rigidity and absolute uniformity should not generally characterize the Christian approach to men's and women's roles. However, on the issue of distinct responsibilities for men and women, a firm adherence to a division of labor has many advantages.

If a restoration of a sexual division of labor in the midst of technological society is to substantially increase the vitality of the Christian community, it must be accompanied by a new attitude toward female responsibilities. Technological society is marked by a tendency to devalue personal service, childrearing, and all domestic tasks, and to place great value on positions of political and economic "power." This scheme of values is directly contrary to the teaching of the scripture. The female role is of central importance in shaping the quality of communal life. Women should experience satisfaction in meeting the personal needs of men and other women, and the men in the community should express their appreciation and respect for this service in tangible ways.

*6. There should be a system of personal subordination among the Christian people with the elders (heads) of the community chosen from among the men and the husband serving as the head of the family, with women in complementary positions of leadership and subordinate government.**

This guideline has three main elements. First, a system of personal subordination and the government of people should be restored in the Christian

* On governance of the Christian people, see Chapter Five, pp. 124-134; Chapter Thirteen; Chapter Eighteen, pp. 495-496; Chapter Nineteen, pp. 526-527; Chapter Twenty-One, p. 598. On men as elders of the community and as heads of their families, see Chapter One, p. 27; Chapter Three, pp. 48-56; Chapter Four, pp. 95-101; Chapter Five, pp. 124-134; Chapter Seven, pp. 182-184; Chapter Eight, pp. 199-199; Chapter Twelve, pp. 290-302; Chapter Thirteen, pp. 304-322; and Chapter Seventeen, pp. 422-434. On women in leadership, see Chapter Three, pp. 56-64; Chapter Five, pp. 130-134; Chapter Eight, pp. 199-201; and Chapter Twelve, pp. 290-302.

community. The Christian people are meant to be a community and not merely a functional organization. A genuine Christian communal life built on scriptural social principles involves personal relationships of authority and subordination. Secondly, there should be male leadership in social groupings. Many men are eager to assume roles of functional leadership such as those found in politics and business, but most men are reluctant to assume responsibility for the life of social groups. Nonetheless, among the Christian people, men should be the overall heads or elders of the community and the family. This does not mean that all women are subordinate to all men. Rather it means that government in the basic groupings of Christian life—the family and the community—is normally entrusted to a man. Thirdly, there should be female roles of leadership and government corresponding to the male roles and subordinate to them. The wife should be the second head of the family. Women should have leadership roles in the community under the direction of the overall heads, as is developed in the next guideline.

The type of subordination and government of the Christian people proposed here does not necessarily involve an obedience relationship covering all of a person's life (except in the family) nor a directive counseling relationship. But it does involve a personal relationship between a head and those the head is caring for which allows the head to form those who need formation, to encourage what is right and correct what is wrong, and to give directions as appropriate. Relationships of personal subordination among the Christian people are built upon a personal love and loyalty between brothers and sisters in Christ or between members of the same family. These relationships are, in fact, a subordination to the community itself, as represented by the elders, and to the family, as represented by the parents, especially the father.

7. *The role of “deaconess” and other female leadership roles should be restored in the Christian community.**

The deaconess was a position in the early church and probably in the New Testament church which supplemented the male headship in the community with female pastoral assistance. This office corresponds to a great need in modern Christian communities, a need which is perhaps even

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* On female leadership roles in the Christian community, see Chapter Four, pp. 97–101; Chapter Five, pp. 114–124, 134–139; Chapter Seven, pp. 189–190; and Chapter Seventeen, pp. 423–425.

stronger now than in the past. A system for raising people in the Lord in which men care for men and women for women (guideline 4) in itself creates a need for mature Christian women who can work alongside the male leaders of the community and who can watch over those aspects of community life primarily entrusted to the women. The heads of the community also need the advice of capable female leaders when they are making important decisions.

A modern Christian community existing within a technological society has an especially great need for visible female leadership that is respected and honored. Often such a system must be consciously developed, because most modern societies lack an operative clan system with an order of authority and honor among the women that can be put to Christian use. Also, as has been noted, modern society normally devalues the responsibilities and tasks that are part of the woman's role. This disrespect for the female role can be countered in the Christian community by a female leadership position which receives special honor and respect. The type of honor given to male and female leaders should differ so as to express the difference and complementarity of role among men and women, but there should be positions of honor for women as well as for men. The honor shown to female leaders will help to establish the value of the woman's role in the community.

The deaconesses and other female leaders should not constitute a second network of government acting independently of the male elders. Rather, they should work under the elders as an extension of their care for the community, taking a complementary responsibility. The same principle which leads to the restoration of the deaconess or of some equivalent should also serve as a basic principle for structuring the entire Christian community. Where male government exists in a community containing both men and women, there normally should be some form of female leadership that takes a complementary role. A contemporary Christian community needs strong, competent women to share responsibility with strong, competent men.

The role of deaconess in the sense in which it is discussed here can only be restored fully in the context of Christian communal relationships. Since modern churches often function as religious service institutions, this guideline is not the same as proposing a restoration of the office of deaconess in such churches as they currently exist. The question of female leadership in such churches is not addressed in these guidelines. To satisfy

the needs visualized in this guideline, the position of deaconess must be set within a structure of communal personal relationships.

8. *There should be cultural expressions of role differences for men and women.**

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A study of scripture and anthropology leads to the conclusion that men and women need to have definite cultural expressions for their role differences. They need a way of expressing, often in symbolic form, their manhood and womanhood. Cultural expressions are important because they constitute the language used by individual human beings to act out and communicate their roles to others and to themselves. Thus they help establish a man's or a woman's personal identity. Most traditional cultures are rich in such gestures and customs, but technological society has lost much of this richness. For men's and women's roles to succeed fully in strengthening the lives of men and women and the life of the Christian community, some of these cultural expressions must be restored.

Modern society tends to deprecate cultural modes of expression such as ritual, ceremony, and formal signs of affection and respect because they appear "arbitrary." Of course, each individual cultural expression, like all symbols, is arbitrary, but the existence of some cultural expression is not arbitrary. It is humanly essential. The meaning of a cultural expression may be determined by tradition rather than by the rationally calculated requirements of the situation. But in language, art, and other matters of cultural expression, much of the symbol's effectiveness in strengthening a community derives from the community's tradition. To reject a language because the meaning assigned to each sound is arbitrary misses the point. All languages are arbitrary, and there is no workable substitute for a common set of meanings passed on by a human tradition.

Likewise, people in modern society can often deprecate cultural expressions as "inauthentic." This objection also ignores an important human truth. If each individual or grouping is expected to develop independently an "authentic" and rich system of symbolic expression, then such systems will never come to be. Instead, human life will be gradually impoverished of its means of expression, and the human realities that need regular

* On cultural expressions of role differences, see Chapter Seven, pp. 174–176, 192; Chapter Nine, pp. 214–215; Chapter Eleven, pp. 277–279, 283–284; Chapter Seventeen, pp. 424–425; and Chapter Eighteen, pp. 508–509.

expression will be left unprovided for. Cultural expressions are shared meanings, not unique creations.

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Cultural expressions of role differences between men and women need to exist. There should be signs of respect and honor shown differently to men and to women. There should be a variety of customs in which men and women play different parts. As much as possible, these customs should be congruent with the realities they express. They should be related as directly as possible to the meaning of the role differences. Nonetheless, there will always be an element of functional arbitrariness to most of the particular cultural expressions. In order to develop a rich system of cultural expression for the roles of men and women, most groups of modern Christians will have to penetrate beyond what many will experience as the functional arbitrariness of the different expressions until they reach the point of understanding the underlying human values being expressed. At that point they will understand experientially how essential are cultural expressions to the restoration of men's and women's roles and a Christian social structure.

Adapting to Technological Society

THE teaching of scripture on men's and women's roles can be applied to modern technological society, but not by overlooking the differences between modern and biblical social conditions. If the scriptural teaching is to actually achieve its purpose of strengthening the Christian people, it must take certain forms which adequately address the special needs of technological society.

One simple example of the need for adaptation of Christian life to contemporary society is the modern practice of scheduling. There is no indication from the scripture or from the records of the early church that the early Christians scheduled their time very closely. Family life and community life in traditional societies never required much concern for scheduling apart from the natural rhythms of the days and seasons. However, people in technological society who lack scheduling wisdom for daily life and work will encounter many problems. In similar fashion, a modern Christian community must make other innovations if it is to adapt the social patterns of the early church to the novel circumstances of technological society so that these patterns might actually serve and strengthen the Christian people. The following two guidelines are given for this purpose.

9. *A Christian community in technological society should have more fraternal and sororal groupings and structures than Christian communities of the past.**

There is a greater need in modern Christian communities for same-sex groupings of men and women organized along peer lines. Though these groupings should bring together married men or married women of a similar age and position in life, they will be even more significant in providing support for single men, single women, and children.

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The Christian community has always needed fraternal and sororal structures built along peer lines rather than family lines. Peer relationships, like other personal relationships, were at one time a normal part of the daily work life of men and women, although they were not as severely limited in age-span as they normally are in a technological society. They were not the predominant type of relationship, but they had a place in the life of the people. However, the social conditions of technological society increase the need for sororal and fraternal groupings in the Christian community and probably require more peer groupings within comparable age ranges. Today, there are many more older single people who cannot be cared for by families. There are also many more younger single people whose families are not in the Christian community or who need a supportive grouping to supplement their family life. Christian peer groups are also needed to help children and young people to resist the peer-group pressure exerted by the surrounding society. Such groupings are needed by people living a celibate life within the Christian community, and by married men and married women who would otherwise be isolated within the nuclear family and/or the functionalized business world. Fraternal and sororal groupings have always been needed in the Christian community, but they are needed especially in technological society.

Although the modern Christian community needs special peer groupings, they should not become the primary structural units of the community. The primary unit of the Christian community should always be the family. Moreover, these fraternal and sororal groupings should be ordered in such a way that they strengthen the basic lines of men's and women's roles in the community. They should therefore primarily be organized according to sex (either all-men or all-women), although there should be mutual support and social interaction between the groups. An envi-

* On male groups and female groups, see Chapter Thirteen, pp. 314–316; Chapter Seventeen, pp. 434–439; Chapter Eighteen, pp. 514–518; Chapter Twenty-Three, pp. 657–660, 664.

ronment for younger people in the Christian community that includes both men and women is helpful, but it must always be secondary to the same-sex peer groupings.

Guidelines
for a Modern
Christian
Approach

10. *A Christian community in technological society should have more interaction between men and women than exists in most traditional societies.**

In most traditional societies, interaction between men and women is significantly less than in technological society. It is difficult to estimate the amount of interaction between men and women in the church of the New Testament, but it was undoubtedly closer to the traditional model than to a modern model. In a Christian community in technological society, however, more interaction between men and women seems necessary.

In most traditional societies, men associate mainly with other men and women associate mainly with other women. This pattern of association in the community is reinforced by customs of separation between single men and women (for sexual reasons), a firm division of male and female spheres of responsibility, and a system of formation and initiation in which men raise the boys and women raise the girls. Moreover, in the family and other settings where men and women are together, communication is often kept to a minimum. For example, the rabbis in the time of Jesus thought that men should speak to their wives as little as possible. While such practices vary, almost all primitive and traditional societies place little emphasis on husband-wife communication. Because traditional societies change so slowly and have roles and responsibilities so well defined, such communication is not often experienced as essential even to the practical maintenance of the household life. Also, husbands and wives can maintain a personal and spiritual communion simply through sharing a common life in the same household and living as part of the same people. Extensive communication is not usually necessary in traditional societies for fulfilling this need.

Such limited interaction between men and women may be workable within the social context of primitive and traditional societies, but it cannot be transferred to technological society without considerable modification. Many of the customs which reinforced a distance between men and women have dissolved. It is becoming more and more common for

* On male-female interaction, see Chapter Seventeen, pp. 434–439; Chapter Twenty-Three, pp. 666–669; and the preceding guideline.

men and women to be educated together, to work together on the same jobs, and to associate informally in friendship groupings. The Christian community needs to adapt to this social change. A Christian community should still retain some simple rules of distance between the sexes, and the primary relationships of formation and service should mainly place men with men and women with women. However, there must be sufficient opportunity for interaction between men and women. The men and women in the Christian community need to learn how to relate to one another as brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Adapting to
Technological
Society

Similarly, husbands and wives must communicate more extensively in technological society than in traditional societies. Few aspects of childrearing and the practical maintenance of household life can be taken for granted in rapidly changing technological societies. More things need to be talked over and agreed upon. A husband cannot take responsibility for his household without receiving much input and advice from his wife. Moreover, life in technological society changes so quickly that marriage partners who do not communicate personally with one another can soon find themselves living in different worlds. They may sleep under the same roof, but it is difficult for them to share a fully common life without effective communication. The spiritual and emotional communion that once came mainly from sharing a common life and belonging to the same people must now be strengthened in other ways. Therefore, husbands and wives need to communicate with one another regularly and with wisdom. In addition, such regular communication should also occur among the male and female leaders of the community. Leaders in a modern Christian community must be involved in more kinds of decision-making than in communities of the past, and, in that decision-making, women's perspectives on important decisions need to be heard and taken into account.

Relating Outside of Christian Community

ALL of the guidelines to this point have been directed toward establishing a Christian social system in the modern world which is faithful to traditional Christian teaching. Some elements of these guidelines, especially the ones concerning division of labor, cultural expression, and subordination, can apply outside of a Christian community with a social structure of its own, but even these elements can only be fully embodied in a comprehensive social system. This raises a serious question: How should Christians

living outside of a Christian community apply the teaching on men's and women's roles? Behind this question is an even more fundamental issue: How should Christians, whether living in community or not, apply this teaching in settings which operate according to principles other than those assumed in the present chapter? In other words, how should Christians relate to the culture of the society around them? The following guidelines will provide some initial answers to these questions.

- II. *Christians should apply the scriptural teaching on men's and women's roles to Christian situations outside of Christian community to the degree that such application would be practical and helpful.**

Most Christians find themselves in various environments which include Christians but which are not Christian communities as the term is used here. They are then faced with the challenge of applying the traditional Christian teaching on men's and women's roles to these environments. This question is especially pressing for Christian families that are not part of a Christian community, for Christian churches with limited communal relationships, and also in connection with businesses operated by Christians. Should the traditional Christian teaching on men's and women's roles be applied rigidly and firmly in these situations, or discarded as irrelevant to the new social circumstances? How should one deal with other Christians in these environments who refuse to accept this teaching?

Three principles of application are very helpful in facing these questions. First, Christians should recognize the great value and importance of a full Christian approach to men's and women's roles. This approach is founded upon truths about human nature and human relationships. These truths remain truths even though they are often forgotten in technological society. The more that a full Christian approach can be preserved, the better. Moreover, this teaching on men's and women's roles is not only sound human wisdom, but also a pattern derived from scripture and Christian tradition. The entire question is a matter of obedience to the Lord. The more faithful the Christian, the more that Christian will want to work to mold daily life in accordance with God's teaching.

The second principle could be stated in a form borrowed from Jesus' comments about the Sabbath in Mark 2:27: "men's and women's roles were made for people, and not people for men's and women's roles." Christians

* On applying the Christian teaching outside of Christian community, see Chapter Five, pp. 125-130; Chapter Fifteen, pp. 374-375; and Chapter Twenty-One, pp. 593-594.

should attempt to be faithful to the scriptural teaching, but this faithfulness should impart life, and not lock Christians into a rigid and ineffective mold. The traditional Christian teaching on men's and women's roles is an ideal of life that should be implemented as far as possible; it is not a law which brings final condemnation if disobeyed. If Christians apply the teaching flexibly and sensitively, it will usually produce benefits, since the teaching is built upon human and spiritual truths. On the other hand, a rigid application of this teaching can sometimes cause more problems than it solves. The key rule is this: all things should be done for edification (1 Cor 14:26). The traditional Christian teaching on men's and women's roles should be applied in a constructive fashion. Though a full application of this teaching is ideal, specific circumstances may make such an application impractical and ineffective.

Relating
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Third, situations should be evaluated in accordance with two main criteria to measure their fitness for a fuller application of the scriptural teaching on men's and women's roles. First, the more the situation is formed on personal relationships rather than functional relationships, the more the scriptural teaching can be applied. Christian families and many Christian churches are therefore likely places to attempt to apply the scriptural teaching on men's and women's roles. Secondly, the more the Christians in the situation accept the teaching, the more readily it can be applied. Christians within a family or a church often disagree over fundamental aspects of men's and women's roles. Such disagreement means that the teaching should be applied with greater flexibility. These two criteria are helpful, but a sound judgment based on the criteria will also demand Christian wisdom and the leading of the Spirit.

Sound judgment is especially needed for applying the scriptural teaching in functional environments which are staffed by Christians and organized for Christian purposes. Christians frequently decide to set up a modern business for Christian purposes or a hospital or counseling service that operates both on a Christian basis and also according to contemporary professional standards and procedures. In these settings it is essential to follow the norms of modern technological society. For example, positions will be filled with greater concern for functional competence and less concern for social role considerations. Nonetheless, Christian social roles can be a useful element even in this type of organization, especially if the environment allows for the development of Christian personal relationships among the workers. Some managerial positions in such organizations resemble the position of elder; they could be entrusted to men

for pastoral reasons beyond the criteria of functional competence. Some managerial positions resemble the role of “deaconess” and could likewise be entrusted to women. In addition, some tasks in a functional organization are more manly and others more womanly according to a Christian role definition, although this judgment is often difficult to make in a strictly functional situation. A Christian functional organization cannot apply all of the scriptural teaching on men’s and women’s roles, but some elements of this teaching can probably be applied successfully.

12. *In non-Christian settings, Christians should accept the prevailing order and customs of the situation as much as possible and not be obligated to press for the Christian view of men’s and women’s roles.**

The scriptural ideal for men’s and women’s roles accounts for basic human realities, and it is therefore potentially applicable to all people and not just Christians. Nonetheless, to its own detriment, modern non-Christian society tends to reject the traditional Christian teaching on men’s and women’s roles. In order to respond properly to this situation, Christians must first understand that they are a body of resident aliens in modern society. The basic perspectives of modern society on social structure are not provided by the Christian people nor built upon scriptural or traditional Christian authority. Thus Christians are not in a position to insist on the traditional Christian teaching regarding men’s and women’s roles, even though this teaching may represent the best human approach available.

From the very beginning of Christian history, Christians have had to accept social principles in their surroundings that fall short of the Christian ideal. The Roman government dictated to its subjects how they were expected to relate to the government, and the Christians accepted those principles—up to the point where acceptance involved transgression of the Lord’s commandments. Likewise, Christians in modern non-Christian social situations have to accept many of the governing principles, though they are less than ideal. This is especially true in functional non-Christian groupings. For example, Christians should feel free to participate on a secular committee according to the rules of that committee, without urging that a man should preside over it.

* On relating to a non-Christian social order, see Chapter Two, pp. 38–3; Chapter Four, pp. 90–91; Chapter Nine, pp. 218–221; Chapter Ten, p. 258; Chapter Nineteen, pp. 536–553; and Chapter Twenty, pp. 558–564, 579–584.

There are two main reasons for relating flexibly to functional non-Christian groupings. First, since the grouping is non-Christian, many issues of far greater seriousness than men's and women's roles will probably arise. For example, a Christian on a secular committee may face a situation in which the commandment to love is violated and in which political power maneuvers are the standard procedures for getting a program accepted. With such significant issues to confront, Christians should not hold out for a traditional Christian ideal which is important, but less important than observing the commandments. Secondly, it is not clear how much the New Testament teaching on men's and women's roles should apply to functional situations. This teaching is primarily designed to order communal personal relationships. It does not necessarily apply to situations that are organized along functional lines. In short, Christians cannot adhere to the scriptural ideal for personal relationships in all their dealings with non-Christians. They should know what the Lord clearly forbids, but they must often simply do the best thing possible according to the principles of the situation in which they find themselves. Christians should realize that modern society is different from a Christian community; it is neither Christian nor a community. Once they accept this view, there is no necessary reason for objecting to a woman president or prime minister—at least from the point of view of Christian principles.

Relating
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Christian
Community

One special case that deserves attention is the situation where a wife feels obligated to follow the scriptural teaching on the roles of men and women, but her husband does not wish to. 1 Peter 3:1–6 teaches that Christian women should be submissive even to husbands who are not Christian, both because submission is right for them (in fulfilling their role as wife) and because by so doing they can win their husbands. However, it is quite common in the modern world for Christian wives to attempt to be submissive to husbands who want no part of wifely submission (or more normally, want no part of the responsibilities of husbandly headship). In such cases, it would be somewhat incongruous for the submissive wife to insist that her unwilling husband be the head of the family. Instead, she should attempt to please her husband, though this will probably lead her to do certain things which might not conform to the ideal Christian model of the womanly role and wifely submission. She should attempt to be as submissive as possible in the scriptural sense, but she will have to maintain some flexibility in order to meet her husband's expectations.

Two general principles can guide Christians in their attempts to apply

the traditional Christian teaching on men's and women's roles to modern non-Christian society. First, Christians should accept the principles of men's and women's roles observed in non-Christian situations as long as they themselves do not have to break God's commandments. They should accept such principles, not as ideal, but as a practical necessity. Therefore, Christians could possibly accept the blurring of sexual distinctions in the curriculum of public secondary schools, but refuse to accept advocacy of immoral sexual relations or the practice of men dressing like women and women like men. To remain in the world involves putting up with ways of life that are not Christian. The blurring of men's and women's roles is one of the less serious things that modern Christians have to put up with.

Secondly, in general, Christians are not obligated to press or argue for the adoption in society of the Christian view of men's and women's roles. This does not mean that Christians should avoid speaking to others about men's and women's roles at appropriate times, or that Christians should avoid attempting to develop a Christian approach to public policy questions related to men's and women's roles. It simply means that Christians are not obligated to propagate a particular view of men's and women's roles because of their Christian commitment. Non-Christian society as a whole needs many things of greater importance and priority than the traditional Christian approach to men's and women's roles, the gospel itself taking first place. The good news is not primarily good news about the restoration of men's and women's roles. It is primarily good news about salvation in Jesus Christ. To be sure, one of the greatest benefits of Christianity is the better life that comes from following the teaching of the Lord. Christians can share about this better life as it comes through a restoration of men's and women's roles when such a sharing would be helpful. However, in the polemical atmosphere of modern society, discussions of men's and women's roles are often more of an obstacle to evangelism than a help to it. It is wiser to keep the focus on the Lord himself.

The question underlying all of these challenging issues is whether the Lord wants his people living in the midst of the world. There are many reasons for believing that this is indeed the Lord's desire for his people; the paramount reason is the Lord's desire to draw the men and women of modern society to himself. If Christians are supposed to live in the midst of the modern non-Christian world, they need to see themselves as resident aliens, accepting and living in a social structure that is not established according to the Lord's plan—without, however, compromising on essential principles of Christian life.

13. *Each attempt to apply the scriptural teaching on men's and women's roles, inside or outside the Christian community, should be guided by local cultural considerations.**

The formation of an effective pattern of men's and women's roles in the Christian community or Christian family should be determined primarily by the scriptural teaching as adapted to the circumstances of the modern world. However, this teaching also can and should be adapted as much as possible to the cultural surroundings of each particular group of Christians. The expression of the scriptural teaching will be different among Chinese Christians, Mexican Christians, and Dutch Christians.

Relating
Outside of
Christian
Community

There are two main areas where adaptation is possible. First, Christians should attempt to draw their cultural expressions of the differences between men's and women's roles from the society which surrounds them. They should use the culture's customs in such areas as differences in clothing, hairstyle, and expressions of respect. Sometimes this need for adaptation places Christians in a difficult situation. For example, the recent trends toward unisex clothing and hairstyles in Western societies militate against the basic principles of a Christian approach to men's and women's roles. Also, with changes in sexual customs, Western Christians often seem forced to wear clothes which in past times would have been considered suggestive or immodest. However, in order to adapt to the surrounding culture, modern Christian men and women often need to wear clothing and hairstyles that are not ideal from a Christian viewpoint. Christians should wear clothes and hairstyles that manifest distinct roles and sexual modesty as much as possible, but their dress should not be clearly outmoded and socially unacceptable unless they are forced to appear this way for moral reasons.

The second area where cultural adaptation is possible is in secondary elements of social structure. For example, the customary division of labor between men and women differs from country to country. Some chores ascribed to men in one place may be ascribed to women in another place. In such matters, a Christian family or community should ordinarily conform to the dominant approach of their culture. Similarly, different cultures approach courtship and marriage differently, and have different systems of kinship and residence. Though adaptation in such matters of social structure is unacceptable past a certain point, Christians have a considerable

* On local considerations, see Chapter Ten, p. 258; and Chapter Eleven, pp. 283-284; Chapter Twenty, pp. 583-584.

amount of latitude within which they can adapt the traditional Christian teaching to the local culture.

At the same time, Christians should be free to supplement the expressions and structures of their local culture when that culture is impoverished. For example, much of American culture has lost an effective way of expressing honor and respect. In this case, American Christians must search elsewhere for ways to express these aspects of personal relationships. In short, Christians should select customs that will fit best within their cultural milieu, but they should not merely conform to the inadequacies of this milieu.

Guidelines
for a Modern
Christian
Approach

The Feasibility of a Christian Restoration of Men's and Women's Roles

THE aim of most of the preceding guidelines has been the establishment or restoration of a Christian social structure within which the scriptural teaching on men's and women's roles can be lived. One reasonable response to these guidelines is the question: Is this approach really feasible? Though it is admittedly very difficult to restore a fabric of Christian social relationships in a contemporary technological society, it is still possible in most places. However, another way of raising the question reveals the heart of the issue: How long can Christians in contemporary society continue to survive with any genuine faithfulness to Christian teaching if they do not create a new social structure? The trend among many Christians is to modify Christian teaching whenever it conflicts with contemporary society and to reinterpret the scripture so that the growing gap between scriptural teaching and contemporary Christian living is not overly painful. How far can this go? Would it not be more honest to simply discard Christianity as unlivable? Moreover, the pressures of contemporary society not only persuade Christians to modify Christian teaching, but they also gradually erode in them the desire to be Christians in any sense. The weaker forms of Christianity are fading away as Christians with weaker commitments drop away. Christianity in contemporary society will need to draw from people a higher commitment to the Lord and to the Christian community if it is to survive at all. The crucial issue is not whether the restoration of a Christian social structure is feasible. The issue is whether any Christianity is feasible without a restoration of a genuine Christian social structure.

SPECIAL ISSUES IN CONSTRUCTING A
MODERN CHRISTIAN SOCIAL STRUCTURE

ESTABLISHING A SUCCESSFUL CHRISTIAN APPROACH to the roles of men and women in today's world is no small order. The two preceding chapters presented a brief sketch of what this might entail. Actually putting the theory into practice, however, is not easily done. The contemporary social system presents special challenges to the development of a distinctively Christian social structure among the people of God. Many of the burning social issues in the Western world today must be answered by Christians as a Christian social order is being established. What should family life look like? What is the ideal for relationships between men and women? How should communal leadership be structured?

It is crucial for Christians in modern Western society to learn how to handle certain key areas of social structure well, and to develop an effective pastoral strategy for each of them. This chapter will consider five such areas, discussing where some of the important issues lie and recommending a strategy for developing each area in a strong Christian way. The areas include (1) strengthening family life; (2) developing a contemporary approach to Christian leadership; (3) strengthening manly and womanly personality; (4) developing good relationships between men and women; and (5) developing an approach to roles for men and women among single people.

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Strengthening Family Life*

Special Issues
in Constructing
a Modern
Christian
Social Structure

THE concern of this first section is one of immense importance for restoring and strengthening a Christian social structure. Because the family is the basic unit of most social structure, its strength is a decisive factor in the strength of the whole people, while its weakness leads to societal weakness, as well as to weakness in the individuals within that society. A Christian group that cannot establish good, strong families will not survive very long. Yet today, Christians are struggling merely to keep the family together on a human level. Many seem to have given up some time ago actually trying to keep family life Christian. Much of the weakness in the contemporary churches has to be attributed to the recent inability of families to pass on their Christian life from one generation to the next. Likewise, many of the social and psychological difficulties that so many people experience can be traced to problems in the family.

Some Christian leaders have recognized this weakening process and have realized more clearly that a concerted effort is needed to strengthen family life as a whole. Perhaps the most vital attempt in the church today to strengthen family life can be found in the various programs which center their strategies around strengthening the husband-wife relationship in the nuclear family. This approach, which could be termed the “Christian nuclear family approach,” takes a variety of forms. Generally, couples are encouraged to spend time together, both socially and in various other activities. A strong emphasis is normally placed on husband-wife friendship, especially the kind of husband-wife friendship that involves a strong emotional dependence upon one another. Often a strong emphasis is also placed on the view that husbands and wives should do all of their Christian service together. In fact, it is sometimes suggested that couples should do everything possible together except for strictly occupational matters. The husband and wife should always socialize together as a couple and should probably even do chores together around the house. Along with these practical suggestions comes a strong teaching on marriage that tends to exalt and romanticize “marriage” (which usually means only the husband-wife

* For background and substantiation of this section, see the relevant material throughout Chapters Three, Four, and Twelve. Also see Chapter Eighteen, pp. 502–510, and Chapter Twenty-Two, pp. 617–618. For more detailed practical advice on supporting Christian family life in technological society, see Ralph Martin, *Husbands, Wives, Parents, Children* (Ann Arbor: Servant, 1978). Martin’s basic perspective is the same as that of the present volume.

relationship). This teaching sometimes views the man-woman relationship as the deepest of all relationships, and scriptural texts are regularly interpreted in a way that tends to understand “one flesh” and all of the New Testament teaching on marriage as exalting husband-wife companionship. In Catholic settings, this teaching is often given in the context of considering marriage as a sacrament, and versions of such teaching often develop a sacramental parallelism with baptism and the eucharist which spiritualizes erotic love (and sometimes specifically the sexual relationship) as a source of grace.

Strengthening
Family Life

One could summarize this approach to strengthening marriage as being an approach that uses Christian words and church authority to strengthen the nuclear family design of modern society. And there is a good reason to concentrate on strengthening the nuclear family. The nuclear family design is the approach of modern technological society, and few people are ready to think that there are any real alternatives. The “Christian nuclear family approach” begins by locating the main structural lines of the modern nuclear family: It finds the husband-wife relationship to be the only stable element with enough commitment to allow anything to be built upon it, and it recognizes emotional attachment as the main bond in the modern husband-wife relationship. Having located these structural elements, this approach intensifies them in order to make them strong enough to withstand all the societal pressures that tend to weaken and dissolve the family. In the face of the increasing dissolution of family life, the “Christian nuclear family approach” is, in many cases, better than nothing. However, it carries with it significant problems of the sort which indicate that it is not an adequate solution. The fact that it interprets the scriptures and Christian teaching in a way that betrays an overall misunderstanding of what the New Testament says is only a symptom of an even deeper problem. The “Christian nuclear family approach” simply reproduces (and often intensifies) many of the problems and weaknesses of the family system in contemporary society.

The “Christian nuclear family approach” lacks the main elements needed to strengthen family life, namely, those same social structural elements that are so drastically weakened in the modern world. Rather than emphasizing these crucial elements, it tends to focus, as was noted above, upon the husband-wife relationship and upon its emotional bond. The emphasis it places on the married couple further isolates the nuclear family from the other supports which are so crucial to maintaining a good social structure (for example, larger social units, such as the extended family or

the community, which transcend the generations). The emphasis on the emotional bond between the husband and the wife puts the weight of the relationship on the least reliable bond—the emotional bond—and neglects the more important bonds formed by commitment and subordination. As a result, the couple often fails to learn the kind of commitment and personal subordination that would move them away from a basic individualism (which allows commitment only when the individuals are being satisfied in their desires) to a corporate approach to community and marriage.

The heavy emphasis on always having the married couple together tends to “feminize” the men, both in their personality traits and in their ability to take a concern for the larger society. The emphasis on the couple also makes it difficult to form a social unit which the children can be fully part of, especially after they have passed the age when they are so dependent that they are cared for devotedly by their parents. In short, the “Christian nuclear family approach,” while it has some immediate short-range benefits, also presents some major long-range liabilities. As a result, it is highly questionable whether its advantages outweigh its disadvantages.

A successful approach to strengthening the family must involve a strengthening of the entire social structure which makes up the family. This strengthening must begin with the family’s functions. If the family as a unit is to be stable, and strong enough to command commitment, the functions of family life must be restored. For one thing, the family has to be the unit within which the children are raised. The raising of children involves more from the parents than caring for them during their pre-school years and merely watching over their future rearing (most of which is done by others). The parents must actually enter into a relationship with their children, a relationship in which they raise the children to become adult Christian men and women. Furthermore, the home should be a place in which many other things happen. It should, for instance, be a center of Christian life and service, of hospitality, and of care for the needy. These changes—restoring the role of the parents in raising their children, and restoring the home as a center of Christian life and service—are key elements in the restoration of a vital set of functions to the family.

Secondly, important structural elements of family life—such as subordination, commitment, and complementary roles for men and women—must be restored in order to strengthen family relationships. These elements must be restored in an effective way, however, or they will fail to bring the strength needed for family life. The “Christian nuclear family

* For a description and discussion of this term adopted from the social science literature, see below, pp. 654–655.

approach” tends to give husband and wife identical roles and has them do many things together and hence works against some of these essential elements. Advocates of such strategies often speak of the importance of man-woman complementarity, but in such a relationship husband-wife “complementarity” comes to mean one of two things: (1) the interaction of the different personalities and gifts of the husband and wife (the same kind of complementarity that could exist between two men or two women, or that could exist in a functional situation), or (2) the interaction of the male personality and the female personality which occurs when the two are doing the same things together. This latter approach to complementarity tends to strengthen the emotional dependence between the man and woman in marriage, but weakens the true interdependence, because each is not depending upon the other to take the primary responsibility for different aspects of their common life. If the man is not there, the woman can do everything just as well, and vice versa. On the other hand, “complementarity” in the early Christian pattern (and in most, if not all, human societies of the past) meant that the husband and wife had different spheres of responsibility which they fulfilled separately, but with the woman subordinate to the man. This type of complementarity is one which greatly strengthens family life.

Strengthening
Family Life

Finally, in strengthening the social structure of family life, the modern competition between the nuclear family and the broader Christian community must be broken, and the nuclear family must be placed within a larger social context that supports, rather than opposes, the family and its relationships. The “Christian nuclear family approach,” in reinforcing that competition, poses a major obstacle to what is most needed for strengthening family life. The larger Christian social system is just as crucial as the smaller family unit when it comes to strengthening family life. Along these same lines, the men of the Christian community should take responsibility for community life. They should, however, assume this broader responsibility in a way that strengthens the family. They need to act as the representatives—the heads—of their families, overseeing their families’ involvement in the wider community and representing their families’ needs to the wider community. In some significant way they need to bring their sons with them so that their sons can be trained as Christian men and are not separated from their fathers. The men need to experience their responsibility as heads of their families so that they can be attentive to the real needs of their families. In short, the role of the men is the main structural link between the smaller unit of the family and the larger unit of the community. Simultaneously restoring the men’s sense of responsibility

for both family and community is a key piece in the strengthening of family life, both internally and in its relationship to a larger social grouping.

Special Issues
in Constructing
a Modern
Christian
Social Structure

The previous chapter outlined some principles for the development of a Christian social structure in contemporary society. However, applying many of these principles and developing a whole social system need to be done within the context of some larger Christian communal grouping—a context not enjoyed by most Christians in the modern world. Instead, most Christians today are forced to deal with their situation within the limits set by modern technological society. Even if a communal grouping is lacking, however, there is still one place where Christians have a chance of doing something effective. That place is family life. Even granted that family life will continue to weaken under the influence of technological society, it is there that Christians can fight the most effective rear-guard action until they are actually able to develop a new social approach. Also, it is often in the family that the most Christian support remains, both because relatives are often of help and because younger couples in Christian parishes and congregations are among those who are most highly motivated to support one another.

Strengthening family life, then, is a key step toward the restoration of Christian social structure. It must be pursued with clarity of purpose and vision: No piecemeal, “band-aid” measures will do. Neither will it suffice to achieve some short-range gains at the expense of long-range losses. Christians today should value and foster those elements of genuine social structure that remain among them, and at the same time develop as much as possible other important elements which have been lost. They should also avoid attempts like the “Christian nuclear family approach” which appear to offer immediate improvements, but whose longer-range value is highly dubious. In doing these things, Christians will develop a stronger family life and, as a consequence, a greater overall strength as a people.

Structures of Christian Leadership*

THE pastoral approach sketched in Chapter Twenty-Two draws the elders (heads) of the Christian community from among the qualified men. This approach is primarily based upon the directives in scripture and tradition, but it is confirmed by the social scientific research material noted

* For background to this section, see especially Chapters Five, Thirteen, and Seventeen. See also Chapter Eighteen, pp. 495–496; Chapter Twenty-One, pp. 600–604; and Chapter Twenty-Two, pp. 622–625.

in Chapter Seventeen. In the church today, however, the roles of men and women in leadership is a much-debated subject, and many Christians seem somewhat more inclined to preserve the headship of the man in the family than to preserve the headship of men in the community. Even if the husband should be the head of the family, they ask, why should there be no women among the elders of the community? In order to adequately understand how to resolve questions of sex roles in leadership within the Christian community, two different sets of considerations should be examined: leadership considerations and social role considerations.

Structures
of Christian
Leadership

Leadership Structure Considerations

The understandings of leadership which people bring to this question can lead to some very different positions on the place of women in Christian leadership, even if there is general agreement on the roles of men and women. At least four models of leadership are often used by Christians, and the dynamics of each model are quite different:

1. *The functional approach.* In this model, the main leader or leaders are primarily administrators and policy setters. They are managers who need to get a job done. Both functional effectiveness and personal leadership qualities are requirements for such a position. The more functionally oriented the situation, the more the functional effectiveness requirements predominate and the more the basis for choosing leaders will simply be competence.
2. *The gift-functional approach.* The main leader or leaders are seen as representing certain "leadership charisms," that is, certain spiritual gifts needed in the leaders' group. The primary requirement for becoming a leader is competence in exercising one or more of these charisms. Under such an approach, if it is felt that the charism of prophecy needs to be represented in the leaders' group, and the person who seems to have that charism most is a woman, then this woman should be in the leaders' group, precisely because she seems to have such a strong prophetic charism. In many ways the gift-functional model of leadership is a spiritual version of the functional approach described above; here the competency requirement is spiritual rather than practical.
3. *The political representative approach.* The main leader or leaders are seen primarily in terms of how they set direction or mold the way things are done. They represent an interest group, a viewpoint, a

method, or even a style of doing things. Each leader's presence is important in the leadership, because together they will shape the outcome. The primary requirement for leadership according to this model concerns what a person represents. A second requirement is that he or she be able to represent it well.

Special Issues
in Constructing
a Modern
Christian
Social Structure

4. *The communal approach (the elder approach)*. The communal approach is significantly different from those described above. The main leader or leaders are the heads of a community. They are in a relationship with the people in the community that involves a personal commitment between them and the community they lead. They care for the people personally, directing and correcting them as necessary. The primary requirements for this kind of leadership are the qualities (both spiritual and natural) which lead the others in the relationship (those in the community) to respect the head in a personal way. Skills in leading groups and the exercise of specific charisms are important, but secondary, requirements. Also, in a real community, what a person represents is not a major requirement for consideration.

These four models differ considerably, but they are not necessarily in opposition to one another. Rather, in the appropriate situation each has its usefulness. If the leadership required is the kind which produces effectively in a task-oriented, technological situation, the first model has much to offer. If the leadership required is the kind which primarily involves ministry through the operation of spiritual gifts, the second model has some obvious advantages. If the leadership required is the kind in which a plurality of approaches and positions need to be reconciled, the third model has many things to recommend it. But if what is required is the kind of leadership which produces a community of people who are committed to one another in a lifelong way, the fourth model is the one to choose. Community leadership is very different from functional leadership, gift-functional leadership, and political representative leadership.

The early Christians took the communal approach, establishing elders who would be heads of the Christian community. Men were chosen as the elders for good reasons, not simply because it was a cultural tradition. First, the natural structure of leadership in a communal grouping puts overall leadership in the hands of certain men. In this natural structure, women exercise leadership too, but their leadership is subordinate to that of the overall male leaders. Secondly, some of the differences between men and women (discussed in Chapters Sixteen and Seventeen) indicate

that men are in a better position to provide the overall personal leadership needed in a community situation. The patterns that emerge in most societies (including modern Western society) would indicate that both men and women generally prefer leadership to be exercised by the qualified men in the group, especially when that leadership is exercised on the personal level. Evidence also indicates that there is a significant evangelistic advantage in having men who can lead effectively presiding over the Christian community. Much of the Christian church today experiences a serious inability to effectively draw men to Christ, largely because Christianity is often more identified with women than with men. Other men will tend to be more attracted to a community led by men.

Leadership
Structure
Considerations

Christians today are rarely in favor of having only women acting as the main leader or leaders of a Christian community. They are sometimes, however, in favor of a “mixed” elders group. In many cases a mixed elders group is favored because the model of leadership which is being adopted is not that of early Christian eldership. For instance, people frequently favor a mixed elders group because they conceive of the position of elder primarily in functional terms (the first approach above). In this view, the elder is the person who leads a committee, or who directs one of the major activities of the community, or who can teach a good course. With such a conception of elder, a mixed elders group might often make good sense. But the early Christians understood an elder primarily as one who governed the Christian people. Only secondarily was he also one who led special activities. Because of his primary role as governor of God’s people, an elder must be able to exercise authority over a segment of the Christian community that includes both men and women. He has to be capable of gaining the respect of, and of being over, the strongest men in the community. The position of elder in the early Christian approach is a position for men.

Another reason why Christians may favor a mixed elders group is that they conceive of the position of elder primarily in terms of the operation of certain charisms (the second approach described above). The elders are those with the strongest spiritual gifts in certain areas (prophecy, teaching, administration, discernment, etc.). According to this conception of elder, there is some real point to having a mixed elders group. For one thing, it is certainly true that elders need spiritual gifts in order to serve well. It is also the case that many women have strong spiritual gifts, some of which are gifts for leadership, given to them by God for the building of the body of Christ. Yet in the early Christian understanding, an elder was not chosen primarily on the basis of spiritual gifts, but on the basis of his character and

his ability to govern his family well (1 Tm 3:1–7; Ti 1:5–9). Spiritual gifts were not by any means irrelevant, but they were secondary to the qualities which would allow a man to take the kind of overall responsibility in the community that he took within his own family. Also, the early Christians clearly recognized the spiritual gifts exercised by the women in their communities. The issue, then, is not whether such gifts should be exercised on behalf of the community, but how in the life of the community they should be expressed. Women in the early Christian communities exercised a wide range of spiritual gifts, including the gifts associated with leadership, but they did not do so as elders.

Frequently Christians also favor a mixed elders group because they see the elders group as a place where all positions should be represented (as in the third approach described above). The women's voice has to be heard among the elders, and the women's influence has to be brought to bear. There is something to be said for this approach. Women are important in the leadership of a Christian community, and if they do not actively take part in it, many areas are not handled well and many important considerations are not taken into account. The issue, however, is not whether their voice should be heard, but how the overall leadership of men and women in the Christian community should be structured. The early church model involved some of the men leaders acting as the elders and taking headship as a group over the Christian community, while some of the women leaders functioned as deaconesses or widows, working along with, and subordinate to, the elders (or bishop). Christians today can often miss the significance of the early church model. For one thing, modern Christians tend to put the accent on the decision-making role of the elders and the need for some kind of input on that level from women. Yet in the early church, decision-making was a small part of the elders' role; their primary responsibility was the personal government of people. What decision-making they did normally occurred in the course of taking responsibility as heads for the people. The dynamics of modern society might indicate the need for more formal consultation or opportunity for input on the part of women (deaconesses?) to the decision-making process of the community than was present in the early church, but their participation should be structured in such a way that it does not weaken the ability of the elders to lead the people. Secondly, modern Christians tend to miss the importance of the change in dynamics that results when leadership is shifted from a group of men to a mixed group. As was noted in Chapter Seventeen, there is a natural linking which occurs between certain men in a community. This

linking allows the men to become a natural backbone for the formation of a strong communal structure. Also, and very importantly, they can come together as a team in a way that produces stronger, more aggressive leadership in a Christian community than would be the case if there were women among them. There is clearly a change in dynamics from a male-group to a mixed-group, and it is important to take that change in dynamics into account when forming any type of leadership team.* (Of course, in other situations, the desired dynamic will point toward forming a mixed group.)

Leadership
Structure
Considerations

Sometimes it is argued that since men and women are complementary, both are needed in the elders group of a community. Women are able to care for people in a way that men are not, and vice versa. Thus, it is argued, men simply cannot lead a community alone. There is some truth to this position. It is by no means the case that all the important leadership positions in a Christian community should be held by men. Again, the primary question at issue is how male leadership and female leadership are to be structured together. Complementarity between men and women is of great value, but it need not be expressed within the same position or role. The model of complementarity which leads to having a mixed elders group assumes that complementarity between men and women is best expressed as they perform the same functions in the same position (elder), but in a different way. The model of complementarity which can be seen in the early church, however, is quite different. In the early church model, complementarity in community leadership is expressed in two different and complementary leadership positions—elders and deaconesses/widows. The pattern for men and women in the community is similar to that for husband and wife in a family (see Chapter Twenty-Two, pp. 617–619). Rather than filling the same position in a different way, men and women take on complementary roles, serving in different, interdependent ways. This expression of complementarity most effectively and naturally allows the full strength of male leadership and female leadership to be realized. Their leadership works together interdependently, without adversely affecting the natural pattern of overall community leadership by the men.

Another consideration should be brought into the picture when considering complementarity between men and women. The differences between men and women are not such that one sex has certain abilities that the other does not have at all. Most of the female characteristics are to be found in men, and vice versa. In the case of ability differences, it is more a matter

* For background to this section, see Chapter Seventeen, pp. 434–437.

of which abilities or qualities predominate. The differences between men and women are more evident on the level of the structure of their personalities than on the level of ability differences or even trait characteristics (though these latter differences are not absent). If the differences were on the abilities level rather than on the personality level, it would not make sense to hold, on the one hand, that women should not be the elders, and to state at the same time that they should have an important role in the leadership of the Christian community. That is, if ability differences were the chief disqualification for women's eldership, those differences would probably also disqualify women from any other important leadership. The issue about eldership, however, is one of *personality* differences: In which sex are the personality characteristics structured in a way that better fits it for the overall headship of people in a community relationship? It is men who are formed in a way that fits them to more naturally and easily govern people and to move them forward as a community.

There is a further consideration which points toward the desirability of having the men be the elders of the Christian community—one that is more easily stated, and of greater importance than the preceding one. The structure of the leadership of a community is only one element in a community's overall social structure. Therefore, the structure of leadership has to be set up in a way that supports the entire social structure of the community. If the men are supposed to be the heads of the family, they must also be the heads of the community. The community must be structured in a way that supports the pattern of the family, and the family must be structured in a way that supports the pattern of the community. Men and women learn how to be men and women in the family. It is in the family that they learn their community roles as well. Conversely, what they see in the community reinforces what they learn in the family. Thus, to adopt different principles on the community level weakens the family, and vice versa.

Social Role Considerations

The preceding material has considered eldership in the community primarily from the standpoint of leadership and how leadership should be structured. A similar set of considerations concerning community eldership derives from the nature of social roles. Social roles, unlike functional roles, are not easily changed. Much of their value for the life of an individual and the life of a group comes from their stability and from the

communally understood nature of the way they function. If the roles of a Christian man and a Christian woman are to have strength and vitality, they should apply in all of a man's or woman's social relationships in the Christian community.

Sometimes people suggest that exceptions should be made to the approach outlined above. They will agree that in general it is better for men to be the heads of the community, but they also say that if a woman has special gifts or abilities, she should be chosen as an elder. It is important at times to make certain exceptions when the circumstances demand them, but it is a mistake to make exceptions to a pattern of social roles on the basis of judgments about particular individuals. Social roles are not formed on the basis of the characteristics of individuals. If social roles for men and women are to be reestablished, they cannot be modified in this way for particular men and particular women. To do so weakens the social role and its functioning in a community.

At the source of some of the contemporary pressure to have women elders in the Christian community is an under-evaluation of the woman's role in the community. In the modern world, the argument goes, women are as educated and technically competent as men. They need an appropriate outlet for their abilities, and a community would be throwing away its resources if it did not use those abilities to the full. Yet, according to the scriptural approach, the women's area of responsibility in a Christian community is as important as that of the men. It requires a very high level of ability and, especially in the modern world, demands a creative and competent exercise of responsibility. To give a very capable woman a man's responsibility on the basis of her abilities betrays a lack of appreciation for the importance of the woman's role and the woman's leadership in the community. Of course, it also commonly represents a situation where there is an absence of a real woman's role and where all the important functions actually are given to the men. If that is the case, however, the problem is due primarily to the lack of a well worked-out system of responsibility for men and for women. Women were created as they are because the human community needs them as they are, and needs them to take on certain responsibilities. Leadership ability is needed as much among the women as it is among the men.

Another source of pressure for having women elders today is the perception that a particular woman can sometimes be more capable than the man to whom she is supposed to be subordinate. It is certainly true that not every man can be over every woman. A capable woman with personal

strength and leadership ability is often more able to be a head than many of the men in a Christian community. Building a social structure along the principles this book has outlined does not mean that any man and any woman can be placed in complementary positions of headship and everything will work out well. An incompetent man should not be put in place of, or over, a competent woman. Only if the right men are chosen as elders will the social structure work well. If the elders are the right men, they should be able to be heads for the women who are in women's roles of leadership.

Once again, the approach sketched above can by no means be universally applied in contemporary Christian situations. The context for this discussion on the restoration of role differences for men and women has been the overall restoration of a system of Christian personal relationships in the modern world. The consideration of elders, then, occurs in a context of a community life of committed relationships, in which having elders is one element in a restoration of such relationships. Many Christian situations today, however, do not involve such commitment or relationship. Often they are unstructured and should remain so, or they are institutional situations and should remain so. The above discussion does not directly apply in such cases. In general, it can be said that this discussion points to elements which are important for the strength of the Christian people and which cannot be absent without a loss, but these elements often cannot be instituted well without also instituting a new approach to Christian personal relationships—one which differs considerably from the approach which normally prevails in technological society.

Male and Female Personality*

It is vitally important to restore a Christian social structure which is faithful to scripture and which will provide certain elements for people which the modern world fails to provide. Two key elements in this restoration are the strengthening of the Christian family structure and the reestablishing of a pattern of Christian community leadership. The social structure of a people is also very closely related to their personality and character: Social structure forms personality and character, and a particular kind of personality and character makes a social structure possible. Part of the program

* For background to this section, see Chapter Sixteen; Chapter Eighteen, pp. 502–510; and Chapter Twenty-Two, pp. 619–620.

of restoring a Christian social structure, then, must be the restoration of Christian masculine character and personality and Christian feminine character and personality.

Character formation is central to Christian pastoral care as well as to the formation of a Christian people. From the beginning, the Lord wanted a people formed in his image and likeness—a people who look like him. Every time he began a new stage of his work in restoring the human race, he called his people to be holy as he is holy (Lv 19:2; Mt 5:48; 1 Pt 1:13–17; Heb 12:10). Under the New Covenant, the ongoing work of redemption in people’s lives is spoken of as “restoring the image of God,” and that restoration is primarily understood as the formation of certain Christian traits, such as love, faithfulness, humility, and self-control (see, for example, Eph 4:1–3; Col 3:12–17). Christians, then, are to be formed in the image of God.

Male and
Female
Personality

Some people object to the idea of character formation on the grounds that people should be encouraged to assert their individuality. People should become what they want—if a man comes out more feminine than a woman, that is fine. However, the choice is not really between “formation” and “no formation.” Rather, it is between two different kinds of formation. Christians who do not receive active character formation do not simply express their individuality. Instead, they are formed (for the most part unconsciously) by the dominant social influences around them rather than by someone who has Christian wisdom about how people should be formed. The “feminized” male is not expressing the individuality with which he was created.* He is, rather, manifesting the fact that he was raised in an environment which feminized him.

* Perhaps the most influential of these views is found in the analytic psychology of Jung. Jungians argue that one ought to articulate the dimension of the opposite sex which is present in the personality as an archetypal image (*anima* for the males, *animus* for the females). Full personality development depends, they say, upon the full articulation of the archetypal elements of the unconscious.

It is certainly to be admitted that men and women typically exhibit traits which are present in a more pronounced way in members of the opposite sex. That these characteristics are the manifestation of an archetypal form resident in the collective unconscious is not supported by any direct evidence; indeed, it rests only upon the coherence of the entire Jungian theory of the unconscious and personality development. Moreover, Jung’s account of the male and female archetypes (*animus* and *anima*) depends on his creating a model of femininity and masculinity by categorizing certain traits. A more useful approach can be found in Chapters Sixteen and Seventeen of this book.

The wisest approach is not to encourage people to articulate in their lives traits which are typical of the opposite sex, since that leads to masculinization of women and feminization of men. Rather, people should be urged to express common human traits in a way which is characteristic of their sex. For example, a man ought to express compassion in a masculine way, rather than either repress it or express it in a womanly way.

Men and women are different from the moment of conception. Their differences have an important part in shaping everything they do. This fact might lead people to assume that men will automatically turn out manly, and women will automatically turn out womanly. For reasons discussed earlier (see Chapter Seventeen), this expectation does not prove to be correct. Differences between the sexes are only one factor in the human personality: Socialization, personal experience, and many other factors are also important in shaping the final product. Males do not always turn out manly, and females do not always turn out womanly. In fact, as males and females grow up in our society, their sexual identity is often a major problem for them.

Restoration of the human race according to God's plan involves restoring manly character and personality and womanly character and personality. The differences between these two types of personality arise from God's purpose in creating the human race and from the natures he gave to men and women. Scripture gives some indication of how manly and womanly character should be formed when it calls for a gentle and quiet spirit in women and when it exhorts men to courage and aggressiveness. Psychology can also offer wisdom in this area, as, for instance, when it shows that aggressiveness is more natural to men and nurturance to women. A person's character should also be formed by the role he or she is supposed to fulfill. For example, if men are supposed to take the roles of governor, provider, and protector, they should be formed in such a way that they can naturally fulfill those roles. Moreover, if they are formed to see the value of their roles and to be confident in fulfilling them, they will naturally want to do so.

Human beings should be formed in a way that maximizes the strengths of their sex, minimizes the weaknesses, and equips them to live a social role effectively and constructively. In this, neither sex has an advantage or disadvantage. It is easy, however, to fall into idealizing or denigrating the opposite sex. Yet both sexes have their own strengths and weaknesses. Both sexes are born in sin and need formation in Christian character in order to fulfill God's purpose for them.

Some of the sinful tendencies of men and women may be somewhat different. For instance, in trying to get power, women may tend to be more manipulative and may use their tongues more to control situations through talkativeness and gossip. By contrast, men may tend to be more brutal and to more directly grasp at positions of power. Yet both sexes are seeking the same thing: to be in a position where they can get their own way. For another example, both sexes let their emotional tendencies dominate them,

but in different ways. Women may tend to be more moody, depressed, anxious, and easily upset. Men may tend to be more impersonal, unexpressive, alcoholic, and suicidal. Of course, each sex can get into the other's area of greater expertise in sin, but, for all that, each sex has its more characteristic shortcomings. Likewise, each has a disposition that is capable of good and evil and which is neither ideal nor problematic in itself.

Male and
Female
Personality

Christian character is formed by correcting, as well as by strengthening, the natural lines of personality (whether individual personality or gender tendencies). The basic Christian ideal which provides a guideline for this process of correcting and strengthening is the character of Christ. All Christians should be loving, humble, courageous, self-controlled. In fact, the bulk of the exhortation and instruction in the New Testament for the formation of Christian character is the same for men and women. But there are also ideals for the Christian man and the Christian woman which differ somewhat because men and women have different roles, and because some of their sexual characteristics better equip them for some things than for others. As is the case with other kinds of character differences, strengthening Christian manliness and Christian womanliness will provide greater strength for the whole Christian people. Christian character, then, is formed primarily according to the nature of God, but it can vary in secondary ways according to the inner qualities of gifts and personality, and the external needs of service.

Manly Personality

Some of the rhetoric of the contemporary feminist movement would lead people to believe that men have it easier in the world and that it is women who suffer the most. This view is based on some elements of truth. Currently, women suffer a more acute role conflict than men, and because women have traditionally been dependent in their position they have been more powerless than men in providing for themselves in an individualistic society where one must provide for oneself. Nonetheless, there is solid evidence to indicate that the male role is achieved with greater difficulty than the female role, and that men actually suffer more from an inability to achieve a successful sexual identity. For instance, more men than women are social misfits, suicides, and criminals. A number of social scientists have pointed out that men experience a drive to achieve a status of success in being men that women do not seem to experience in being women. Also, men fail more often in their own eyes.¹

A lack of Christian manliness is particularly a problem for two types of men—the socially disruptive man and the “feminized” man.² The socially disruptive male is prone to becoming a delinquent if he is young or a criminal if he is older. If he does not actually break the law, he is at least habitually socially irresponsible. He is often unstable occupationally and in his family commitments, and if he is not violent, he is at least a social problem. The socially disruptive male is fairly easy for the Christian to perceive and understand as someone lacking in Christian character. Christians less frequently realize that a significant contributing factor to his condition is often an unresolved problem with being a man.

Christians do not as easily identify the “feminized” male as someone for whom Christian manliness is a particular problem. This in itself is revealing. Contemporary Christians often lack an ideal of manly character, and they do not value some of the character traits that ought to be prominent in a man: courage, aggressiveness (zeal), and readiness to lead in personal relationship situations when one is the proper person to do so. The contemporary picture of Christian character is all too often feminine, and the Victorian notion of feminine at that. The fact is that many men in our society have been “feminized” to some degree, and this is true of an increasing number of them.

The term “feminization” as used by many social scientists should not be confused with such words as “femininity,” “effeminacy,” and “homosexuality.”³ “Femininity” is a natural womanly quality. A woman is “feminine” when she has an appropriate womanly personality, when her strength, assertiveness, and interests are expressed in a womanly way. “Effeminacy” describes the condition of a man who acts like a woman, whose psychological structure is womanly.⁴ Effeminacy usually betrays an underlying difficulty in psycho-social adjustment. “Homosexuality” refers to people

* The distinction between effeminacy and feminization is an important one. Effeminacy is a psychological disorder involving conflicts over sexual identity. The effeminate man usually does not want to be a man, or is afraid that he cannot successfully be part of a group of men. Effeminacy usually stems from experiences in early childhood, and is more often tied to such family disorders as an absent parent, a domineering or over-protective mother, or a hostile or weak father. It may also at times be connected to some hormonal defect during the early developmental process. Therefore, effeminacy is deeply rooted in the personality, and is difficult to change totally.

On the other hand, feminization is not a psychological disorder and need not involve conflicts over sexual identity. It is a cultural pattern passed on to men leading them to take a “feminized” approach to emotions, personal relations, and values. This cultural pattern is passed on through the media, the school system, and the family, and has its greatest impact in childhood and adolescence. Unlike effeminacy, feminization is not difficult to change. It mainly requires exposure to a new cultural pattern—new models, a new social environment, a new set of values.

who relate sexually to those of the same sex. Homosexuality is often associated with effeminacy, but the two do not necessarily accompany one another.⁵ Many homosexuals are masculine in personality (often pointedly so), and many effeminate men have sexual desire predominantly for women.

Being “feminized,” then, is not the same as being effeminate or being feminine. A feminized male is a male who has learned to behave or react in ways that are more appropriate to women. The feminized male can be normal as a male, with no tendencies to reject being male and no tendencies toward homosexuality, and yet he can have been so influenced by women or can have so identified himself with a world in which women dominate, that many of his interests and traits are more womanly than manly. Compared to men who have not been feminized, he will place much higher emphasis and attention on how he feels and how other people feel. He will be much more gentle and handle situations in a “soft” way. He will be much more subject to the approval of the group, especially emotionally expressed approval (that is, how others feel about him and what he is doing, how others react to him). He will sometimes tend to relate by preference to women and other feminized or effeminate men, and will sometimes have a difficult time with an all-male group. He will tend to fear women’s emotions, and in his family and at work he can be easily controlled by the possibility of women (his mother, wife, or co-worker) having an emotional reaction. He will tend to idealize women and, if he is religious, he will tend to see in women the ideal Christians or the definition of what it means to be spiritual. He will identify Christian virtue with feminine characteristics.

As technological society develops, men tend increasingly to spend time in situations dominated by women. Men also tend to have more successful relationships with women and fewer with other men. The home environment tends increasingly to be dominated by the mother. In some countries males as young as ten to fourteen years old begin to “hang around with” one girl—to relate together erotically, but also to have their primary companionship with one young female. This pattern of predominantly female companionship for males continues because they spend their main social time with their wife and little with other men. The historical novelty of this social arrangement is pointed out dramatically by Marion J. Levy Jr., a sociologist who has studied extensively the process of modernization:

Our young are the first people of whom the following can be said: if they are males, they and their fathers and their brothers and sons and all the

Manly
Personality

males they know are overwhelmingly likely to have been reared under the direct domination and supervision of females from birth to maturity. No less important is the fact that their mothers and their sisters and their girl friends and their wives and all of the ladies with whom they have to do have had to do only with males so reared. Most of us have not even noticed this change, nor do we have any realization of its radicality. We certainly do not have any systematic body of speculation on what the significances of so radical a change are or could be. To put the matter as dramatically as possible, we do not even know whether viable human beings can over any long period of time be reared in such a fashion. After all, this has never held true of any substantial proportion of any population for even one generation in the history of the world until the last fifty years. This has not held true for two generations, for any substantial portion of any population for more than twenty years at the outside. It has not yet characterized any substantial portion of any population for three generations, but most of those living today will live to see what this will be like! . . .

This sexual revolution has come on little cat's feet. So far no high levels of violence have been directly associated with this revolution, though we certainly don't know that these changes have nothing to do with the increasing levels of violence that seem to characterize both the highly modernized and latecomers to modernization as well. If the change to which I point has taken place on anything like the scale that I allege, nothing is less likely than that it makes no difference or very little difference.⁶

Some males respond to this situation by becoming (usually before adulthood) socially disruptive, by asserting their masculinity in some uncontrolled or irresponsible way. Others accept a female-dominated social world and become feminized to a greater or lesser degree. Among contemporary Christians this latter process is accelerated by a kind of teaching which encourages males to be more feminized by teaching them that emotions and emotional relationships are the most important things in life from the Christian point of view (a kind of teaching which is bad for women as well as for men).

The popular masculine caricature of the impersonal, unexpressive, unemotional, rugged individualist out for himself is not the ideal for the Christian man. Nor should men be self-consciously manly all the time, always trying to prove the point that they are men. A confident man should be capable of readily doing something that is "for women" if he judges that it is right to do so. But at the same time there is great importance—both social and Christian—in having men of masculine character. Manliness

equips men to take social responsibility for groups, to work together with other men, to exercise authority and discipline over people, to move a social grouping forward in becoming what it should be, and to protect the group and those in it from harm. If the men in a group are feminized, the group as a whole is weakened and a healthy expression of roles for men and women becomes more difficult.

The feminizing process affects different men in different ways. Some feminized men take on characteristics which, from the Christian point of view, are bad for both women and men, but which more frequently characterize female groups or groups dominated by females. As they are feminized, some men become, for instance, sentimental or very subject to social approval. Christian character formation would attempt to correct these characteristics in women as well as in men, but these characteristics more often pertain to females than to males.

Certain other feminized men do not necessarily take on such faults. Instead, they will take on a structuring of their character that is more appropriate for Christian women than for Christian men. For example, a feminized man may have a character in which the traits of gentleness and quietness are stronger than the traits of aggressiveness and courage. Both Christian men and Christian women should be both gentle and aggressive (zealous). Yet, in the scriptures, quietness and gentleness are particularly emphasized in forming women, and aggressiveness and courage are especially underlined for men. Men are supposed to respond more aggressively than women in social situations and are, in general, more aggressive than gentle. The opposite is true for women. This does not mean that women should never be aggressive and men should never be gentle, but there should be a certain overall difference in how the two sexes express these traits. Feminization, then, not only can give men female faults; it can also give their virtues a female structure.

Social Responsibility and Aggressiveness ▸ Two crucial areas in the character formation of men must be dealt with successfully if men are to be effectively formed in manly Christian character. These areas are of great importance both in raising young boys to be Christian men, and in raising new Christians—young and old men alike—to Christian maturity. The first and primary area is that of training men to take social responsibility. Men have a natural tendency to avoid social responsibility and instead follow one of two other directions. Either they will tend to follow the course of self-aggrandizement and pleasure-seeking or, if they are feminized (or at least are cowed by women in social situations), they will tend

Manly
Personality

to withdraw and take responsibility only in the areas which they stake out for themselves as being those where they will achieve. This does not mean that there are no natural factors in men which lead them to take social responsibility. Indeed, there are such factors, but these do not operate very easily in unstructured social situations. Men assume social responsibility most naturally and effectively when (1) it is clear to them that the primary responsibility for the well-being of others rests on them and that others are relying on them, and (2) when they have been trained from an early age by the men in their lives to recognize and assume that responsibility faithfully.

The second crucial area for developing manly character is aggressiveness. Men are, and should be, naturally aggressive.* They will be aggressive, unless early in life they are taught to be afraid of hurting themselves. Rather than being a disruptive or harmful factor, this natural male aggressiveness can be one of the greatest social contributions men can make. But they need to be trained when to be aggressive and when not to be. They have to learn to control their aggressiveness according to Christian ideals, to learn courage and how to put their aggressiveness to a constructive use. Such training is most effectively provided by older men that young boys can respect.

The key factor in forming manly character is the right social structure. The primary component of this structure is a context within which men can form strong relationships with other individual men and with a group of men. Men achieve a healthy masculine identity primarily when they are relating successfully as men with other men. The most important of these relationships is normally that between father and son. A young man should instinctively identify with his father and model himself after him. If the father-son relationship is good—if the father is not indifferent to and distant from his son, and if he is not brutal or cruel toward him—the son will receive a great deal of his personal confidence and his identity as a man from his relationship with his father. A young man's father should be instrumental in bringing him into groupings of men so that, under the sponsorship of his father, he can make contact with adult male society. The father's role, of course, can be and often is supplemented or replaced by other older men—an older brother or an uncle, perhaps. A young man should also experience a sense of co-responsibility and camaraderie as part of a group of men with whom he can identify. It should be added here that the common notion of the male as being a self-reliant, independent individual is a myth of American individualist society. Psychological and

* For background to this section, see Chapter Sixteen, pp. 404–405.

anthropological evidence point instead to the view that men function more naturally in groups and, if anything, are less individualistic than women in their personal relationships (though men are more concerned about their own personal accomplishment).^{*} If a young man's relationships with his father and with a social grouping are good and are working properly, those relationships will be a major help in developing his sense of social responsibility as a male and in his learning how to use his aggressiveness in a constructive way. (The same principle applies to training men who are new Christians, whatever their age, in Christian manliness.) The restoration of the Christian father-son relationship and of Christian brotherhood among the men in a Christian community is one of the more important tasks in restoring Christian community life.

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If they are going to develop manly character, men must also be given positions of social responsibility and a set of social tasks that are acknowledged as manly. This statement holds true, of course, in a corresponding way for women. When a person can observe a clear role model operating in a role that he or she will eventually be filling, identification with that role and personal change are much easier. In certain ways, however, the proper role model is more important for men than for women. Men in modern society tend to be socially irresponsible, leaving the responsibility of caring for people to the women. Only when younger men see older men exercising responsibility for groupings of people will they develop a sense of social responsibility. Male headship in the family and community also tends to counteract the male tendency to "leave it to the women," because it allows the man to identify his care for his family and community with personal accomplishment in a way that produces a commitment to his responsibility that he would not otherwise have. Moreover, the evidence seems to indicate that men have a more difficult time than women identifying with their social role. Certain social scientists have stressed the importance of a society having socially recognized male tasks in order for proper male development to occur.⁷

Finally, if men are going to develop manly character, they must be freed from the dominant social pattern of spending most of their time with women. This comment, to be sure, applies primarily to recent Western society. In most societies, even in sexually permissive cultures, men and women have little tendency to spend most of their time together in pairs. Yet the pattern of men relating primarily with women is developing in

^{*} For background to this section, see Chapter Sixteen, pp. 398–402, and Chapter Seventeen, pp. 434–437.

increasingly large sectors of contemporary Western society. This pattern seems to have the effect of feminizing the male rather than of masculinizing the female. To make these observations is not to say that men and women should have nothing to do with one another. The point is, rather, that when the primary social support for a male (or a female) is one individual of the opposite sex, the effect is harmful—both on the character of the individuals involved and on the type of relationship that is fostered in the social grouping.

Machismo ▶ Some cultures and environments are noted for a special problem among males which in Latin America is called “machismo.” The “macho” man is a type of the socially disruptive male, irresponsible in his family commitments (and often in his work commitments) and overly assertive about his manly prowess, especially in the sexual area. Machismo is frequently accompanied by a great deal of violence, alcoholism or other addiction, and crime. The term “machismo” was developed in Latin America because of the acuteness of the problem in many sectors of Latin American society. Yet the problem is also acute both in other societies and in sub-groupings in other societies. The Black American culture, for instance, breeds a similar machismo.

The macho male is a familiar type, but machismo is only one expression of a broader social problem. It is often not recognized that in many societal groupings characterized by machismo there are also large numbers of effeminate, homosexual, and feminized men. In fact, there are few males in those groupings who do not show strong tendencies in one direction or the other. Another important observation about societies where machismo is common is that the families in those societies are generally dominated by the mother. Frequently the father is simply absent from the scene.

Machismo, in short, develops in a societal grouping characterized by social disorganization. In such a situation, the males often manifest the worst effects of the culture’s disorder. They find themselves with very few solid models of responsible manliness, and they often grow up under the domination of women. As a result, they usually either rebel against women and become irresponsible, macho males, or they accept the domination of women, identify with them, and are in some way formed by them. This pattern is caused by the breakdown of male responsibility in the family and the unwillingness of older men to assume responsibility for younger men.

Christians in these societal situations frequently tend to work primarily with women because they find them more cooperative and reliable. Their hope is that by strengthening the women, they will be strengthening—and

Christianizing—the social grouping, and hence gradually overcoming the problem. In fact, their efforts have little effect on the problem because they are relying upon women to form the men in a situation where the failure of men to form men is the origin of the difficulty. Unless men are effectively reached and formed in social responsibility by other men, the problem cannot be overcome.

Male and
Female
Personality

Womanly Personality

Christian women in contemporary society likewise face difficulties in growing into a womanly personality formed by Christian character. In recent years, the pressures on womanly personality have become much stronger due to the fact that part of the ideology held in some sectors of the feminist movement advocates a change in personality for women—one that is supposed to allow them to compete more equally with men. While this aspect of the feminist movement does not seem to have received anything like universal acceptance, it has at least made the question of personality for women a much more pressured one.

There are three main types of women for whom Christian womanliness is a particular problem. The first is the woman who is characterized by a great deal of personal insecurity and dependence. Like the feminized man, this type of woman has often been overlooked by Christians, because her tendencies toward submissiveness, self-abasement, and a great desire to please others are equated by many with charity, humility, and a gentle and quiet spirit. Her difficulties are more readily recognized than those of the feminized man, however, because she normally experiences a great deal of unhappiness and personal dissatisfaction and has a strong tendency to seek help.⁸ Few Christians, though, will view her personal difficulties as problems in her Christian character, even when they are recognized. Yet her anxiety, lack of faith and joy, and lack of personal confidence and strength, even though they may not “be her fault,” do not correspond to Christian character traits.

The second type of woman for whom Christian womanliness is a particular problem is the “masculinized” woman.* Masculinized women are women who have learned to behave or react in ways that are more

* The “masculinized” woman parallels the “feminized” man discussed earlier in this chapter. In similar fashion, “masculinization” should not be confused with the words “masculinity,” “mannishness,” and “lesbianism.” “Masculinity” is a natural manly quality corresponding to “femininity”; “mannishness” is a problem in female psycho-social adjustment corresponding to male “effeminacy”; and “lesbianism” refers to a woman’s sexual preference for other women that is sometimes but not always associated with “mannishness.”

appropriate to men. Although the basic psychological development has been normal in their identification as women, they have in the course of their lives learned or been formed in manly ways. They tend to be more unexpressive and more personally distant. They often seem hard and are aggressive in a way that seems “pushy.” They often dress in a more masculine style, even when they do not wear masculine clothes. Their interests are frequently closer to those of men.

Sometimes women become masculinized out of a lack of confidence that they will be accepted as women. Sometimes, however, and perhaps more importantly, they seem to become masculinized out of a feeling that male roles and activities are more important and provide greater security than female roles and activities. This feeling can often develop at an early age. Finally, women sometimes seem to become masculinized by the experience of competing with men in situations that are predominantly male in composition or standards. The “career woman” has a reputation (not always justified) for being masculinized. Just as boys seem to become feminized in social situations where their contacts are predominantly with women, girls seem to become masculinized in male-dominated task-oriented situations.

The third type of woman for whom Christian womanliness is a particular problem is one who has had her “consciousness raised” by the feminist movement. According to feminist theory, this woman is a new personality, socialized into equality with men. Outside observers, however, are often more inclined to view the “new” personality as a female personality with the more-than-ordinary amount of inner anger (frustration, resentment, bitterness), and often an assertiveness that is appropriate neither for a Christian man nor a Christian woman. Often, women of this sort also exhibit a competitiveness, especially with men, that indicates that their new confidence is based more upon particular achievements in tasks and situations that have been traditionally understood as male than upon an inner peace and confidence about being women. Whatever the inner dynamics of the new feminist personality, many feminists have a character which is not formed according to the basic Christian character for men and women, and much less according to the specific aspects of a womanly Christian character. Furthermore, Christian feminists often betray the fact that the primary formative influence upon their characters has been a group of non-Christian women who make no pretense of forming themselves in Christian character.

To say that there are shortcomings in what feminism produces in many women is not to imply that everything feminists say is wrong. For instance,

their emphasis on female assertiveness has something to recommend it: Women have often been taught to be unassertive in a way that makes them ineffective in some of their responsibilities. However, the assertiveness that feminists teach is often based on the premise of women trying to get their own way (a characteristic that has never been absent in women, or men, before). It is often an assertiveness characterized by anger and hostility. Nonetheless, Christian women could well learn to be more assertive, not indiscriminately but selectively, especially in situations where their responsibilities call for it. Another potentially valuable feminist emphasis is that placed on women controlling their emotions and being firmer in the way they respond to situations. This can be an expression of Christian self-control, although it does not have to be done in a way that eliminates the warmth traditionally associated with Christian women or that produces hardness in women.

Womanly
Personality

As was true for manly character, there are several crucial areas that must be dealt with successfully if women are to be effectively formed in womanly Christian character. In our society, one of the most important of these areas is that of women learning the value of being women. Women frequently feel second-rate because the achievements that are valued in our society are masculine ones, and because women are normally placed in situations where there is no difference in how men and women are evaluated.⁹ The contemporary situation is unusual, despite views to the contrary often presented by the feminist movement. Women of past ages have not shown the signs of dissatisfaction with being women that modern women have manifested. Most societies (not all) have valued and respected women and have had ways of expressing this value and respect. Women have been conscious of being subordinate, but subordination (whether for a male or female) was not experienced as degrading in the way it often is in modern society.¹⁰ A massive cultural change has occurred in this area, a change which has produced an inner dissatisfaction in women. Training women to compete successfully with men will probably only increase, rather than eliminate, this dissatisfaction. This dissatisfaction will be eliminated only when women can experience being valued precisely as women and as different than men.

A second crucial area in character formation for women is that of trust. The “gentle and quiet spirit” that scripture says should characterize women is the fruit of trust. By contrast, women in modern society are frequently characterized by anxiety, anxiety about their own lives and about how the circumstances of life will work out for themselves and others. This anxiety

may manifest itself in a great deal of aggressiveness and assertiveness, but the inner core of it is lack of trust. For a Christian woman who wants to accept a Christian woman's role, anxiety and lack of trust must be replaced by an experience of the dependability of other people, especially the dependability of men in taking responsibility for those areas in which she is relying on them.

Again, as with the formation of manly character, one of the key factors in the formation of womanly Christian character is the restoration of a Christian social structure. Women need a clear role they can accept and fulfill, and they need clear tasks they can become confident in performing and for which they know they are valued. This womanly role must be respected by others, especially men, and respected in a way that women can experience. Women should be honored precisely because they are women. The restoration of expressions of respect connected with social roles is particularly important in a situation like contemporary society where there is a tendency not to value the role of women. From the Christian perspective, the true dignity of women is not based upon their ability to do the same things as men. Rather, it is based upon the value of women precisely as women—as different from men and as equally valuable in that difference, making contributions that men cannot make.

Relationships among women are also important in the area of forming womanly Christian character. They are not, perhaps, as important as they are for men, but they are important nonetheless. The mother-daughter relationship is instrumental in effectively developing Christian womanliness in young girls. As a young boy can grow more confidently and readily in his role as a man through identifying and modeling himself on his father, so also can a young girl grow more confidently and readily in her role as a woman through identifying and modeling herself on her mother. Moreover, if a young girl experiences her mother as someone who is glad to be a woman and who wants her to be womanly, she will have much more inner confidence in that position. Strong relationships with other women must also be restored. The women of the community should support one another and work together in a spirit of sisterhood. Just as in the formation of young girls, women who are new Christians develop greater confidence in Christian womanliness by belonging to a group of Christian women and by being raised in the Lord by women with greater Christian maturity. Correlative to a restoration of relationships among men should be the restoration of relationships among women.

Finally, women must be freed from excessive emotional dependence

upon men.* In our society, a woman often feels an extremely strong emotional dependency on a man—either a boyfriend or a husband or a son. Mothers tend to hold on to their sons, girlfriends let their lives center emotionally on their boyfriends, and wives constantly reach out for more of their husbands' companionship and concern and are resentful when they do not get it. Modern women do not do these things from conscious decision. Modern Western society has been structured in such a way that a woman's only hope for any personal support is to have a man who will make her the center of his life. For this situation to change, a change must be made in social patterns as well as in the kind of media-supported view which makes a woman feel that the only truly satisfying relationship is a relationship with one man who is *her* man. To be sure, husbands are important in the lives of their wives, but excessive emotional dependency often makes it difficult even for very dedicated husbands to satisfy their wives. For single women, it should not be the case that they are constantly fixated on finding a man. If women are to grow into confident, responsible, Christian womanhood, they need a certain emotional freedom from men.

This section of the chapter has been concerned with the formation of character, not with imposing behavioral norms on people. There is a limit to how much an adult or an older child can change which varies from person to person and area to area. Nonetheless, Christians can be formed so that they reflect the image of God more and more fully in their lives, and so that they are more the kind of men and women who can most freely serve in the way the Lord is calling them to serve. It is one thing to accept limitations and to respect individual needs and possibilities. It is another thing to completely give up the formation of Christian personality or to have no guiding vision of how a Christian should be. If Christianity should do anything, it should produce a new kind of man and woman.

* Emotional dependence is different from social dependence. Women are socially dependent on men when there is an interdependence (or a dependence) of function such that women need men in order to function (to live or work in some way). Social interdependence is an important part of good roles for men and women. When women depend on men and men depend on women, their interrelationships will be stronger and healthier. This is not the same as emotional dependence. When someone is emotionally dependent, that person has an inner need for certain kinds of emotional support in order to function well emotionally. Some emotional dependence is unavoidable and good. Husbands and wives, for instance, should experience a need for one another of the sort that if one should lose the other, he or she would experience a loss emotionally as well as practically. The right kind of relationships, however, should produce an emotional strength that decreases emotional dependence rather than increases it. That is to say, if people's lives are going well, they should be involved emotionally with others but they should not be increasingly dependent on them in order to function. Rather, they should become *stronger* emotionally.

Relationships between Men and Women*

Special Issues
in Constructing
a Modern
Christian
Social Structure

As might be expected in a study such as this, the subject of relationships between men and women has threaded in and out of many of the chapters, including the present one. This section will raise the subject again, but the treatment given to it here is not intended to be exhaustive or to be a synthesis of all that has been discussed previously. The most important elements of relationships between men and women have been treated already, especially in the first pastoral guideline of Chapter Twenty-Two. The aim of this section is to distinguish between the sexualized ideal of man-woman companionship which operates increasingly in our day and age, and a stronger, healthier Christian ideal which situates man-woman relationships in their proper context of the overall social life of the Christian people. When wisely placed in the broader picture of all social relationships, relationships between men and women contribute richly to Christian life without distorting social roles or undermining other important relationships.

Unfortunately, a balanced placing of relationships between men and women in their proper context does not characterize much of modern society. Rather, sexualized man-woman companionship has become a growing focus.¹¹ Even among Christian teachers and theologians, man-woman companionship has been increasingly discussed, praised, and exalted. Some of them would view it as the most fulfilling of all human relationships and the most perfect image of God's love for mankind. (To make the latter point, they must usually interpret marriage images in the scriptures according to modern "companionship marriage," and not according to marriage as it existed in scriptural times.) Behind this increasing emphasis on companionship between men and women is a sociological shift of the sort that was discussed in Chapter Eighteen. But rather than romanticizing man-woman companionship or viewing it as something in itself, one must see it in its social structural perspective.

Man-woman companionship tends to increase with the development of technological society. This trend seems to be more apparent in socially unstructured Western society than in a more disciplined Communist society, but the observation is true in both cases. In particular, the trend is for men and women to pair off and spend a great deal of their leisure time with one

* For background to this section, see Chapter Three, pp. 48-64; Chapter Four, pp. 95-101; Chapter Sixteen, pp. 398-402; Chapter Seventeen, pp. 457-458; and Chapter Eighteen, pp. 507-509.

individual of the opposite sex—either a boyfriend or girlfriend, a marriage partner, or a “lover.” One effect of this pattern seems to be the sexualization of personal relations. A male and a female pair off primarily for reasons of sexual attraction and, when they spend time together, a sexual-emotional way of relating is either the primary focus or a prominent undercurrent which determines a great deal about how the relationship goes. Rather than producing a special depth in relationship (other than, perhaps, a certain kind of affective depth), this sort of relationship produces a personal gratification focus in the lives and personal relationships of those for whom it is a primary form of relating. Those in such relationships tend to evaluate them primarily in terms of what they are getting out of them; consequently, the pairs they form will break up as the sexual-emotional affectivity departs. Rather than centering relationships around similarity of social role and task (as are relationships among men or among women) or around partnership in social task (as is the husband-wife relationship in scripture), the modern ideal of man-woman companionship centers relationships around mutuality of personal attraction. The effect is in good part not socially constructive. As discussed above, it has the tendency to feminize males, to produce emotional dependency in females, and to weaken both sexes.

Relationships
between Men
and Women

Man-woman companionship is an essential part of successful marriage in technological society, and it performs a useful social function. It cannot be eliminated. In fact, some type of man-woman companionship probably has to be fostered. When placed in the context of Christian family life, where it is one element in a relationship that exists for the sake of serving the Lord and others (and not merely for the sake of individual gratification), the harmful effects of much of contemporary man-woman relating are lessened and perhaps eliminated. But man-woman companionship cannot be the only kind of significant relationship in the lives of husbands and wives, and it should not be the predominant form of social relating among single people (until they are moving toward marriage). Sex, and the kind of man-woman relationship to which it gives rise, is at its healthiest and most constructive when it is placed in the context of stable social relationships which have other purposes than simply gratifying the two individuals involved.

In order to successfully restore Christian social relationships, an emphasis must be placed both on brother-sister relationships between men and women and on relationships among men and among women, as well as on the man-woman relationship of marriage in the context of family life. “Brother-sister relationships” should be the primary relationships between

men and women. These relationships are those which occur where people relate freely to one another as brothers and sisters in the Lord—to be cared for and served, and not to be seen as candidates for a special one-to-one relationship with someone of the opposite sex. In order to have the right kind of relationships among men and among women, the importance of relationships of companionship and friendship among people of the same sex and social role must be restored. These relationships cross age group lines (older women and younger women, older men and younger men) and bring people together for a constructive social purpose, and not just because of personal interest and attraction. In other words, man-woman companionship should be part of a larger fabric of social relationships that is centered on and structured around building the body of Christ and bringing others to life in him.

Likewise, the man-woman relationship within marriage should be shaped by what the family should be as a set of social relationships. The husband-wife bond should not be so all-absorbing that the husband is unable to relate to his sons or to other men, or so that the wife is unable to relate to her daughters or to other women. The husband-wife bond is very important for family life, but it should serve to bring together the husband's set of relationships and the wife's set of relationships, rather than excluding all other relationships. In fact, if the children are not to feel that they are growing up in someone else's family, the father-son, mother-daughter relationships must be strong companionship relationships, and must be centered on training the children to take on the same roles and responsibilities as their father or mother.

What is more, the companionship between husband and wife should not be the same as if they were friends of identical social role. The relationship becomes distorted if they are "best buddies" who "hang around together." Husbands and wives are partners with complementary roles who are one flesh. The husband should be the head of the family. He should care for and protect his wife. He should provide for her a clarity in what is expected of her, and he should provide a steadying and ordering influence on her emotional life. He ought not to try to have the same reactions to situations as she does, nor should she try to share his. In fact, when their companionship leads them to share each other's emotional reactions, the effect is to feminize the man. The wife in turn should support her husband. She should serve him freely, not equating this service with something beneath her dignity. She should be a loyal partner whom he can count on as part of his own person. If Christian family life is working well, the husband should not love his wife in the same way she loves him, but there should

be a complementary aspect to their love. They do not share everything in the sense that they can approach everything in the same way and feel alike about everything. One of the greatest benefits of marriage is that the husband and wife are not the same and cannot share together in that sense. Rather, the husband and wife are able to share everything in a much deeper sense, in that they belong to one another and make up one person.

Single People*

ONE can distinguish between two major categories of single people. The first category are those for whom being single is simply a consequence of youth and of the fact that they are not yet married. The second category are those for whom being single is a long-term condition, either because they have chosen not to marry (celibates, those “single for the Lord”), or because marriage has not come their way, or because their marriage partner has died and their children no longer live with them. Some single people, especially the younger ones who have not yet married, can be provided for in the context of Christian family life and are therefore not the concern of this section. The concern here is primarily with those for whom being single is a long-term condition, especially celibates. This section does not attempt to give a full treatment of all that is involved in integrating single people into community life (particularly the special pastoral concerns affecting single parents and older unmarriages not living single for the Lord), but only to treat the topic of single people in relation to such social structural considerations as roles, patterns of life, character and personality, and Christian service.

Single people in general, and celibates in particular, are among the groups of people most prone to the harmful social consequences of contemporary functionalizing society. This proneness results from the fact that they commonly live outside the context of the family—the one social unit of contemporary society that retains some vitality and that has a relationship-oriented approach in which age and sex considerations are important and make sense. The structure of family life is the basic structure of a Christian community, providing the formative principles with which all other relationships must harmonize. Celibates and other single people must therefore shape their lives in a way that supports the basic form and pattern of the rest of the Christian community. Otherwise,

* There is some background to this section in the discussions of the social roles of celibate men and women in Chapters Five and Thirteen.

they will become a socially disorganizing factor in the community. Social roles, including the roles of men and women, are important for celibates and older single people as well as those who are married, partly because the unmarried state does not eliminate their sexual natures, and partly because they must be integrated into the wider Christian community in a supportive way.

Traditionally, groupings of celibates have followed one of three main patterns.¹² One pattern has been to form separate communities in which the members were either all men or all women. Normally these communities were located in the country, geographically separated from other people. Sometimes, however, they were in the city, where members lived in a separate building and restricted their social contact with the rest of the city. Usually these communities developed their pattern of life to allow for a greater focus on prayer, worship, and spiritual discipline than would be possible in normal life. The second pattern celibate groupings have followed has been to form special households in which celibates lived a life that was more integrated into the broader Christian community. Sometimes these groupings would take on special service as a household, as with households of school teachers, nurses, or preachers. Sometimes, as in Catholic religious orders, these households would be part of a regional grouping of similar households. The third pattern has been that of individual celibates living within family households. These individuals would normally live as members of the family, but would also often have some kind of special service within the larger community. Of these three main patterns—celibates living separately from the wider Christian community, celibates living in households within the Christian community, or individual celibates living in families—the primary focus of this section is on the latter two, because in them the need for healthy integration of celibates into community life is more acute.

Celibates and other single people should live authentically as men and as women even though they are without a sexual relationship. The character and personality of single males should be manly, and that of single females should be womanly. In larger social groupings, the single men should take part with the wider group of men in the community and should follow the appropriate customs; single women should do likewise with the other women in the community. Within single households (or, in the case of monastic communities, within their communities) it might not be possible to have the same division of labor as can exist within a sexually mixed household. Quite commonly, however, households of

single men and women have either lived closely enough to one another to provide services for one another, or they have employed people of the opposite sex to perform services for them. The basic principle should be that single people, as much as possible, are like the members of their own sex in the wider community: in their character, in their personality, and in their social roles.

The service of celibates to the community is a larger issue, especially in contemporary society. Traditionally, when celibates have served within the Christian community, they have performed the same kind of services as the other community members of their own sex. Male celibates have been elders—priests or ministers, traveling apostles, preachers, and teachers. Female celibates and widows have provided pastoral leadership either as deaconesses, as members of an order of widows, or as co-workers of missionaries. Male celibates have taught men and boys, provided health care, and provided a work force for the Christian community. Female celibates have taught women and girls, and given charitable service. The principle is that male celibates, like other single men, engage in the work of men in the Christian community, and female celibates like other single women engage in that of the women. Their services harmonize with the social roles of the other men and women in the community.

Of course, contemporary society presents single people with a vastly different set of circumstances. Many do not serve within Christian communities, and many serve in functional Christian organizations that are associated with Christian communities. In these cases it can be difficult to apply principles which would be essential within the context of the Christian community. Adjustments must be made for those living or serving outside of Christian communities, but the basic principle of Christian tradition remains clear: There should be harmony between married and single people in expressing the social roles appropriate to their age and sex. This supportive integration of single people into the overall social pattern of the people is of great importance, especially within Christian community.

Single
People

The Need for a Pastoral Strategy

THE five areas discussed in this chapter are frequently subjects of hot debate, both within the church and in secular society. It can often be difficult for those attempting to build a strong Christian life together to see the way

Special Issues
in Constructing
a Modern
Christian
Social Structure

clear through the barrage of strongly held and strongly asserted positions, opinions, and feelings, many of which derive from unchristian sources and lead in unchristian directions. Because these issues can appear to be isolated concerns which could be resolved without reference to the broader social framework of the Christian people, it can also be difficult for Christians to see the individual issues within their broader social structural context.

The fact is, however, that scattered, short-sighted approaches to one or all of these issues will simply not suffice. Neither can unchristian solutions provide what is necessary. Rather, a clear, consistent, longer-range pastoral strategy is needed—one which situates each issue in the overall context of the Christian social structure and outlines for each an effective resolution that can enhance the strength and vitality of Christian life. The overall pastoral vision which shapes these strategies points Christians in the direction of fostering the development of Christian communal life to whatever degree is possible in their circumstances as they seek to strengthen their life in Christ in the midst of a rapidly changing world.

ORDINATION, OCCUPATION, LEGISLATION

THE BASIC THRUST OF CHRISTIAN PASTORAL CONCERN should be to foster an increasing degree of Christian community life, which includes developing a Christian social structure. But if Christians are going to live in the world and not be of it, they will face a wide variety of issues and challenges concerning the roles of men and women. Christians can take the initiative among themselves in developing a Christian social structure: They can shape Christian communal situations in a way that allows a sensible application of Christian teaching on the roles of men and women. However, in dealing with situations in modern society the initiative is rarely with Christians. Usually, Christians must respond to the prevailing social currents. Often they have to confront social situations that are already shaped in such a way that applying Christian teaching on the roles of men and women is unclear and difficult. This chapter will consider three such significant issues which face contemporary Christians in a Westernized society: ordination of women, occupations for women, and legislation on the roles of men and women.

The present chapter is limited in its aims. It does not intend to offer an exhaustive treatment of each of these issues. Its primary concern is to draw out the implications of what has been said in the previous chapters of this study as it applies to these three issues. Far more remains to be said about each of these issues than will be said here, but it must be done according to principles other than those discussed in this study.

▷

Ordination of Women*

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Legislation

THE ordination of women is a recent issue for the Christian churches.[†] A woman was first ordained to the ministry of a recognized Christian denomination in 1863, in the Universalist Church.[‡] (At that time the Universalist Church would normally have been regarded as heterodox by most Christian churches, but it was more clearly a Christian denomination than it is now.) In general, the denominations which grew out of a revivalist tradition ordained women ministers first.[§] It was not, in general, until World War II that most of the historic mainline Protestant churches began to ordain women. The “liturgical churches” were the last, for the most part, to take this step (the 1958 decision of the Church of Sweden and the 1976 decision of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA were significant in this regard).¹ On the other hand, the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Churches have, to date, resisted the ordination of women. The Pope’s reaffirmation of the traditional Catholic position has been the most notable stand.² The fact that the debate over ordaining women has arisen among Christians so recently, relatively speaking, indicates that its appearance as an issue has much more to do with the development of technological society and its influence on the Christian churches than with anything arising from within Christian tradition.

A full treatment of the contemporary issue of ordination for women is outside the scope of this book. This book concerns the social roles of

* “Ordination” here refers specifically to ordination to the presbyterate. Because of different conceptions of the presbyterate in different churches, the understanding of ordination will vary somewhat.

† As was previously noted in Chapter Thirteen, ordination is a recent issue as far as the practice of orthodox Christianity is concerned. Such heretical sects as the Montanists and the Collyridians appear to have ordained women. However, the practice was not accepted by any recognized Christian church (Eastern Orthodox, Catholic, or Protestant) until the last century.

‡ These smaller revivalist denominations were possibly among the earliest to ordain women because, beyond their core revival teaching, they were less grounded in Christian tradition than were, for instance, the historical mainline Protestant Churches, the Eastern Orthodox Churches, or the Roman Catholic Church.

§ Among the revivalist denominations a Congregationalist woman was first ordained, although unofficially, in 1853, a Wesleyan Methodist in the early 1850s, a Baptist by the late 1800s and a Pentecostal in the early 1900s. Among the more mainline Protestant Churches, Lutheran Churches in Scandinavia began ordaining women around World War II (Norway made the decision in 1938, Denmark in 1947, and as mentioned, Sweden in 1953). In the United States, the United Presbyterian Church decided to ordain women in 1956, the Lutheran Church in America and the American Lutheran Church in 1970, and the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1976.

men and women, and these roles are only one aspect of the discussion about the ordination of women. In some ways, the most significant aspect of the ordination issue is the question of the nature of the ministry itself, especially the ministry of presbyter or priest. In this, the views of ministry taken by the various churches make a significant difference to the terms of the discussion.³ For example, when Roman Catholics discuss the ordination of women to the priesthood, there is often a great deal of discussion about the sacramental nature of the priesthood. A recent document of a Catholic study commission asserted that the New Testament is very clear on not allowing women to be the heads of the Christian community, but that the evidence it provides about the admissibility of ordaining women to the priesthood is inconclusive.⁴ From the Catholic perspective one might raise some questions about how good an understanding of the priesthood lay at the basis of this document, but there are other church traditions in which the very distinction and the terms of the argument would be incomprehensible. An exhaustive discussion of all the aspects of the question of the ordination of women, then, is beyond the range of this book. The material presented in this book, however, does allow some reflections on the ordination of women insofar as Christian social roles bear on the issue of ordination. This section will consider three such reflections.

First, the study done here reveals that both scripture and tradition teach very clearly that the positions of overall government in the Christian community should be held by men.* This is one of the clearest and most consistent principles concerning the structure and order of the Christian people, from the time of Christ and the apostles until a very recent period of Christian history. If any authoritative statements about order among the Christian people are undisputed in scripture and tradition, this one is surely among them. To change it is not simply a matter of changing one rule: If this principle can be changed, the Christian people can change any feature of order, and they are not bound by scripture and tradition in shaping their life together. The judgment to ordain women, then, involves the judgment that modern society has reached the point where scripture and tradition cannot definitively guide the structuring of the common life of Christians.

Secondly, the study done in this book indicates that the question of who should be heads of the Christian people is actually a question of God's purposes for the human race and for how the new humanity should be

* See above, Chapter Five, pp. 124–134; and Chapter Thirteen, pp. 304–322.

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formed. Government of the Christian people is not merely a secondary question of social roles that can be changed with little consequence. Rather, the question involves a broader vision of what human life should be like according to God's ideal. The ordering of governmental responsibilities is only an expression of that underlying vision. Deciding to have women acting as heads of the Christian people means deciding that the scriptural vision of the life of humans together is no longer applicable or appropriate. A decision about structure and order in this area is a decision about what a body of Christians is trying to be.

The decision to ordain women often arises from a perception that, sociologically speaking, the Christian churches have become something very different than they have been in the past. In the modern Western world, most Christian bodies function more as religious institutions providing religious services than as Christian communities.⁵ They have, in short, lost much of the relationship that makes a group a "people" in the sense in which the scriptures speak of a "people." The governing officials of a church function less as heads over the people than as administrators and policy setters in a modern social institution, and their teaching is not received (or given) as being authoritative. Church bodies are conducted according to the principles of a service institution. Eliminating the restriction on women holding governing positions simply brings the structure of the church more in line with the principles that govern other service institutions in a modern society.

Of course, the question is how the contemporary church bodies should respond to the current situation. Should they write into their constitutions, canons, and books of church order and discipline principles that ratify their current position as service institutions, or should they try to become communities? This is not an easy question to decide. There is much to be said for the value of service institutions which have accommodated structurally as much to the contemporary society as most church bodies have. As service institutions, they can preserve some Christian life among a broad number of people. To become communities like those of the early church would involve changing much more than some isolated principles of men's and women's roles. As was pointed out earlier, Christian churches today do not follow many other instructions given in the New Testament, such as instructions about Christian discipline and about relations with non-Christians and fallen-away Christians.* All these instructions make

* See Chapter Twenty, pp. 568–571.

sense when Christians are viewed as a people, a social body with committed relationships. In short, to reverse the balance from being a religious institution accommodated to modern society to being more of a people would be both very difficult and quite risky for most Christian churches. The question, then, is whether the current situation in some way reflects an accommodation the Lord wants the churches to make. The key issue facing the churches today as they survey contemporary society and consider the scriptural view of the Christian people is: What kind of Christian bodies should they attempt to be?⁶

Ordination
of Women

Thirdly, the study in this book also points to a problem which faces those churches which are trying to maintain the view that women should not be ordained. For the most part, these churches are trying to maintain this position without attempting to provide a corresponding social structure to support it.⁷ For instance, they do not any longer normally teach very clearly about a difference in the roles of men and women. Yet, unless they do, their position on ordination will become more and more difficult for their people to understand and accept. When rules of order do not structure social life in a helpful way, such rules are often experienced as both restrictive and senseless. Of course, these churches could claim a basis other than social structure for holding that women should not be ordained. That is, they can, for example, insist that ordination is a sacramental matter which operates by an entirely different set of rules than the rest of life, and which should have no consequences for social structure. The effect of such an approach, however, would be to reinforce the already existing separation between “religion” (or “ritual”) and “real life.” Ordination can then be different because it operates in a different realm, one where only symbol is important and where sacramental actions have effects but do not order or structure the daily life of people. In short, if the churches that presently maintain the prohibition of women’s ordination do not (1) back up their position with clear instruction on family structure, and (2) provide their people with adequate social support to live a way of life different from the technological society around them (one which includes a role difference between men and women), these churches will fail to resolve the current controversy in the area. Either the issue of women’s ordination will remain a sore point, or it will contribute to an even greater separation between “sacramental” matters and the daily life of the Christian people.

Obviously these three reflections do not cover the subject of women’s ordination. However, they help to place the issue in its social context—a crucial perspective if the issue is to be resolved properly. On the one hand,

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those favoring women's ordination are confronted with the clear, consistent, authoritative statements of scripture and tradition. They are also faced with the prospect of choosing to become something that may be significantly different than the vision of God's people outlined in the New Testament. On the other hand, those opposing women's ordination must be ready to take more action than the mere defense of a single rule of order which seems to make little sense by itself in the present day. They, too, must face up to the full scriptural vision of the new humanity, and must be prepared to establish a whole Christian social order which will support and make sense of many of the individual prescriptions of authoritative Christian teaching.

Women and Occupations

THE question of occupations for women is often raised by Christians who take the scriptural teaching on the roles of men and women seriously. If, they ask, some differences should be maintained between the roles of men and women—differences which are expressed in household chores, for instance—should there not also be differences in the secular occupations of men and women? That is, should some occupations be particularly for men and others be particularly for women? The issue raised by these questions is actually not that of reshaping secular society, although it may appear to be so at first glance. For while certain *de facto* differences can be observed from occupation to occupation (some having considerably more men and others more women), there is little likelihood of reaching an agreement that any jobs in society should be restricted to one or another of the sexes. Technological society as it now exists is not amenable to being structured according to principles of sex roles, although in actual practice it normally has a certain amount of sexual differentiation. The practical issue which Christians face, then, is not that of restructuring modern technological society, but of establishing guidelines for Christian men and women in that society. In other words, the issue is whether Christian men and women should avoid certain occupations and enter others according to their sex.

As a basis for discussing this issue, it might be helpful to call to mind some general observations which were made earlier in this book. These observations concern both scriptural teaching and modern social conditions. First and most importantly, the scripture does not lay down commandments about what kind of occupations men should have and what kind women should have, or about what occupations are forbidden to one sex

or the other.* The only directives scripture clearly gives to men and women concern order in personal relationships. Moreover, women in scriptural times did far more than modern Christians, who have been influenced by the Victorian ideal, are sometimes led to believe. They worked hard, often at tasks that demanded physical strength. They engaged in a wide range of activities, including the sort of economic activities that are now sometimes considered to have been the domain of men (see Prv 31:10–20). To be sure, they did most of these things in the context of the home. There was a sense in which, occupationally speaking, “the woman’s place was in the home.” On the other hand, however, the home was then a far different place than it is now, and it fulfilled many economic and social-welfare functions that it no longer fulfills today.

A second observation from this book which bears on the issue of occupation is the importance of social roles. When scripture points to differences between men and women, it is concerned with social roles, not with particular activities and abilities.† Scripture teaches about order in social relationships within community situations. Even when it prohibits an activity for a woman—teaching, for example—the prohibition of that activity is not universal. Women are not forbidden all teaching. Nor does scripture state such prohibitions in terms of ability. An activity is prohibited for women when it expresses a social role that is reserved for certain men—namely, the role of being in overall personal authority over the lives of the men and women in the community. It could be misleading to say that scripture forbids certain activities to women. It would be more accurate to say that scripture enjoins certain social roles on men and women in communal situations, and that it forbids certain activities to women only in certain situations: when those activities are not appropriate to their social role.

Thirdly, there do seem to be some real differences between men and women in areas of occupation.‡ These differences involve ability, and also readiness to engage in particular tasks. Rather than being established through scriptural teaching, however, these differences are established empirically. Some of the empirical evidence along these lines comes from experimental research. Some evidence also comes from research which indicates that even when a social grouping makes a sustained effort to eliminate occupational differences between men and women, those differences

* See Chapter Five.

† See Chapter Five.

‡ See above, Chapter Sixteen, the discussion on experimental psychology and the results. See also Chapter Seventeen.

will reassert themselves.* In other words, such differences are real, although they are not explicitly described in scripture.

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These three general observations provide useful background for the discussion of the issue of occupations for women. In handling this issue, the primary concern for Christians attempting to follow scriptural teaching on the roles of men and women is the preservation of social roles in family and community. In this the major concern will normally be the family because the life of the community should reflect the life of the family, and also because occupational considerations tend to affect family life more immediately than community life as a whole. There might, in addition, be the additional judgment that a type of work, or the environment in which that work occurs, de-feminizes women or makes it more difficult for them to function in womanly roles in family or community, but the analysis of modern occupations involved in such a judgment goes beyond the scope of this book. For our purposes, the criteria that come from the needs of Christian family life will be the main concern.

A woman's job or occupation, then, should not conflict with or disrupt her position in the family. This is an important criterion, but it will not normally determine what type of job or occupation she gets. Instead, it might more likely affect specific jobs. If certain job opportunities would adversely affect a woman's social role relative to her husband, it would generally make sense for her to limit which positions she might choose. For instance, a woman who considers her relationship with her husband and family more important than occupational advancement would not be wise to hold a job involving significantly more managerial responsibility, prestige, or remuneration than that of her husband.

More commonly, the criterion of protecting the woman's position in the family is likely to indicate that she should not get a job which prevents her from "ruling the household" well or from making the home a center of childrearing and Christian service. In certain periods of her life, this criterion would point toward a part-time job at most. To be sure, economic survival is so difficult in some Christian families that they do not have the luxury to make this kind of choice, yet it is still the better choice when it is possible. For both men and women, then, their social roles should shape their approach to occupations, but, for the most part, their social roles will not dictate a limitation on types of occupation.

While the primary concern in the area of occupations is the preserva-

* See Chapter Seventeen, pp. 431-434.

tion of social roles, especially in the family, Christians must also be prepared to adapt the expression of these roles to certain elements of contemporary society. The need for this adaptation can be seen, for example, for the woman's role in the home. While Christian teaching on social roles emphasizes the woman's role in the home (her role of ruling the household), this teaching does not necessarily indicate that the women should always be at home. The significance of some women's household responsibilities would indicate that they should work only at home, but in modern society it is unlikely that most women will be in that position. A significant change has occurred in traditional family functions, with the result that the majority of a woman's traditional tasks (economic, social-welfare, educational) for the most part no longer occur at home. For women to remain at home under these circumstances would leave them underemployed and, in addition, underrepresented in some of the most vital areas of modern society. As a Christian community develops, more of these important activities might return to their traditional place in the home. Yet, short of a complete withdrawal of the Christian community from most modern social institutions, there will always be a significant need in technological society for women to work outside the home.

As long as Christians remain within contemporary social institutions, they must also adapt to another aspect of contemporary society: Jobs and occupations are set up according to functional specifications, not according to relationship roles. Christian women, then, must be prepared to hold a modern job in the way their employers expect of them. While they need not become de-feminized in doing so, Christian women do need to be prepared to work with both men and women differently on the job than they might within the Christian community. In the various social situations they may encounter at their jobs, Christian women might still make service to people's immediate needs a more major concern than men might, but their primary responsibility is still to do the jobs assigned to them.

Christian women often choose jobs and occupations that are more womanly. For instance, women have a natural tendency toward teaching and caring for smaller children and toward certain secretarial positions. These tendencies are healthy, and Christian women would often do well to incline toward them. In general, Christian women would do well to find work in positions which are normally for women or for both women and men, while Christian men would do better to find work in positions which are normally for men or for both sexes. Christians should look for jobs that affirm their roles as men and women. They should generally support those

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things in society that strengthen an expression of the differences between men and women, rather than being among those who are trying to destroy such expression. This does not mean that Christians should be heavily invested in maintaining men-women differences in various occupations. But it does mean that in a quiet way (1 Th 4:11) they should support what differences exist. As long as Christians intend to engage in contemporary technological society, and do not choose to withdraw from it or to work against its entire system, they must learn how to live within it.

On the other hand, Christians who work at jobs within an organization sponsored by a Christian community can operate according to a somewhat different set of principles than they can in a secular job. In general, a Christian organization within a Christian community should normally reflect the social roles of the community more fully than if it were not part of the Christian community. Managers, for instance, are often more than mere administrators; they act as heads of groupings of Christian brothers and sisters.* In fact, the more a Christian organization is formed by the scripture's instruction on relationships, the more the heads of the organization must function as elders as well as managers—taking a personal pastoral care for the workers. The social roles of the community will therefore be reflected in the Christian organization, and the organization will not be structured as much on functional lines as would a similar organization that was either secular or that was Christian but independent of a community context.

Christians should always be guided by the ideal of personal relations revealed in the scriptures, even when they find themselves in secular situations. Yet they should follow that ideal wisely. It does not make sense to treat a secular situation as though it were part of the Christian community. Neither does it make sense to treat a functionally structured situation as though it were structured according to relationships. A wise accommodation must be made to the circumstances. Since the Fall, the world has not been an ideal place to live. Even before the Fall, it may not have been a fully ideal place to live. The Lord may have left the human race a fair amount of room to improve as part of their responsibility for creation. In any case, Christians must take their given situation and work with it wisely in order to bring life to the world. This can often mean accommodating themselves to their situation in order to bring the Lord's life into it.

* On acting as "heads" of Christian groupings, see Chapter Five.

Legislation

ANOTHER difficult issue for Christians who hold to role differences between men and women is the question of governmental legislation. For one thing, very few people in contemporary society are willing to publicly defend or give legislative protection to social role differences of any sort. Moreover, from the Christian point of view, any piece of legislation is usually of mixed value. Legislation often attempts to deal with a real problem, but its proposed solution is often only partially acceptable from the Christian point of view. Normally, a Christian is forced to choose among the best of a number of imperfect alternatives. One alternative is to have no legislation. But it is often clear that some kind of action is needed, and a law which is a mixed blessing is frequently better than no law at all. A further difficulty is the pressure coming from a women's movement which is hostile to all expression of, and regard for, role differences between men and women, even the most minimal of them. Because the movement exists by ideological principles, it is not an interest group which can be readily engaged in discussion. It can either be appeased or resisted. Finally, the issue of legislation is very complex, not easily understood or dealt with. Because of all these difficulties in the area of legislation, Christians who believe in some kind of role differences for men and women often avoid dealing with it.

Evaluating legislation must begin with knowing the situation for which the laws are intended. In Westernized societies, legislation concerning roles for men and women is never intended for a community. Neither does it seek to structure good relationships among a group of people who have a personal commitment to one another. Rather, such legislation attempts to deal with a technological society and with the consequences of technological development. In a modern technological society, it is often the case, for example, that women need more legislation in order to "secure their rights." (To take one instance, a woman who is responsible for children and is without a husband can find that society is not set up in such a way as to allow her to easily fulfill her responsibilities—regardless of why she is without a husband.) In other words, Western legislation concerning roles for men and women is intended for a situation which differs greatly from the one envisioned in the last few chapters.

To know the situation in technological society well enough to evaluate different pieces of proposed legislation is certainly not an easy task. In

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recent years, the amount of sustained propaganda concerning men and women has made it very difficult to learn even the basic facts about how men-women differences affect their situation, and many "sociological studies" of what is currently happening to men and women are done to prove a preconceived point. Despite the many difficulties, however, the task of understanding the situation of our society should be attempted. The primary question for Christians facing the issue of legislation is not how a group of Christians should form a Christian community, but how a secular government can best care for the welfare of all its citizens in the midst of technological development. To answer that question, one should normally begin by understanding what is actually happening in society. One must then attempt to shape an intelligent legislative approach for the government in view of that understanding.

At the same time as they are seeking to understand the legal needs of modern technological society in the area of roles for men and women, Christians should be aware of the fact that there are real differences between men and women which have been established by contemporary social sciences as well as such differences can be. A great deal of evidence also indicates that societies have functioned best when these differences were taken into account and worked with, rather than when they were simply ignored as though men and women were the same, and as though they were isolated individuals outside of any social structure. In addition to actually perceiving that differences between men and women do, in fact, exist, Christians should be aware that this truth is one of the points of most determined opposition from many segments of the women's movement. For this reason, Christians can well be wary of most of that movement's analyses of the situations that call for legislative action, because these analyses normally presume that men and women should not be treated differently in social life. Such analyses then lead to legislative proposals that would further the very trends in society which cause the analyses in the first place. An example of this process might be illuminating. A study claims to discover that women are being discriminated against in certain job situations. It is likely that those job situations were analyzed on the basic assumption that men and women should be doing the same things in approximately equal numbers; if this were found to be not the case, the obvious conclusion is that discrimination must be going on. Having collected evidence that men and women are not doing the same jobs in equal numbers, the study then proceeds to recommend certain legislation that would result in approximately the same numbers of men and women occupying those

jobs. Such a study might just as well have skipped the step of collecting data: The legislative recommendations proceed fairly directly from the assumptions on which the study was made.

One can see from the preceding discussion that it is not easy for a Christian to sort through the issue of legislation. Yet a rough guideline might be as follows: Legislation which provides protection for women should be supported by Christians, but legislation which takes active steps to make men and women the same should be resisted. Examples of legislation which provides protection for women are legislative efforts to guarantee women equal pay for equal work, and to protect women's ability to establish good credit ratings. An example of legislation which takes active steps to make men and women the same is that legislation which presupposes and attempts to enforce the view that men and women should hold all positions in equal numbers (for instance, legislation which calls for governmental councils to be made up of men and women in approximately equal numbers). Other examples of this type of legislation are laws banning textbooks which show men and women having different interests or engaging in different activities, or which encourage women to be more interested in marriage and family than in outside careers. At times, the distinction between these two types of legislation is not easily made. While the guideline proposed here can, at times, be difficult to apply, it can also be very helpful in highlighting the significant difference between legislation which attempts to protect women from discrimination and that which attempts to eliminate such discrimination by erasing the differences between men and women.

Legislation

There is a good reason for suggesting that Christians should favor protective legislation. This reason, discussed in more detail in Chapter Eighteen, is a simple one: A technological society, unlike a Christian community, must provide protection for its members according to the kind of social relationships which form in a technological situation. The ideological principle that government should protect people's rights is one somewhat well-accepted way of providing that protection. Christians would ordinarily do well to support the principle that certain rights of all individuals should be protected simply on the basis of their common humanity. This principle will lead to protection for Christians as well as for others. In the absence of a better means of protecting people in a secular technological society, Christians would be wise to support the most effective one available. However, Christians need not adopt that principle as coming from God. Nor should they assume that the approach to protecting

people in Christian communal life should be the same as that adopted by a secular, functionalized society. Rather, they should understand that the principle is useful in certain social situations.

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On the other hand, there is also good reason for resisting legislation designed to make men and women the same. Such resistance is a matter of claiming the freedom for Christians and their views that their society allows. It is also a matter of making use of that wisdom taught by Christian revelation, but which applies to both Christian and secular concerns. Men and women are different. Normally, attempts to totally eliminate these differences between them end in failure. There is no reason why secular society cannot allow for those differences, and even foster them intelligently within the bounds set by modern technological life. In doing so, society can profit from them. What is more, there is no reason why the government should allow one particular ideology to have access to everyone's life so as to condition people to support that ideology in the future. One of the areas where Christians should be most eager to see limits placed on the government is in its attempts to condition children through education and mold public opinion through media. Every time Christians support such an effort, they are helping to build a weapon that may easily be used against them.

Although the area of legislation concerning roles of men and women is complex and difficult, it is an important area for Christians to understand properly. Genuine differences between men and women remain, despite pressures from various sectors of our society to level them. Wise and useful legislation will attempt to protect women in technological society, but it will not attempt to eliminate the differences between men and women. There is a tremendous difference between protecting the possibility of women being senators, and insisting that women compose half the senate. There is an even greater difference between offering women legislative protection, and conditioning both women and men to expect that social roles should be eliminated. It is here that the real battle over legislation must be fought.

A few short pages can hardly do justice to issues like legislation, ordination, and occupations for women. Full treatments of these subjects, though, are well beyond the realm of this chapter or this book. The aim of the preceding discussions has been far more modest: to examine the considerations of social roles among men and women as these roles bear upon ordination, occupation, and legislation for women. Social roles considerations, however, offer only a single component of the solution to these

broad-ranging issues; much of the discussion necessary to a full solution must be held on other grounds. Because of the limited scope of this discussion, the comments offered above remain somewhat sketchy and are not in themselves intended to add up to a set of clear, practical solutions. Instead, they are meant to illustrate one aspect of these issues, thereby contributing an important, and often neglected, perspective to the overall discussion.

Christians in the World

CHRISTIANS must live in the world, not solely in the Christian community. Thus they must have a dual subordination. They are citizens of heaven, and in their hearts they are subordinate to spiritual authority because they have accepted the Lord as the one they follow. But they are also subject to the governments and social systems of this earth, and out of reverence for the Lord they must be subordinate to them for the sake of good order. In their subordination to the governments and the social systems of this world, they will follow different principles than in their subordination to spiritual authority. They cannot treat society as though it were the Christian community, and they cannot treat the Christian community as though it were society—unless, of course, they find themselves in a place that is a Christian society (in which case the terms of the question are somewhat different). Christians should refrain from trying to make secular society act as if it follows the Lord; at the same time, they should serve society with the wisdom the Lord provides, to the extent that this wisdom can be put to good use. Christians must also live in a secular social system which follows very different principles than a Christian social system, and, at the same time, live in a Christian social system. They must, in other words, be in the world but not of it (Jn 17:15–16), obey God and not men (Acts 5:29), and be submissive to rulers and authorities, ready for any honest work, showing perfect courtesy toward all men (Ti 3:1–2).

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AFTERWORD

PHYSICAL EXERCISE has become popular in many places in the Western world as people have become aware of the fact that life in a technological society can have adverse effects on their physical well-being. Yet exercise seems to be a very strange activity. Human beings have worked for hundreds of years to develop techniques to free themselves from the necessity of physical exertion. Now many people are building extra physical exertion into their lives—and pointless physical exertion at that. Running, for example, does not bring a person to any destination in particular. Normally, in fact, runners return to the same point from which they started without doing anything—apart from exercising—to justify their trip.

The popularity of exercise is a symptom of the fact that human beings were not designed to live in modern technological society. Modern society does not allow everything in human nature to work well. Human beings were designed to do more work involving physical exertion than what ordinary daily life allows for many of them today. Hence the exercise to compensate.

Our modern technological society also “leaves out” other aspects of our human nature. The differences between men and women are one of those aspects. Men and women are different. Scripture teaches that they were created to be different, because God has a purpose for that difference. Common sense indicates that men and women are different—not only in the obvious physical ways but also in their psychological makeup. Modern social science has been able to confirm that indeed there are real, biologically rooted differences between men and women, and that these

differences have led all human societies in the past to structure their life so that men and women had different social roles. To say that men and women are different seems like stressing the obvious. Indeed, in a less politicized time, this would be so. Much of what has been written in this book, in fact, amounts to restressing the obvious.

We do need to find ways to live out our differences of age and sex in modern functionalized society, a society that tends to leave out these aspects of our humanity—or tends to see them as inconveniences. There are advantages to having both men and women. Men and women are able to make different, complementary contributions in human life. Perhaps the pastoral recommendations made in this book do not express the best way of living out these differences. But some way has to be found, some way that corresponds to what every human society has done in the past. Some guidelines like these, at least, have to be developed.

Christians do not have to live like the nations around them. In a society that is losing its grasp on some basic human realities, Christians have the opportunity to show that God's revelation allows them to live with greater wisdom. Christians should be able to have a life together that draws the full advantage from the differences God created into men and women. They are called, after all, to be fashioned in God's image and likeness, to be the new Adam, to be human beings who reflect God's purposes for the human race.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

THE notes in this book contain extensive bibliographical references. The present bibliography offers a list of recommended works for further reading. To say that they are “recommended” does not indicate full approval of these books or articles, either in their approach or in their conclusions. Rather, it indicates that each book and article, in whole or in part, contains important material for understanding Christian social roles for men and women. These books and articles often contain useful substantiation for the positions taken in the present volume or fuller developments of some of its arguments. Taken together they cover the same ground as this book.

ON THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING

Barth, Markus. “Excursus on Head and Body” in *Ephesians 1–3*, Section XI in *Ephesians 4–6*. Vols. 34 and 34a of *The Anchor Bible*. New York: Doubleday, 1974.

In this study Barth offers a highly developed exegesis of Ephesians 5:21–33. In doing so he goes beyond the passage itself to treat important issues which it raises. Overall, this is a very helpful study for the key New Testament texts.

Boucher, Madeleine. “Some Unexplored Parallels to 1 Corinthians 11:11–12 and Galatians 3:28: The New Testament on the Role of Women.” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (January 1969): 50–58.

This is a brief, well-written article comparing some rabbinic texts with certain New Testament passages on men and women. It is most helpful for the clarity of its approach to Galatians 3:28, where Boucher

distinguishes between issues the passage might raise in a first century mind and those it might raise for people in the twentieth century.

Ryrie, Charles. *The Role of Women in the Church*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1970.

The best introductory survey of scripture and early church texts available. It is written from a conservative evangelical perspective and does not treat much of the recent discussion, scholarly or popular, on the subject, but it is more accurate than the feminist surveys that are available. His conclusions about the active role of women in community ministry differ from those here.

Sampley, J. Paul. *And the Two Shall Become One Flesh*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971.

This monograph is perhaps the best single exposition of Ephesians 5:21–33. Its work substantiates the exegetical positions of this book, although, because it deals only with the exegesis of the text, it does not attempt to address many of the issues treated here.

Zerbst, Fritz. *The Office of Woman in the Church*. Translated by A. G. Merkens. St. Louis: Concordia, 1955.

Zerbst has written an excellent book on the subject. His very helpful survey, however, is intended to cover ministry in the church, and it treats only indirectly the issues concerning family. His work substantiates the positions taken in this book. Zerbst offers a useful European bibliographical survey, which unfortunately stops at 1955.

BACKGROUND TO THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING

Derrett, J. Duncan M. *Jesus's Audience*. New York: Seabury Press, 1973.

Derrett's first lecture provides a good survey of the social history of the New Testament as important background to the key texts and issues.

Jeremias, Joachim. *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. London: SCM Press, 1969.

The section of the book entitled "The Maintenance of Racial Purity" is one of the most helpful surveys available of the role of birth and race insofar as they relate to Jewish social structure at the time of Jesus. This provides useful background to underlying concepts of social structure in the New Testament.

Strack, Hermann L., and Paul Billerbeck. *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*. Munich: Beck, 1922–26.

All of the sections on the key texts are of value. This is a standard reference work, but it is surprisingly often ignored by feminist writers. It

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is an essential tool for viewing the New Testament against the rabbinic background, and its commentary is often illuminating.

Vos, Clarence J. *Woman in Old Testament Worship*. Delft: Judels & Brinkman, 1968.

The central thesis of this book—that woman held a position of honor and importance in Old Testament Israel, and that she engaged in worship (although not under obligation as did her husband, who represented the family)—substantiates the position of this book. Not all of Vos's specific points are as sound as his main thesis, but the book is generally of value.

PATRISTIC MATERIALS

Daniélou, Jean. *The Ministry of Women in the Early Church*. London: Faith Press, 1961.

Daniélou gives the best short summary and analysis of New Testament and Patristic evidence as it relates to the ministry of women. His work substantiates the positions of this book.

Gryson, Roger. *Le ministère des femmes dans l'Église ancienne*. Gembloux: Duculot, 1972.

Gryson offers the best full survey to date of the Patristic texts on the ministry of women in the church. His discussion of the issues involved, however, is often weak.

ON THE QUESTION OF THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE AND MODERN BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP

Childs, Brevard S. *Biblical Theology in Crisis*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1970.

This book contains a helpful analysis of the problems of interpretation and modern biblical criticism. The analysis substantiates, in large part, and provides historical background for, the position of this book.

ON DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

Bardwick, Judith M. *Psychology of Women*. New York: Harper & Row, 1971.

This is probably the best single book on the psychology of women. It harmonizes well with the position taken in the present volume.

Hutt, Corinne. *Males and Females*. Ontario: Penguin, 1972.

This is an excellent brief summary of the differences between men and women, mainly from the point of view of psychology.

Mead, Margaret. *Male and Female*. New York: Dell, 1949.

This book includes penetrating and insightful reflections on the social roles of men and women based on many years of cross-cultural field experience.

Tiger, Lionel. *Men in Groups*. New York: Vintage Books, 1969.

This book presents a challenging theory of the origin and function of men's and women's roles in the human social structure which has yet to be seriously answered. It goes beyond what is attempted in this book in its efforts to formulate a view of the origins of social structural differences between men and women, but presents a standpoint worth considering.

Tiger, Lionel, and Joseph Shepher. *Women in the Kibbutz*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975.

This is a key sociological study documenting the resistance of men's and women's roles to radical ideological change. It points to the biological origin of men's and women's roles.

van den Berghe, Pierre L. *Age and Sex in Human Societies: A Biosocial Perspective*. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1973.

This is a fine summary of the differences between men and women, including chapters on such areas as primatology, cross-cultural studies, and psychology. It is honest, useful, and clear, although it is sometimes colored by a leftist political viewpoint.

SOCIAL HISTORY AND CULTURAL ANALYSIS

Ariès, Philippe. *Centuries of Childhood*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1962.

———. "The Family, Prison of Love." *Psychology Today*, August 1975: 53–58.

The above writings by Ariès give an eye-opening and currently very influential perspective on the social history of the family. They are useful for understanding social life in traditional societies and therefore for understanding social life in New Testament society.

Berger, Peter, Brigitte Berger, and Hansfried Kellner. *The Homeless Mind*. New York: Random House, 1973.

Berger et al. give a fine sociological analysis of the elements of technological society and its approach to personal relationships. Their analysis supports much of what is said in this book.

Ellul, Jacques. *The Technological Society*. New York: Knopf, 1973.

This book is a profound analysis of the development of technological society. Its scope is much wider than that of the present volume, but its

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reservations about the quality of life in technological society support the conclusions drawn here.

Laslett, Peter. *The World We Have Lost*. London: Methuen, 1965.

Laslett describes concretely many of the differences between traditional society and technological society. This book is helpful background for understanding the social context for traditional men's and women's roles.

Levy, Marion J., Jr. *Modernization: Latecomers and Survivors*. New York: Basic Books, 1972.

A prominent sociologist points out many of the important but unnoticed social novelties of modern society. This book is short, readable, and helpful.

Lutzbetack, Louis J. *The Church and Cultures*. South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1975.

This book is a basic presentation of cultural anthropology as applied to Christian pastoral and missionary work. It provides a perspective on culture that is the same as the framework of this book.

Nisbet, Robert. *The Quest for Community*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1969.

An excellent work of social and intellectual history with an analysis very similar to that found in this volume. This book traces the loss of community in modern society to the rise of individualism, the modern nation-state, and the destruction of important intermediate groupings such as the family, the church community, and the guild.

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S ROLES

IN THE MODERN WORLD ▸ SPECIAL PROBLEMS

Gilder, George F. *Sexual Suicide*. New York: Quadrangle, 1973.

This is a helpful analysis of modern problems in the area of men's and women's roles. Gilder takes a different approach from the present volume, but provides a useful view on the dangers of the feminist program.

Sexton, Patricia Cayo. *The Feminized Male*. New York: Vintage, 1969.

———. "How the American Boy Is Feminized." *Psychology Today* 3, no. 8 (January 1970): 23–29, 66–67.

Sexton raises important questions about modern changes in the American male. The book provides a helpful analysis of the difficulties, though it is almost completely lacking in an understanding of social roles.

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NOTES

THIS book is designed to answer the question of what Christians should do about the roles of men and women in the modern world. Consequently, it touches on a great many areas, each of which has been written about extensively. A book such as this cannot survey all the relevant material in each area.

On the other hand, this book is written in the conviction that a broader perspective is needed than that which is normally provided by most of those who write about social roles. Most of the books which advocate an approach to the roles of men and women do so without adequately surveying the relevant material on the subject. They rely heavily upon one author or a school of authors in controversial areas without seeming to realize that there are other valid approaches and without justifying their own choice of approach. As the Notes on Method will attempt to establish, feminist authors are particularly guilty of this, probably because their purpose is polemical.

A broader survey would also be helpful for scholarly writers who touch on the area of social roles for men and women. Much exegesis would be done differently, for instance, if exegetes were more aware of the work of social historians on the differences between traditional and technological society. Many exegetes would probably treat Paul's arguments from Genesis differently if they had before them all the relevant modern social scientific data on the biological origin of the differences between men and women.

The approach adopted in these footnotes is a "survey" approach. The survey is reasonably complete for all the major works on approaches to the roles of men and women in the modern world up to the date of the completion

of the text, and it is complete on the works those books draw upon. It is, in other words, a complete survey of all the significant works which play a part in the current discussion of social roles for men and women.

In addition, the survey covers the current scholarly approaches to the various areas touched upon in the argument of the text, even when these approaches are not represented in the current discussion of social roles. These notes do not try to present the history of the discussion in these areas. Neither do they attempt to be as complete in surveying works not written or translated into English unless the English sources indicate the importance of a work available only in another language.

The contribution of this book does not lie in original research. Rather, it lies in the framework of concepts and arguments that makes possible the assessing of different bodies of literature and thought. Perhaps it also lies in showing how much is being neglected or ignored in the current discussion of the roles of men and women.

CHAPTER I FROM THE BEGINNING

1. For a short exposition of this controversy, see J. C. Fenton, *St. Matthew* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1963), 307–308 (cf. R. V. G. Tasker, *St. Matthew* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961], 178–180). For a fuller presentation, see Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, vol. 1 (Munich: Beck, 1928), 312–321.
2. M Git. 9, 10.
3. In this view, Jesus was in harmony with views contemporary to him which saw Adam before the Fall as the ideal man. For a summary, see *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT)*, ed. G. Kittel, trans. G. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 1:142–143.
4. For some examples, see Robert Graves, *Adam's Rib* (London: Trianon Press, 1955). Sr. Albertus Magnus McGrath, in *What a Modern Catholic Believes about Women* (Chicago: St. Thomas More Press, 1972), 101, also appears to take this view: “The modern biblical scholar would not accept Genesis 1–11 as in any sense literal history or as description either of what had been or what should be according to God’s plan.” Her use of the Genesis passages, however, is more in accord with view #2, parallel to the positions mentioned in the following note.
5. For some examples, see S. Hooke, *Peake’s Commentary on the Bible* (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1962), 177; also W. R. Bowie, *The Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. 1 (New York: Abingdon, 1952), 463.
6. For some examples, see F. Schaeffer, *Genesis in Space and Time*, 41–43; also M. Kline, *New Bible Commentary*, 79–80.
7. For some examples, see G. von Rad, *Genesis*, trans. J. H. Marks (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961), 30–42. Von Rad discusses the “saga” in Genesis and its relation to history.

- While he is speaking of the later chapters of Genesis, others would see the principles as applying to the earlier chapters of the book as well. See also Paul K. Jewett, *Man as Male and Female* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1975), 122; C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), 77–88; and James Barr, *The Bible in the Modern World* (London: SCM Press, 1973), 172.
8. Among those who take this position are H. Lindell, “Egalitarianism and Scriptural Infallibility,” *Christianity Today*, March 1976, 45–46; also Schaeffer, 41–43; Kline, 79–80.
9. For helpful discussions of the purpose of those accounts, see von Rad, 22; J. L. McKenzie, *The Two-Edged Sword* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1956), 113–115.
10. See the quote in the footnote on p. 8 for a statement of such an approach.
11. See, among others who make this point, von Rad, 55; U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, pt. 1, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1961), 57; Bruce Vawter, *A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1969), 175.
12. An example of such overinterpretation can be found in V. Mollenkott, “Women and the Bible,” *Sojourners*, February 1976, 22.
13. For the first view, see Maly, *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. Raymond Brown (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 12; John Marks, *The Interpreter’s One-Volume Commentary on the Bible* (New York: Abingdon, 1971), 4–5. For the second view, see McKenzie, 113.
14. For a full discussion of this idea with later applications, see DeFraigne, *Adam and the Family of Man* (New York: Alba House, 1965).
15. On Adam’s being portrayed in Genesis as God’s son, see Cassuto, 135, and von Rad, 80. A. Feuillet takes a different and less likely approach in his reference to the groomsmen as *shoshebin* in “La dignité et le rôle de la femme d’après quelques textes Pauliniens: comparaison avec l’Ancien Testament,” *New Testament Studies (NTS)* 21, no. 2 (1975): 157–191.
16. For some instances, see von Rad, 87; Cassuto, 130; Vawter, *On Genesis*, 74; Maly, 12.
17. For rib as “side” or “flank” see R. Batey, “The $\mu\alpha\ \Sigma\alpha\rho\ \xi$ Union of Christ and the Church,” *NTS* 13, no. 3 (April 1967): 271; Q. M. Adams, *Neither Male Nor Female* (Elms Court, Great Britain: Arthur H. Stockwell, 1973), 18. For some helpful discussion on the significance of “rib,” see Marks, 5; Cassuto, 134.
18. On this point, Jewett (120–121) attempts to draw a sharp distinction between v. 23 and v. 24, between Adam’s statement (part of the narrative) and the following verse which he views as a theological reflection on Adam’s statement which is subsequent and secondary. His purpose in drawing such a sharp distinction is to distinguish between sexuality (i.e., being men and women) and marriage, and to assert that it is sexuality which is of primary significance here, and marriage as an expression of sexuality is only of secondary importance. While the distinction is important for him, it is not important for our purposes. His reflection on these passages, however, is accurate. He says, “In other words, in the Old Testament as a whole the presupposition of marriage merges with the reality of marriage. In the Jewish scriptures, the man and the woman in their mutual relationship are viewed almost exclusively as husband and wife, as father and mother.” This observation is correct from the exegetical viewpoint. The Old Testament clearly views marriage and family life (including reproduction) as the purpose for which God made man male and female. However, to attempt to separate v. 24 from v. 23 and to say that the narrative represents a more primitive view and the following verse contains a subsequent and secondary theological reflection is to make a division in the text which seems unwarranted.

19. For helpful discussions on “cleave” see Brueggeman, 540; Cassuto, 137; Feuillet, 178.
20. See G. Tvard, *Woman in Christian Tradition* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1973), 6. Tvard’s interpretation of Genesis is somewhat eccentric and seems to be dictated more by an approach to men-women relationships that comes from modern society than it does from something that is actually in the text.
21. Von Rad, 80.
- Pages 19–35 22. For interpretations of the word “fit” (*keneged*) see, e.g., von Rad, 80; Cassuto, 127–128; Vos, 16–17.
23. For helpful observations here, see Vos, 18n24; Maly, 12.
24. Vos, 18n24.
25. For a discussion of the man’s representative headship in Israelite society, see Vos, 49–50.

CHAPTER 2

SIN AND THE NEW ADAM

- Ambrose, in *De Paradiso*, 309–356, discusses at length the consequences of the Fall on man’s and woman’s relationship with God and with one another. Cf. von Rad, 87–93.
- Some commentators have understood Satan’s approaching woman first as a result of her sexual attractiveness and his desire for her. See Hanson, *Studies in the Pastoral Epistles* (London: SPCK, 1968), 65–77. On woman as more appealing, see Tribble, 256. The more common and more likely interpretation involves seeing some sort of heightened vulnerability on the part of woman. E.g., von Rad, 87–88; J. Bailey, “Initiation and the Primal Woman in Gilgamesh and Gen 2–3,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, June 1970, 148; E. Stein, “The Vocation of Man and Woman According to Nature and to Grace,” in *Writings of Edith Stein*, ed. Hilda Graef (London: Peter Owen, 1956), 105–106; Benno Jacob, *Genesis, The First Book of the Bible* (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1974), 22.
- Those subscribing to view 1 fall into two very different categories. There are those (e.g., Schaeffer, 93–94; cf. Philo, “On the Creation of the World,” *The Works of Philo Judaeus*, trans. C. D. Yonge [London: George Bell & Sons, 1890], 50–51) who see subordination as a result of the curse, yet understand Genesis 3:16 as something to be followed. On the other hand, the view has recently been taken up by many feminists (e.g., Tribble, 257; Kress, *Whither Womankind?* [St. Meinrad: Abbey Press, 1975], 26–28) whose conclusions differ vastly from those in the first category. They see Genesis 3:16 and subordination as something to be abolished. For those holding view 2, in opposition to view 1, see as an example, Vos, 28ff., in his discussion of man’s “headship” become “lordship,” and Feuillet, 168. For an example of view 3, see Ambrose, *De Paradiso*, 350: “Servitude, therefore, of this sort is a gift of God. Wherefore, compliance with this servitude is to be reckoned among blessings.”
- Some examples of the positive usage of *mashal* and *kyrieuō* in scripture are listed below. Often, they refer to God’s rule over his people or over creation.

mashal: Jgs 8:22–23; Ps 59:13; 66:7; 89:9; 103:19; Is 40:10; Zech 6:13

kyrieuō: Rom 14:9; 1 Tim 6:15

in Septuagint (often translating *mashal*): 2 Chr 14:7; 2 Chr 20:6; Dn 5:21

- Among the scholars who hold this position are Vos, 30f.; Maly, 13; Marks, 5–6; Kline, 85; and Jacob, 30.

6. For a fuller discussion of these concepts, see C. K. Barrett, *From First Adam to Last* (New York: Scribner's, 1962). Jesus is in many aspects a contrast to Adam and hence has been described as a "converse type."
7. The title "Son of Man," which Jesus most commonly used for himself, possibly has reference to his being the new Adam. For this understanding, see Jeremias, *TDNT*, 1:141-143.
8. Batey, 280, makes this point, as does N. A. Dahl, "Christ, Creation and the Church," *The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 438-443.
9. See, for one example of a discussion that begins with such an assumption as if there were no alternative, Scanzoni and Hardesty, *All We're Meant to Be* (Waco: Word Books, 1974), 110.
10. Jewett, 8. The foreword, quoted in the text, was written by Virginia Mollenkott.
11. Scanzoni/Hardesty, 110.
12. Swidler, 29.

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CHAPTER 3

THE FAMILY ▷ HUSBANDS AND WIVES

1. The format of this chapter is a commentary on a number of New Testament passages which illustrate the basic pattern of family roles for men and women in the family. A comprehensive social history of Jewish and Christian family roles in biblical times is beyond the scope of this book. The footnotes, however, will cite fuller treatments of the different points and provide justifications for the points made here from the perspective of social historical study. Most helpful among the available books have been: Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, vol. 1 (New York: McGraw Hill, 1961); J. Pederson, *Israel: Its Life and Culture*, vols. 1-4 (Copenhagen: Povel Branner, 1926, 1940); David R. Mace, *Hebrew Marriage* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1953); J. Duncan M. Derrett, *Jesus's Audience* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1973); Raphael Patai, *Sex and Family in the Bible and the Middle East* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1959); and Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1969).
2. The description of the importance of household life contained in this paragraph holds true not only for biblical society, but for most if not all pre-industrial societies. See pp. 502-505 for a discussion of the family in traditional and technological society.
3. This parallel between household and community is related to the earlier Jewish conception of the nation as an amalgamation of tribes, a family descended from a common ancestor. Among those who discuss this, see Mace, 66. The Christian community is not a blood grouping, but it is nonetheless viewed as a "brotherhood" or "race" or family grouping in the New Testament.
4. On the term *proistēmi*, see Reicke, *TDNT*, 6:701-702. As to other possible translations, the passage in 1 Tm 3:4-5, which contains this root twice, has for instance, been rendered alternatively: "rule" (KJV), "manage" (RSV, NAB), "control" (NEB), and "preside over" (American Bible Union Version).
5. Reicke makes this point in his discussion of *proistēmi* in *TDNT*, 6:702.
6. For the use of "shepherd," see Jeremias, *TDNT*, 6:485-499.
7. Various features of the portrait of Job given in the text can be found in Torczyner, *The Book of Job* (Jerusalem: Kiryath Sepher, 1967), 410-419; S. A. Hirsch, *Commentary on*

- the Book of Job* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1905), 193–198; Kissane, *The Book of Job* (Dublin: Brown and Nolan, 1939), 181–194. See also Pope, *Job*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 15 (New York: Doubleday, 1973), 207–216; R. A. F. MacKenzie, *JBC*, 527.
8. Though the Jewish father of Jesus' day held substantial power over the lives of his family, his use of authority was formed and restricted by accepted standards of righteousness. See Patai, 122; Stuart A. Queen and Robert W. Habenstein, *The Family in Various Cultures* (New York: Lippincott, 1952), 166–167.
 9. Many passages concerning God's requirement of righteousness in Israel's rulers can be found throughout the scripture. For the first three kings, for example, see 1 Sm 12:14–15, 13:13–14, and 15:10–23 (Saul); 2 Sm 12:7–14 (David); 1 Kgs 3:14 (Solomon). See further 2 Kgs 22:14–20; Jer 22:3–5.
 10. Homily 20 on Ephesians (*PG* 62:134, 142). English translation in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff, vol. 13 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), 146, 148.
 11. For discussions of the superiority of this title, see A. Cohen, *Proverbs* (London: The Soncino Press, 1952), 211. Rabbi S. Hirsch, "The Jewish Woman," in *In Accordance with His Will* (Oak Park, 1976), 40; J. T. Forestell, *JBC*, 505.
 12. Cohen, pp. xi, xii, comments along these lines in his introduction to the Proverbs.
 13. For a helpful discussion of this view see R. B. Y. Scott, *Proverbs and Ecclesiastes*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 18 (New York: Doubleday, 1965), 3–9.
 14. Forestell, 505, and Cohen, 211, among others argue for seeing the poem this way.
 15. There is not adequate evidence from contemporary sources to definitively describe the arrangement, but anthropological studies of comparable societies indicate that the arrangement suggested here would be a likely one. See comments on division of labor by sex in Roy G. D'Andrade, "Sex Differences and Cultural Institutions," in *The Development of Sex Differences*, ed. Eleanor E. Maccoby (Stanford University Press, 1966), 176; and George Murdock, *Social Structure* (New York: Macmillan, 1949), 7.
 16. Cohen, 211, and Hirsch, 40, substantiate this interpretation.
 17. Markus Barth's comments in this regard are useful. See his *Ephesians 4–6*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 34a (New York: Doubleday, 1974), 711. One is also reminded of such Old Testament women as Jael and Judith as figures who render more relevant the military allusion mentioned above.
 18. *PG* 62:136.
 19. Hirsch, 41n1, comments helpfully on the economic significance of the woman's accumulation of savings.
 20. The most pre-industrial societies foster a significant female economic role as a result of the importance of the family unit. See Judith Blake, "The Changing Status of Women in Developed Countries," *Scientific American*, September 1974, 138; and Chapter Eighteen in this volume.
 21. On the function of the city gates, see Cohen, 6; Pope, 204–210; R. B. Y. Scott, *The Way of Wisdom* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), 8.
 22. For example, Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John I–XII*, Anchor Bible, vol. 29 (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 218.
 23. On the mother's role in raising the children, see *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 6 (Jerusalem: Keter, 1971), 1167. See also de Vaux, 48–49; H. Daniel-Rops, *Daily Life in the Time of Jesus* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1962), 112.

24. *Tos. Kidd.* 1:11 (and its parallels). See further, Strack/Billerbeck, 2:380.
25. For helpful treatments of the Jewish father-son relationship, see Gerald Blidstein, *Honor Thy Father and Mother* (New York: KTAV, 1975); Mace, 166; Patai, 125-127; Schrenk, *TDNT*, 5:974-975.
26. On customs of inheritance and the parable of the prodigal son, see J. D. M. Derrett, *Law in the New Testament* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1970), 110-111; and Schrenk, *TDNT*, 5:983-984.
27. Even more, the paradigm father-son relationship was the relationship between the father and the eldest son, because the eldest son most fully succeeded to his father's place. On the father-son relationship as a stable adult relationship, see Blidstein, pp. xii-xiii, 33, 119-121, 140.
28. Mace, 72-73, discusses the son's succeeding to his father's place.
29. Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood* (New York: Random House, 1962), provides a good description of how apprenticing worked in Western European society during the Middle Ages. However, apprenticeship was probably more common in Medieval Europe than among Jews or Christians in New Testament times. The rabbi-disciple relationship is the one commonly described instance of it in scripture. Apprenticeship outside of the master-disciple relationship and special hardship cases was probably uncommon in first-century Palestine. "In a simple society like that of Palestine, a trade would be taught within a family" (R. Brown, 218).
30. M. Aberbach, "The Relations Between Master and Disciple in the Talmudic Age," in *Essays Presented to Chief Rabbi Israel Brodie*, ed. Zimmels, Rabinowitz and Firestein, Jews' College Publications, New Series, no. 3 (London: The Soncino Press, 1967), 1ff. For a comparison of the master-disciple relationship with the father-son relationship, see Blidstein, 137-157.
31. For fuller descriptions of the rearing of daughters, see Daniel-Rops, 112; and Mace, 215.
32. In fact, it was common to marry a cousin or a niece. In such a case the breach between the wife's two families is substantially reduced. See Jeremiah, 365-366.
33. On the father's responsibility for discipline, see Mace, 215.

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CHAPTER 4

THE FAMILY ▷ KEY TEXTS

1. The concept of biblical theology used here is one which sees biblical theology as a descriptive, historical discipline. This would be the approach to biblical theology of, for example, James Barr in *The Bible in the Modern World* (London: SCM Press, 1975), 135-136, or George E. Ladd in "The Search for Perspective," *Interpretation* 25, no. 1 (January 1971): 48. There is a different approach to biblical theology which would emphasize its character as a theology. Hence it would adopt the view as a premise of biblical theology that the Bible has a unity and that the role of biblical theology is to state that unity either for the Bible as a whole, or for parts of it, or for an aspect of "Biblical thought." Heinrich Schlier expresses such an approach forcefully in "The Meaning and Function of a Theology of the New Testament," in Herbert Vorgrimler, *Dogmatic vs. Biblical Theology* (London: Burns and Oates, 1964), 90-94. Such a notion of biblical theology comes closest to the phrase "the teaching of scripture" as used in this book. See Brevard Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis*

(Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1970), 97–107, for a helpful survey of this issue and some of the consequences of it. For the most part, however, any approach to biblical theology makes the Bible itself a central concern. Here, the concern is with the teaching which the Bible gives on a subject, and hence exegetical and descriptive material is only brought in insofar as it clarifies the message of the New Testament as to what should be the social roles of men and women.

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2. Some who write on this passage begin the passage at Ephesians 5:21, often on the basis that v. 22 depends upon the preceding verse for its verb. An accurate way of understanding verse 21 is as a heading for a whole set of instructions to follow—the first being to husbands and wives (beginning in v. 22). The position of Ephesians 5:21 will become clear in the analysis of the structure of Ephesians 5:21–6:9 on p. 77. See J. Sampley, *And the Two Shall Become One Flesh* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 116, and Barth, 608–609, as examples of perceiving Ephesians 5:21 as an opening statement to the entire subsequent section (Eph 5:22–6:9).
3. The New Testament “household codes,” or *Haustafeln*, have been the subject of considerable scholarly discussion and debate for decades. The issues of whether or not they represent an earlier Christian catechism, and whether the roots of this material are Hellenistic, Jewish, or exclusively Christian in origin have been frequently discussed. For a good short survey of recent scholarship in the area, see Crouch, 9–31.
4. Barth, 607. Among the commentaries on Ephesians, Barth’s is especially valuable. His work will be cited frequently in the following discussion of this passage. Another work containing very useful material is J. Sampley’s book cited above. It will also appear in the following footnotes with some frequency.
5. Barth, 608, 662–668, provides a more in-depth justification for this approach to “the fear of Christ”/“the fear of the Lord.” For further helpful development of this subject, see H. R. Balz, *TDNT*, 9:189–219, as well as Balz’s article “Furcht vor Gott?” *Evangelische Theologie* 29, no. 12 (1969): 626–644, and J. Becker, “Gottesfurcht im Alten Testament,” *Analecta Biblica* 25 (1965): 85–111.
6. John 4:18 could be read to contradict this view. 1 John 4:18, however, is explicitly about a fear of punishment and not about the fuller fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom. The love involved, moreover, is perfection in Christian living. 1 John 4:18, therefore, means that we should fulfill the commandments and hence have nothing to fear from the judgment. This “love” closely connected as it is with keeping the commandments (5:3) is almost a synonym for fear of the Lord. See here also the discussion referenced in footnote on pp. 80–81.
7. Some writers (see Crouch, 37–73) stress that the household codes and similar materials have secular parallels (Stoic teaching, for instance), and the teaching in the New Testament should simply be viewed as saying that these things hold for Christians as well as non-Christians. The opinion in this paragraph does not necessarily conflict with such a view. It simply observes that the household codes present this material as something Christians ought to do out of their obedience to the Lord. The interpretation of the household codes in relation to non-Christian influences will be taken up in Chapter Eleven.
8. Various other interpretations of “as to the Lord” which were not mentioned in the text tend to be developments of these two main lines of interpretation. Barth, 612, gives a survey of interpretations of “as to the Lord.” Among them he mentions that the phrase can indicate

both the urgency and the limit of the wives' subordination. This interpretation falls under the first category mentioned in the text. Two other interpretations Barth offers (first, that wives give way to husbands in the same unrestricted manner as to Christ—in everything; and secondly, that a wife's subordination to the husband and to Christ are as inseparable as love of God and love of neighbor), are closely related—the latter being a strong version of the former. These two interpretations apply to the second general category mentioned in the text. Barth mentions two other unlikely interpretations in his survey. The notion offered by some that "Lord" should not be capitalized, and that it actually refers to the husband (i.e., "as to your lord") is unlikely, both because of the grammar involved, and because the whole context of the passage involves a comparison of the marriage relationship with that of Christ the Lord and his Church. A further unlikely interpretation is that the phrase indicates that submission is exclusively to Christ, in such a way that the husband is a mere vehicle or occasion for expressing submission to Christ. See the comments in the text on the faultiness of this interpretation (pp. 79–80).

9. For example, the two Greek verbs in v. 29, translated "provide" and "care for" in Barth's translation, express such love. Sampley, 144, points out that the two verbs together produce a generalization, signifying that the husband "does everything possible to take care of" his wife. The first verb is also used in Ephesians 6:4 in context of the parent-child relationship, while the second verb appears in 1 Thessalonians 2:7, also in a context of caring for children. See M. Barth, 634–635; F. Foulkes, *The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 160; E. Best, *One Body in Christ* (London: SPCK, 1955), 178n1.
10. Chrysostom clearly makes this point about the basis of the husband's care for his wife in Homily 20 on Ephesians (PG 62:141).
11. See Delling, *TDNT*, 8:39–46, for a good survey of the New Testament use of the word. See also H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1940), 1897, for the word's secular Greek usages.
12. As Barth points out (710), the subordination Paul expects of the wife is "a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden. He expects this kind of subordination only of Christ and of persons who are 'in Christ.'"
13. Among those who attempt to divorce subordination from obedience are E. Kähler, *Die Frau in den paulinischen Briefen* (Zurich/Frankfurt: Gotthelf, 1960); Adams, 171–177; and Scanzoni/Hardesty, 80–105. The justification offered for this separation is often that of denying that "blind obedience" is required of the wife, and rooting the voluntary aspect of her submission in the New Testament. While these points are in themselves well taken, they do not exclude the very real aspect of obedience which is also evident in the New Testament idea of submission—an obedience which should not be misinterpreted by equating all obedience with extreme forms of it. Thus, for instance, obedience need not be "blind obedience." (See further the discussion of "in everything" on p. 83 of this chapter for a clarification of the limits of obedience.) These observations, of course, do not mean that subordination is to be equated with obedience, nor that Paul in this chapter might not have specifically avoided using the word "obedience" for the wife's relation to her husband to indicate its difference from that of a child or slave.
14. Barth, 620–621, does a brief survey of the phrase "in everything." He points out that, on one hand, "in everything" cannot mean mere blind obedience, especially when obedience would involve acting contrary to God's commands. On the other hand, Barth states, 621, "it

is improper to explain the words 'in everything' by compiling a short or long list of exemptions to prove that 'in everything' actually means 'not in everything.'" See also Sampley's comments on this phrase, 126, which follow in a similar vein.

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15. Aquila, one of Paul's Jewish contemporaries, likewise always translated the Hebrew *ros* with *kephalē* in his Greek translation of the Old Testament. See Schlier, *TDNT*, 8:675, for a discussion of the use of *kephalē* in Judaism as well as in the New Testament. A good exposition of the view that the head governed through the eye can be found in Basil, *The Long Rules*, Q. 2.4, in *The Ascetic Works of St. Basil*, trans. W. K. Lowther Clark (London: SPCK, 1925), 191.
16. For a useful examination of the meaning of "head" and "body" in Ephesians, as well as for some discussion of the head-body imagery, and the phrase "the body of Christ," see Barth's lengthy discussion in vol. 1 of his commentary on Ephesians, 183–199. See also, Sampley's discussion (61–66) of some of the possible origins of the head-body imagery in Ephesians.
17. Chrysostom, Homily 20 on Ephesians (*PG* 62:142), makes use of this application to Christ of going forth from his father to take his bride, the church.
18. This point is often missed in commentaries on Ephesians, which can tend to assume that Christian marriage offers instruction on Christ and the church (as, for example, G. B. Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison*, New Clarendon Bible [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976], 88–89; E. Goodspeed, *The Meaning of Ephesians* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933], 61–62), or which can speak of Christian marriage in general as a type of Christ and the church (rather than the "marriage" of Adam and Eve, as Paul indicates in Eph 5:31–32). An example of this notion can be found in E. K. Simpson, *The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 128–134. The recognition that this passage uses the example of Christ and the church to teach about marriage (and not the reverse) is clearly expressed by I. Muirhead, "The Bride of Christ," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 5, no. 2 (June 1952): 186: "The thought moves from the Bridegroom and the Bride to the bridegroom and the bride, and not vice versa." Barth, 655, makes this point in a similar fashion.
19. Concerning the meaning of the Greek term *mystērion*, see Sampley, 86–96; Barth, 641–644; Foulkes, 162; Bornkamm, *TDNT*, 4:832. While considerable agreement exists among scholars as to the meaning of this term in the rest of Ephesians, there is much discussion as to its meaning in Ephesians 5:32. Some, such as R. Brown, "Mysterion," *Biblica* 40 (1959): 83–84, and Barth, 642–644, see its meaning as different from other occurrences in Ephesians, and as pointing to a scripture passage which contains a deeper (allegorical or typological) meaning than appears at first. Others, including Sampley, 90–96, and R. Batey, *New Testament Nuptial Imagery* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 31n5, see its meaning in v. 32 as consistent with its use throughout Ephesians, and hold that "mystery" here refers not merely to a deeper meaning in scripture, but specifically to the "mystery of Christ" as referred to throughout Ephesians. As Sampley states: "when a substantive like *mystērion* is used six times in such crucial places as it is in Ephesians, there is considerable probability of some lines of continuity of meaning between the uses in the different contexts" (91). The two views, however, are not mutually exclusive.
20. There is widespread agreement that portions of 1 Peter and Ephesians resemble one another, although there is some discussion as to the source of their similarities. Some commentators, such as J. Moffatt, *An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament* (New York: Scribner's, 1925), 381–383, consider Ephesians to be in some way dependent upon 1 Peter, while others, such as F. W. Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter* (Oxford: Blackwell,

- 1970), 219–220, and C. L. Mitton, “The Relationship of 1 Peter and Ephesians,” *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s., 1, no. 1 (April 1950): 68–73, consider 1 Peter to be in some way dependent upon Ephesians. Others, such as E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of Peter* (London: Macmillan, 1947), 422–439, consider both epistles to be dependent upon earlier catechetical, liturgical, and confessional materials from the New Testament church. Some of the discussion extends beyond a consideration of the two passages being treated here, and it is enough for present purposes to note the resemblances and the differences between 1 Peter 3:1–7, and the household code material in Ephesians 5:22–33.
21. Some (e.g., A. R. C. Leaney, *The Letters of Peter and Jude*, Cambridge Bible Commentaries [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967], 41–42), have read the opening word—“likewise”—in the address to wives as indicating that wives are being commanded to have the same kind of submission that was prescribed previously for the slave to his master. Such an interpretation of the word is unnecessary, however, as Beare, 152–153, and E. Best, *1 Peter*, New Century Bible (London: Oliphants, 1971), 124, clearly point out. Selwyn, 182, suggests that this word, which appears both in v. 1 at the opening address to the wives, and in v. 7 at the address to the husbands, belongs in some way to the underlying household code of subordination.
 22. Chrysostom, Homily 20 on Ephesians (*PG* 62:141).
 23. The notion of being Sarah’s children is one which goes back to the Old Testament (see especially, Is 51:1–2). B. Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude*, Anchor Bible, vol. 37 (New York: Doubleday, 1964), 101–102, points out that the role of Sarah, as progenitor by faith with Abraham of the people of God is very significant. In 1 Peter, Sarah is noted for her obedience; while in Hebrews 11:11, she is cited for her faith.
 24. Many commentators have suggested that Proverbs 3:25 might also be behind the phrase “let nothing make you fear.” Among them are Beare, 157; A. Stibbs, *The First Epistle of Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 127, who suggests that Proverbs 3:25–27 expresses one of the themes of the whole letter; and Selwyn, 408ff., who suggests that the third chapter of Proverbs was used in early church catechism—as it is alluded to in 1 Peter 3:6, and is quoted from in 1 Peter 5:5 and (the same passage—Prv 3:34) in James 4:6.
 25. Among those who suggest this view are Selwyn, 432–435; Beare, 154–155; and Leaney, 43.
 26. That the inner adornment points primarily to a quality of submissiveness is noted by Beare, 156, where he states that Peter “seems to look upon the exhibition of a loyal ‘subjection’ to husbands as a cardinal element—almost as *the* cardinal element—in the inward, spiritual adornment which he commends.” Best, 126, suggests the unusual and unlikely notion that “spirit” in this verse (and, he further suggests, in all its occurrences in 1 Peter), refers not to the human spirit, but to the Holy Spirit. The vast majority of translations and commentators, however, would point in the direction of the analysis given in the text above.
 27. For brief expositions of the meanings of these words in this context, see Selwyn, 184, and Stibbs, 125.
 28. Beare, 153, makes the point that scripture teaches subjection (or submission) to be a duty of all Christians in the appropriate times and places.
 29. For justification of this view, see Beare, 157; Stibbs, 128.
 30. The argument is sometimes made that because of the close parallel between 1 Peter 3:3–4 and 1 Timothy 2:9–11 that “weakness” in 1 Peter 3:7 should be interpreted by 1 Timothy 2:14–15 and hence would refer to Eve’s being deceived. For instance, see K. Stendahl, *The Bible and the Role of Women*, trans. E. Sander (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 28. That

argument rests upon seeing an overall parallelism to the two texts. On most other grounds than the one clear parallel, the texts are dissimilar. To deal adequately with this observation it would be enough to understand 1 Peter 3:3-4 and 1 Timothy 2:9-11 as instances of an exhortation circulating among early Christians, with perhaps some saying (*logion*) as its source that becomes modified in both texts. See Chapter Eight for a treatment of this matter in the context of the discussion of 1 Timothy 2:8-15. See Chapter Sixteen for a discussion of men and women in regard to physical strength.

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31. The term "brother" used in this passage from Matthew would certainly be understood to apply to women as well. As was mentioned above (see footnote on pp. 80-81), it was common for rabbis to interpret such words as "neighbor" in terms of the marital relationship (as Paul appears to do in Eph 5:28). See Crouch, 113; Sampley, 30-34.

CHAPTER 5

THE PEOPLE ▷ SERVICE AND POSITION

1. See for instance, J. Leipoldt, *Die Frau in der antiken Welt und im Urchristentum* (Leipzig: Koehler and Amelang, 1954), 147-155; and Thierry Maertens, *The Advancing Dignity of Woman in the Bible*, trans. Sandra Dibbs (De Pere, Wisconsin: St. Norbert Abbey Press, 1969), 184-193.
2. See for instance, Jean Daniélou, *The Ministry of Women in the Early Church* (London: Faith Press, 1961); Roger Gryson, *Le Ministère des femmes dans L'Église Ancienne* (Gembloux: Duculot, 1972); and Charles Meyer, "Ordained Women in the Early Church," *Chicago Studies* 4, no. 3 (Fall 1965): 285-309.
3. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 5.17.3 (PG 20:471-472).
4. For a good discussion of the distinction and its possible uses, see B. Yocum, 48.
5. For a discussion of the transition from the diaconal system to the charitable institutions, see S. B. Clark, *Unordained Elders and Renewal Communities* (New York: Paulist Press, 1976), 70-74.
6. For a particularly helpful interpretation of these passages see Jean Colson, "Das Diakonat im Neuen Testament," *Diakonia in Christo* (Freiburg: Herder, 1962), 3-22. For helpful summaries of the history of the diaconate in the early church, see W. Croce, "Aus der Geschichte des Diakonates," *Diakonia in Christo* (Freiburg: Herder, 1962), 92-128, and another article in the same book by Colson, "Diakon und Bischof in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten der Kirche," 23-30. Other helpful discussions of the role of the "seven" in Acts 6 can be found in Lemaire, *Les ministères aux origines de L'Église* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1971); and M. Miguens, *Church Ministries in New Testament Times* (Arlington: Christian Culture Press, 1976), 40-43.
7. For example, Stählin, *TDNT*, 9:451n107, and T. B. Allworthy, *Women in the Apostolic Church* (Cambridge: Witteffer and Sons, 1917), 44, make this observation about Tabitha's role in the community.
8. For a lengthy early description of the role of widows, see *Didascalica Apostolorum* 3.2 in *Didascalica et Constitutiones Apostolorum*, ed. F. X. Funk, vol. 1 (Paderborn, 1905), 184.9-186.2. For summaries of the history of the "order of widows," see Stählin, 457-465; J. G. Davies, "Deacons, Deaconesses, and the Minor Orders in the Patristic Period," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 14, no. 1 (April 1963): 5.

9. See for instance, the “church orders,” such as the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, in F. X. Funk; *The Apostolic Constitutions* in Funk; *The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus*, trans. B. S. Easton (Cambridge, 1924); *The Apostolic Church Order*, ed. T. Schermann, *Die allgemeine Kirchenordnung, frühchristlicher Liturgien und kirchlicher Überlieferung*, vol. 1 (St. GKA 3, Ergänzungsbend) (Paderborn, 1914), 12–34; I. E. Rahmani, *Testamentum Domini Nostri Iesu Christi* (Mainz, 1899). They all give materials on widows and were used in Syrian and Egyptian churches.
10. On women as apostolic workers, see Daniélou, 8ff.; also R. Brown, “Women in the Fourth Gospel,” *Theological Studies* 36, no. 4 (December 1975): 691–693.
11. See Rengstorf, *TDNT*, 1:4ff., for a good presentation of the basic meaning of the word.
12. An alternate translation of Philippians 4:2–3 can be found in the Jerusalem Bible:

I appeal to Evodia and I appeal to Syntyche to come to agreement with each other in the Lord; and I ask you, Syzygus, to be truly a “companion” and to help them in this. These women were a help to me when I was fighting to defend the Good News—and so, at the same time were Clement and the others who worked with me. Their names are written in the book of life.

13. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 3.6.53 (*GCS* 52:20.20–25). For *The Acts of Paul*, see E. Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. 2, ed. Schneemelcher (London: Butterworth, 1973), 269. See also Daniélou, 8–9. Evidence such as Clement’s, as well as passages like 1 Corinthians 9:5, indicate that Paul was not the only apostle to work with women; rather, women traveled, probably as missionary workers, with the other apostles as well.
14. The evidence from the second century would indicate that deacons worked under bishops. (See Jean Colson, “Diakon und Bischof.”) While such a system cannot be read back into the New Testament with certainty, there is no evidence for another practical system.
15. Among those surveying the early evidence for deaconesses are Meyer, 288; Davies, 2; P. Hünermann, “Conclusions Regarding the Female Diaconate,” *Theological Studies* 36, no. 2 (May 1975), 327; and Fritz Zerbst, *The Office of Woman in the Church*, trans. A. G. Merckens (St. Louis: Concordia, 1955), 89. The *Didascalia Apostolorum* is the first full description of the position. Meyer, 297, notes the end of deaconesses in the West in the early middle ages, while Hünermann, 330, and Zerbst, 91, ascribe their disappearance to the end of the missionary era, and the resulting decrease in adult baptisms.
16. Among those who find the references to deaconesses in scripture are Daniélou, 14; Gryson, 31; Meyer, 287; and Hünermann, 326; while C. C. Ryrie, *The Role of Women in the Church* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1970), 85–91, does not find such to be the case, and Davies, 2, appears to be inclined against seeing any scriptural references as well.
17. Among those who have favored “wives” are the New English Bible (which has “deaconesses” as a marginal alternative), Davies (who actually reads “women in general”), 2, as well as such time-honored commentators as Luther, Calvin, Erasmus, Thomas Aquinas, and Ambrosiaster (who reads “women in general”) (*CSEL* 81/3:267.28–268.16). Those who here find a reference to deaconesses include Gryson, 31; Daniélou, 14; Meyer 287; Colson, *La Fonction diaconale aux origines de L’Église* (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1960), 64; as well as John Chrysostom (Homily 11 on 1 Timothy, *PG* 62:553; Theodoret (*PG* 82:809); Theodore of Mopsuestia (Swete 2:128.9–129.12); and Clement of Alexandria (*GCS* 52:20.20–25). The problem with the absence of the possessive in interpreting the passage as applying to wives has been noted by Meyer, 287; Davies, 2; C. K. Barrett, *The Pastoral*

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Epistles (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 62; and J. Forget, "Diaconesses," *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, 4:686. The Greek term in scripture would be *diakonos*, while later it was *diakonissa*. The change in title is likely only a word change, although it could also point to a change in understanding or approach.

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18. A diversity of opinions can be found among commentators concerning whether Phoebe was or was not a "deaconess" in the sense of holding an established office in the church. Among those affirming that Phoebe held such a position are J. B. Lightfoot, *Dissertations on the Apostolic Age* (London: Macmillan, 1892), 148; J. Forget, "Diaconesses," in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, 4:686; H. Leclercq, "Diaconesse," in *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, 4:725; Meyer, 286–287; and C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, Moffatt New Testament Commentary (London: Harper, 1932), 234–235; as well as various Fathers of the church, including Origen (*PG* 14:1278) and Theodoret of Cyrus (*PG* 82:217–220). Others hold that it is unlikely that the office of deaconess had yet officially come into being, and that the title given to Phoebe is somewhat more general. Among these are Daniélou, 8; Hünermann, 325–326; Davies, 1; J. Armitage Robinson, "Deacons and Deaconesses," *Encyclopedia Biblica* (New York: Macmillan, 1914), 1039; Ryrie, 86–90; and the church Father Ambrosiaster (*CSEL* 81/1:476.10–23, 477.10–22). Gryson, 22f., chooses something of a middle ground, as does A. Oepke, *TDNT*, 1:787, seeing the position of deaconess as somewhere in its process of formation, but perhaps not as clearly established as it was to become.
19. The term "servant" could be (a) a title for a position; (b) a general term for services rendered; (c) a term given to all those holding positions (e.g., Col 1:7); or (d) a term given to all Christians. The link with the church at Cenchreae makes the term sound more like (a) or a general term for commendation. If it were (c) or (d), the term would be used in reference to Christ or God, as in "servant of Christ." The reading of Maertens, 189, who sees Phoebe as a "minister" participating in the government of the community, and not "confined to the 'diaconate,'" is highly tenuous.
20. See, for example, Gryson, 23–24. Leipoldt, 98, points to ruling titles which were given to women in synagogues because of their service or financial contribution, but which carried no authority (e.g., *archisynagogus*). *Prostatis* could be the same sort of title. Ryrie, 86–88, bases his interpretation of the word on such a view.
21. It would be interesting to deal with the question of the relationship of the deaconess to the bishop, elders, and deacons by analyzing the question document by document and community by community. For instance, the *Didascalia Apostolorum* draws the strongest parallel between the deacon and deaconess. But the *Didascalia* is written for a small church in which there were either no elders apart from the bishop or elders who were not particularly active in caring for the congregation. All the "work" was done by the bishop and deacons and deaconesses. The deaconesses were very much like deacons, to be sure, but undoubtedly the deacons were more like elders than they were in other situations. Such analysis would probably reveal some significant differences in the way women were involved in pastoral care in different Christian communities, but it goes beyond our purposes for this book.
22. For some helpful descriptions of the functions of deaconesses, see *Didascalia Apostolorum* 3.12–13; *Apostolic Constitutions* 3.15; Meyer, 288–289; Zerbst, 89; Davies, 3.
23. Many have written concerning the question of the relationship between these two orders of women, among them Gryson, 9–17, who includes a longer survey discussion; Daniélou, 14, 84; Meyer, 292–293; Zerbst, 91. There is early evidence for an identity of the two: *Apostolic Church Order* 21; Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Smyr.* 13.1, in J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*,

- pt. 2, vol. 2 (London: Macmillan, 1889), 323; and possibly Tertullian, *De virginibus velandis* (CCSL 2:1219.15–29). There is also evidence for a distinction: *The Apostolic Constitutions* 3.8; the *Testamentum Domini Nostri*, 1.40–43. Some suggest that, out of the larger body of widows in the community, some performed service that was analogous to that of the deacons: Daniélou, 14; Meyer, 257–288, 292. 1 Timothy 3:11 and Titus 2:3 might, in this context, be understood to refer to widows. For the order of widows as having “ecclesiastical rank,” see Epiphanius, *Panarion* 79.2 (GCS 37:476.25–477.26), as well as Origen, *Homilies on Isaiah* 6.3 (GCS 33:273.9–19).
24. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 79.2 (GCS 37:476.25–477.26).
 25. Examples of abbot-presbyters and abbess-deaconesses can be found in Palladius, *Lausiac History* 17.18, 58, 70.3, in *Ancient Christian Writers*, no. 34, trans. Robert Meyer (Westminster, Maryland: Newman, 1965). Clark, *Unordained Elders*, 50–70; Daniélou, 24; and Meyer, 297; discuss the development of abbess-deaconesses, and their parallel with abbot-presbyters.
 26. One might further note that the terms “elderess” (*presbytera*) and even “bishops” (*episkopa*) were sometimes ascribed to deaconesses. The term *presbytera* was used for the wife of a presbyter or elder (Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* 4.11 [PL 77:336]), but could also be used for deaconesses (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 79.4 [GCS 37:476.24–29]), to indicate the corresponding nature of the positions. *Presbytera* is used in modern Greek for the “priest’s wife.” *Episkopa* was a term used for the women who presided over (were “overseers” of) the women’s sections of the congregation. See Meyer, 294–296, for a discussion of these terms. These women clearly did not have the same authority as a *presbyteros* or *episkopos*.
 27. For a fuller discussion of communal structures vis-à-vis institutional structures see S. B. Clark, *Building Christian Communities* (Notre Dame: Ave Maria, 1973), 33–40.
 28. For a good description of the order of subordination in a Christian community, see Zerbst, 69–81.
 29. Clement, “First Epistle to the Corinthians,” 37–38, *Early Christian Writings* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1968), 42–43; the critical Greek edition in J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, pt. 1, 2:111–117.
 30. Probably in the pastoral epistles the terms were identical in meaning, but later the term *episkopos* was reserved for the presiding elder. Some, e.g., N. Brox, “Historische und theologische Probleme der Pastoralbriefe des Neuen Testaments,” *Kairos* 11, no. 2 (1969): 91ff.; John Meier, “*Presbyteros* in the Pastoral Epistles,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (July 1973): 328; and A. Cousineau, “Le sens de ‘presbuteros’ dans les Pastorales,” *Science et Esprit* 28, no. 2 (1976): 147–162; hold that in 1 Timothy “bishops” were a special group of “presbyters.” Most, like A. Lemaire, “Conseils pour le ministère, 2 Tm 1, 6–8, 13–14,” *Assembl. Seign.* 58 (1974): 61–66, would not accept this view. The differences in interpretation, however, are not significant for the basic discussion in the book.
 31. See, for instance, Rengstorf, *TDNT*, 1:398–445, for a helpful discussion of some of these issues. See also R. Schnackenburg’s article “Apostolicity: The Present Position of Studies,” *One in Christ* 6 (1970): 243–273, for an overall survey of the subject in contemporary scholarship. For examples of those who argue for the view that apostles exercise a governmental authority in the early church, see R. Schnackenburg, *The Church in the New Testament* (London: Burns and Oates, 1974), 27–35; R. Brown’s discussion of issues concerning the position of apostles in *Priest and Bishop: Biblical Reflections* (New York: Paulist, 1970), 47–73; P. Grelot, “Les épîtres de Paul: la mission apostolique,” *Le ministère et les ministères*, ed. J. Delorme (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1974), 49ff.; J. Colson, “Le ministère apostolique

clans la littérature chrétienne primitive: apôtres et évêques ‘sanctificateurs des nations,’ L’Épiscopat et l’Église Universelle, ed. Y. Congar and B. Dupuy (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1962), 135–169. H. von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 30–54, represents a somewhat different view of apostolic authority. While acknowledging the authority of the apostle over the churches he founded, von Campenhausen portrays that authority as highly individual, non-official, and very limited. He states:

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However imperiously Paul the apostle may demand a hearing for Christ, however ingenuously he may put himself forward as a pattern for imitation, yet he cannot simply give orders. . . . They must themselves recognize in his instructions the ‘standard of teaching’ to which they are committed, and to which Paul in a sense merely “recalls” them, in order that they may affirm it for themselves, and freely and joyfully make it their own once more. (47)

Schnackenburg, 28–29, takes exception to von Campenhausen’s approach, stating

That surely cannot be an accurate picture. . . . His apostolic power in no way makes him dependent on the “freedom of the community” to follow him. But unmistakably he asks the Corinthians, “What will you? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and the spirit of gentleness?” (1 Cor 4:21).

While the term “apostle” was primarily a governmental term in New Testament times, to designate the Twelve, Paul, and probably some others, it is not clear that all who were called “apostles” in the New Testament had a governmental role (see footnote on p. 130 for a possible exception). The title as a governmental function was not used after the New Testament until it was revived by certain Protestant churches like the Irvingites. Gradually the term was used more for those who first brought Christianity or the gospel message somewhere and therefore used more in the sense of “evangelist.” In this meaning it was later commonly applied to women. St. Nino was called the “apostle of Georgia.” The title “apostle to the apostles” was given by some to Mary Magdalene in the middle ages, because she first told the apostles about the resurrection. The relation of the Twelve and others termed “apostles” as well as other possible distinctions among apostles or views about apostles in the early literature are beyond the scope of this work and do not affect the basic considerations here as long as the governmental nature of the apostolic position is recognized.

32. I. De la Potterie, “Titres missionnaires du chrétien clans le Nouveau Testament,” *Rapports de la xxxvième Semaine de Missiologie*, Louvain, 1966 (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1966), 44–45.
33. While either form of the name is possible, “Junias” as a man’s name is nowhere else attested in the Greek. This is perhaps the weightiest grammatical argument for holding that the text refers to a woman. Andronicus and Junia, then, might be a husband-wife pair. However, even if Junia(s) were clearly a woman and were being referred to as an “apostle,” there would be a further question of the sense of the term—whether it would refer to actually holding the office or not (see note 31 above). Chrysostom, for example (Homily 31 on Romans, *PG* 60:670) seems to believe that it was an honorary title given to a woman (Junia) for special merit.
34. See, for developments of this possibility, Ryrie, 56, and J. Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 229–230.

35. For further substantiation of *presbyteros* as meaning “older man” as well as “elder” (as in 1 Tm 5:1–2) see the discussion of this word by Bornkamm in *TDNT*, 6:666. See also Meier, 324–325. The interpretation given here is confirmed by a similar passage in 1 Clement 1:3, an early church document that was probably written before 100 AD (Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 8–11).
36. Another possible interpretation, one not commonly held, is that the “church in so-and-so’s house” meant the community that lived together as a household. If this were correct, Nympha might have been a widow or virgin who was head of a household.
37. Certain feminists attempt to draw some unjustified conclusions from the reading of this name in the feminine (Nympha). However, it is worth noting (as does Gryson, 24n1) that, in fact, the majority of manuscripts have Nympha(s) in the masculine. This is certainly the reading which John Chrysostom had (Homily 12 on Colossians, *PG* 62:381), as well as that preferred by the NAB and *La Bible de Jérusalem*.
38. Daniélou, 14.
39. The last two elements of this pattern cannot be documented in any more than a sketchy way because of the limited evidence available. The New Testament evidence has been surveyed and supports both generalizations, though not with the strength that can claim conclusiveness. The generalizations, however, are greatly strengthened by social historical and anthropological study, not only that treated in Chapter Three, but also broader anthropological studies considered in Chapter Seventeen.
40. Priscilla might be seen as an exception to this in the case of Apollos (Acts 18:28). But it was not just Priscilla who instructed him. It was Priscilla and Aquila. And they could hardly be said to be raising him. The instance was more one of special instruction of a well-trained man in a situation where no church had yet been established.
41. Chrysostom, Homily 20 on Ephesians (*PG* 62:143); Homily 10 on 1 Timothy (*PG* 62:549).

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CHAPTER 6

SOCIAL ROLES AND GALATIANS 3:28

1. Among those taking such a position are Stendahl, *The Bible and the Role of Women*; Jewett, 112; C. Parvey, “The Theology and Leadership of Women in the New Testament,” in *Religion and Sexism*, ed. R. R. Ruether (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), 132–134; and V. Mollenkott, 25. It is interesting to note how recent is the “discovery” of Galatians 3:28 as the major scriptural teaching on men and women. Most of the books written on the subject of men and women before 1955 either do not give it consideration as a passage concerning the roles of men and women, or only mention it in passing. The passage does seem to have been used as a key text on men-women roles by some earlier Evangelicals fighting for women’s emancipation (e.g., Jessie Penn-Lewis in *The Magna Carta of Women* [Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1975], 99), and by some sects in the past such as the Quintillianists. (See Epiphanius, *Panarion* 49.2.1 [*GCS* 31:241.18–244.11].)
2. Scanzoni/Hardesty, 18.
3. See K. Stendahl, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 18–19, both for a helpful treatment of the pedagogue and for a treatment of the centrality of the issue of circumcision in Galatians.
4. Vos, 49–50, discusses women’s participation through the circumcision of the males.

5. For helpful discussions here, see Stendahl, *The Bible and the Role of Women*, 32; David Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (New York: ARNO Press, 1973), 442. Both of these writers argue for the connection of Galatians 3:28 with the creation narrative.
6. The prayer is quoted from the version of S. Singer, *Authorized Daily Prayer Book* (London, 1939), 5–6.
7. Strack/Billerbeck, 3:558. See 557–563 for a treatment of the three distinctions and their significance in relation to the law.
8. For helpful treatments of this, see Stendahl, *The Bible and the Role of Women*, 27–28; and John Bligh, *Galatians: A Discussion of St. Paul's Epistle* (London: St. Paul Publications, 1969), 314–329.
9. Strack/Billerbeck makes the comparison with the full proselyte, but that seems to miss the point of the category that Paul had in mind. See rather Crouch, 90–95. Being a Jew had legal consequences in the Roman Empire. When one became a Jew, he actually changed nations legally and became subject to the Jewish government in the diaspora. The use of the term “Greek” rather than Gentile might refer to the fact that it was precisely the “God-fearers” or resident alien proselytes, who were at issue, that is, precisely the proselytes who were still Greek and had not become Jewish.
10. On Galatians 3:28 as “the great breakthrough” see pp. 141–142 and footnote on pp. 149–150. A clear statement of the view that finds Galatians 3:28 incompatible with the other New Testament statements can be found in Jewett, 112–113:

Because these two perspectives—the Jewish and the Christian—are incompatible, there is no satisfying way to harmonize the Pauline argument for female subordination with the larger Christian vision of which the great apostle to the Gentiles was himself the primary architect. It appears from the evidence that Paul himself sensed that his view of the man/woman relationship, inherited from Judaism, was not altogether congruous with the gospel he preached.

11. There are, to be sure, views that 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 was not written close to the time of Galatians, but was an interpolation. See W. O. Walker, “1 Corinthians 11:2–16 and Paul's Views Regarding Women,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 94, no. 1 (March 1975): 94–110. Walker's views are clearly conditioned by the kind of position which assumes an incompatibility on the basis of a modern approach. The normal view of almost all exegetes would be to see 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 as written close to the time of Galatians 3:28. Likewise, even if Paul did not write Colossians, the fact that someone so close to his time and thought could hold both opinions would argue for the view that they were not incompatible in Paul's mind either. Further confirmation of the fact that no incoherence is involved in Paul's teaching is the presence in 1 Peter 3:7 of the view that wives are both joint heirs and subordinate, uniting the themes of Galatians 3:28 and 1 Corinthians 11:2–16.
12. For the use of this phrase in contemporary exegesis, see Stendahl, *The Bible and the Role of Women*, 31–32.
13. Italics mine. See Madeleine Boucher, “Some Unexplored Parallels to 1 Cor 11:11–12 and Gal 3:28: The New Testament on the Role of Women,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (January 1969): 56. In general this is a very helpful article. It misses the point in this case, however, by finding the basis of comparison on any privilege rather than in status before God according to the law. Social privilege nowhere comes into the discussion in Galatians except possibly as a consequence of religious status.

14. The distinction behind this view is a traditional Lutheran one. Stendahl, in *The Bible and the Role of Women*, 32–34, gives a brief survey of its use in modern Lutheran interpretations of Galatians 3:28.
15. See Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, 270–302, 317–344, for a helpful discussion of the background to this change.
16. Many contemporary people recoil at the idea that Paul could have recommended to Christian masters and slaves that they relate to one another as brothers rather than that the master dissolve the relationship. Some of that recoiling comes from a deeply ingrained commitment to abolish the institution of slavery. Much of it, however, comes from a failure to understand how different the institution of slavery could be in different times and places. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and other expressions of modern slavery do not well represent all forms of slavery. The slavery of an Israelite to an Israelite master, as described in the Pentateuch (Ex 21:2–11; Dt 14:12–18), was more like being an indentured servant than like being a full slave. Moreover, in Hellenistic kingdoms, in fact in many ancient kingdoms, the highest ministers were slaves of the king. Slaves were not only menial servants or workers, they were also stewards, set over the estate of the master. Such stewards could be both powerful and respected. In many societies, slaves had legal protection and could expect care from their master. In short, Paul might well have reacted to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* the same way nineteenth-century Americans did and still not have seen it as representative of the slavery of his day.
17. The more likely interpretation of this passage would seem to me to be that Paul is urging Philemon to receive his runaway slave back as a brother, without implying that he free him. The view that Paul is implying manumission, however, is often maintained and the issue is complex.
18. On *agapē* as distinctively Christian, see A. Nygren, *Agapē and Eros*, 3 vols. (London: SPCK, 1932, 1938, 1939). Crouch, 11n70, lists several other commentators who assume this position. Among those who object to such a view are Crouch, 111, and M. Barth, *Ephesians 4–6*, 715–720.
19. For a valuable treatment of Galatians 3:28, which offers some insightful analysis and arrives at this same conclusion about the effects of the passage on social roles, see Hans Cavallin, “Demythologising the Liberal Illusion,” in *Why Not?* (Apelford: Marcham Books, 1976), 81–94.
20. For instance Stendahl, *The Bible and the Role of Women*, 34. On the other hand, in *Paul among Jews and Gentiles*, 1–7, he reverses his approach.
21. See, for instance, W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (London: SPCK, 1948), 68–76, 301; W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, *Matthew*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 26 (New York: Doubleday, 1971), ix; as well as Stendahl, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles*, 129–133. See also W. L. Knox, *St. Paul and the Church of Jerusalem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939), 122; C. H. Dodd, “The Mind of Paul: Change and Development,” *The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 18, no. 1 (January 1934): 41.
22. Crouch, 125–126, and Stendahl, *The Bible and the Role of Women*, 33, justify this position fully.
23. Regarding the difference between Paul's perception of the men-women differences and those of slave-free, see also R. C. Sproul, “Controversy at Culture Gap,” *Eternity* 27 (May 1976): 15, and Thomas Hopko, “On the Male Character of the Christian Priesthood,” *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 19, no. 3 (1975): 151.

24. This observation about Galatians 3:28 seems to me totally destructive of the basic argumentation of Jewett's book. His attempt to argue for the fundamentality of the man-woman relationship on the basis of Genesis 1 is contradicted by the statement of Galatians 3:28 which urges going back beyond the male and female differentiation to the original unity of man. The attempt to abolish role differences and simultaneously exalt the sexual relationship finds no support in the scriptural approach from Genesis to Revelation.
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25. Mary Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 41–42.
26. Boucher, 57. Emphasis in the original.
27. Scanzoni/Hardesty, 110.

CHAPTER 7

THE COMMUNITY ▷ KEY TEXTS

(1 CORINTHIANS 11:2–16; 14:33–36)

1. For a fuller justification of this view, see C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1968), 247; and F. F. Bruce, *I and II Corinthians* (London: Oliphants, 1971), 102; among others. However, there is Walker's view, which would begin an interpolation at this point (Walker, "1 Corinthians 11:2–16 and Paul's Views Regarding Women," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 94, no. 1 [March 1975]: 97ff.). There is no manuscript evidence, however, for any interpolation and there is an alternate explanation (the one given here) that is adequate. Walker's article is one of the more speculative approaches to dealing with difficulties in a scriptural passage that can be found.
2. For a substantiation of this view, see J. A. Fitzmyer, "A Feature of Qumran Angelology and the Angels of 1 Cor XI. 10," *New Testament Studies* 4, no. 1 (October 1957): 48–58, in which Fitzmyer cites two passages from Qumran texts that demonstrate the presence of angels in worship assemblies. See also Annie Jaubert, "Le Voile des femmes," *New Testament Studies* 18, no. 4 (July 1972): 427–428. Fritz Zerbst, in *The Office of Women in the Church*, trans. A. G. Merckens (St. Louis: Concordia, 1955), 42–43, gives a number of other possible interpretations which include understanding the "angels" in the passage to be elders of the church, prophets, husbands, and young people, pagan or Jewish spies, or evil spirits (in view of Gn 6).
3. The opinions of scholars differ greatly as to the customs of veiling in the ancient world. Those pertaining to Jewish women are fairly clear. See especially Jeremias, 359–360, and Strack/Billerbeck, 3:423–437, for good treatments of this. Also see Jaubert, 424; Orr and Walther in *I Corinthians* (New York: Doubleday, 1976), 260; C. K. Barrett, 247ff.; and J. Duncan M. Derrett, "Religious Hair," *Studies in the New Testament*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 170–174. There is some general agreement that veiling among the Greeks was primarily an Eastern custom, being less and less common as one headed West. See Oepke, *TDNT*, 3:561–563. Jaubert says that the Greeks would have considered it generally more decent for a woman to wear a veil in public, but that it is not possible to know what the local Corinthian custom was. See also Zerbst, 36–37.

Among popular writers who suggest that unveiled women in Corinth would be taken as prostitutes are D. Pape, *In Search of God's Ideal Woman* (Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 122 (where it is mentioned as one option among several possible ones); R.

Kress, 87; and Mary Daly, 38, who, with Sister Albertus Magnus McGrath, OP (35–36) also sees the instructions on veiling as a form of “missionary adaptation.” The opinion is not normally advanced by scholars.

For the most part, our sources on Jewish custom are rabbinic and are later than 1 Cor. We have no clear sources in the area for diaspora Judaism in the time of Jesus, or for non-rabbinic custom except as we can deduce it from the later rabbinic sources.

4. For discussions of the origin of the yarmulke and prayer shawl, see Strack/Billerbeck, 3:423–437; also Barrett, 250ff.; C. T. Craig, *Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 10 (New York: Abingdon, 1953), 126. Possibly the wearing of the yarmulke was designed as an anti-Christian practice on the part of the Jews. See “Head, Covering of,” *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 8 (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1971), 5.
5. See for example, Anton Baumstark, *Liturgie comparée: principes et Méthodes pour l'étude historique des liturgies chrétiennes* (Paris: Éditions de Chevetogne, 1953), 30ff.
6. For a discussion of the tallis (or tallit) in Judaism, see “Tallit” in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 11 (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1905), 676–678.
7. The evidence for the Jewish practice comes mainly from Palestinian sources. Hence, Paul and the early Christians may have adopted the custom of Jews in the Greco-Roman world. There is a passage in Tertullian (*De Corona* 4; *CCL* 2:1043–1044) which indicates that Jewish women in North Africa wore veils all the time in public. If this were a widespread custom, diaspora Judaism would not present the kind of parallel suggested.
8. On the honor involved in a woman's wearing a veil, see Feuillet, “La dignité et le rôle de la femme d'après quelques textes pauliniens,” 160; and W. Ramsey, 202–203. Ramsey writes:

In Oriental lands the veil is the power and the honour and dignity of the woman. With the veil on her head she can go anywhere in security and profound respect. . . . But without the veil the woman is a thing of nought, whom anyone may insult. . . . A woman's authority and dignity vanish along with the all-covering veil that she discards.

9. Zerbst's observations concerning cultural expressions are worthy of note:

The considerations and explanations advanced by Paul in the 1 Cor 11 passage appear strange to us of modern times not only because we are unable to determine with finality the custom to which Paul refers, but also because the people of Paul's day felt much more keenly than do people of our day that the outward demeanor of a person is an expression of his inner life, specifically his religious convictions and moral attitude. The arguments of Paul will be rightly understood and appreciated only when the attempts of Corinthian women to lay aside the headcloth are recognized as an attack upon the structure of marriage, and, as such, an attack in general upon the relations between man and woman as established in creation. (40)

Some view the concern in the passage as “legalism,” and therefore certainly not Pauline (Walker, 106). Such a view is an arbitrary interpretation of Paul's concerns. Paul chooses where to make rulings (e.g., 1 Cor 5; 7; 14) and where not to make them, depending upon his approach and the importance he attaches to a particular practice.

10. On the term *physis*, see Koester, *TDNT*, 9:246–271. Zerbst, 43ff., discusses various interpretations of Paul's use of *physis* in 1 Corinthians 11, which include “the objective order

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of nature,” “a natural feeling,” a Stoic usage of the term. Zerbst comments that Paul “sees behind *physis* the Creator,” who so made nature that it is able to teach such lessons as the one he puts forth in verses 14ff. See also Barrett, 256–257.

11. One example of such a scornful approach is in R. C. Devor, “When We’re ‘Blindsided’ by the Gospel,” *Encounter* 35 (Autumn 1974): 376, as he says of verse 14:

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This is not only laughable but questionable. Convention may have dictated short haired men and long haired women. It may have been a part of Paul’s religious tradition. But it can hardly be claimed that this is the way “nature” ordered it . . . as we can see everywhere today, long haired men abound. I would hesitate to suggest to most of them that their appearance is degrading.

Not only does Devor assume one of the possible interpretations of “nature,” but he also assumes a kind of cultural relativity that many would give reasons for disagreeing with. The question of how to decide whether something is natural will be discussed further in Chapters Sixteen and Seventeen.

12. For further development of the significance of the concept of tradition, see Büchsel, *TDNT*, 2:169–173; also Rengstorff, *TDNT*, 2:152–159. See also Y. Congar, *Tradition and Traditions* (London: Burns and Oates, 1966), 8–13; Zerbst, 31–32; and F. F. Bruce, *Tradition Old and New* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 19ff.
13. Examples of those who see Paul as merely giving his own personal and hence non-authoritative opinion are Ford, “Biblical Material Relevant to the Ordination of Women,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 10, no. 4 (Fall 1973): 679; J. Short, in *The Interpreter’s Bible*, 10:128–129; and McGrath, 41.
14. Among those proposing the first view are F. F. Bruce, 105; L. Morris, 153; C. T. Craig, *Interpreter’s Bible*, 127; and Kugelman, *JBC*, 210. Among those recommending the second view are A. Feuillet, “L’homme ‘gloire de Dieu’ et femme ‘gloire de l’homme’ (I Cor XI,7b),” *Revue Biblique* 81, no. 2 (April 1974): 161–182; and A. Jaubert, 418–430. In favor of the view that “glory” here means “reflection” is the fact that the phrase one would normally expect would be “image and likeness.” The context points to the fact, moreover, that “glory” should somehow express the idea that woman is from man. On the other hand, someone’s glory is more commonly something that gives him glory. The parallels, moreover, point in this direction. It would not be unreasonable to see man, the obedient son, as someone who brings glory to God. For a collection and discussion of the later rabbinic parallels, see Strack/Billerbeck, 3:611.
15. In an attempt to deal with this passage, some of the Fathers and some later Christian teachers following them stated that woman was in the image of God in a derivative way, not directly, because she was created from man. For instance, Cyril of Alexandria, who stated that “woman, too, is indeed in God’s image and likeness, but as by means of the man, so that in a way she is distinguished a little in reference to nature” (*PG* 74:881). However, even being in the image of God derivatively rather than directly does not seem to change the nature of the image of God in her.

The Fathers resolved the issue of whether woman was in the image of God in a variety of ways, which generally depended upon their interpretation of the word “image.” Ambrose (*PL* 16:307ff.), Augustine (*PL* 34:452f.), Basil (*PG* 31:240f.), Gregory of Nazianzus (*PG* 36:289–292), Gregory of Nyssa (*PG* 44:181), Origen (*GCS* 10:252), and many others, see “image” as referring in some way or other to one’s essential nature and therefore hold

that woman as well as man is in God's image. On the other hand, John Chrysostom (*PG* 53:73), and others of the Antiochene school such as Diodore of Tarsus (*PG* 33:1546f.) understand "image" to be a functional term referring to man's ruling position. They state that woman is not in God's image according to this functional sense. Yet, on the level of essential nature, Fathers such as Chrysostom would appear to agree with the others cited above (e.g., *PG* 53:73). In short, the passage in 1 Corinthians 11 does not rule out woman's being in the image of God, and both Genesis 1 and Galatians 3:28 would call for her being in the image of God.

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16. Among those taking such a position are Stendahl, *The Bible and the Role of Women*, 31–32, 35; Scanzoni/Hardesty, 66; and R. Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 40, no. 3 (1 September 1972): 300–302. This view is relatively recent and seems to ignore the basic reference to a man's relationship to his mother in the text.
17. An example of the first approach can be found in Russell Prohl, *Woman in the Church: A Restudy of Woman's Place in Building the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 24ff. An example of the second approach would be that of H. Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser* (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1957), 253–254. For an example of the approach which combines the first two, see Zerbst, 33–34, where he states:

These observations suggest the thought that the Apostle had husbands and wives in mind when he wrote this passage. However, Paul in this passage at the same time speaks also generally of man and woman. In order to understand Paul we must bear in mind that the relationship between the sexes always has its center in marriage. In all his pronouncements concerning the position of woman, Paul's central concern is for the preservation and protection of marriage. . . . It is a fundamental consideration for him that the preservation of marriage always depends also upon the deportment of the unmarried. . . . The demeanor of the unmarried woman, for instance, is not a matter of indifference for the preservation of marriage. One may perhaps say, therefore, that every word concerning marriage is at the same time a word concerning the relationships between men and women in general and, vice versa, that every declaration concerning the relationship between the sexes in general is decisive also for marriage. This fact explains the characteristic indefiniteness of 1 Cor 11, which in one place speaks of men and women in general and in another place of married people in particular.

18. Among those stating that Paul makes no sense, or that he presents a string of poor arguments, realizes their weakness, and appeals to authority, are R. C. Devor, "When We're 'Blindsided' by the Gospel," 360–381; Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman," 297; and Walker, 97.
19. For a discussion of the reasoning behind the interpolation view, see Zerbst, 45; A. Feuillet, "La dignité et le rôle de la femme d'après quelques textes pauliniens," 162ff.; and M. E. Thrall, *The Ordination of Women to the Priesthood* (London: SCM Press, 1958), 77–79. Their arguments seem adequate to refute the idea.
20. On the question of the relationship between 1 Corinthians 11 and 1 Corinthians 14, the interpolation view can be found in Scroggs, 284; Conzelmann, 246; among others. The view that 1 Corinthians 14 rules out the praying and prophesying spoken of in 1 Corinthians 11 is held by Crouch, 133ff.; Rylie, 74–81; and J. Wahl, *The Exclusion of Women from*

Holy Orders, Studies in Sacred Theology (Second Series), no. 110 (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1959), 15–18; among others. The suggestion that these passages refer to different situations is made by R. Prohl, 34–35. Among the many who see two different types of speaking referred to are Daniélou, 10–11; Feuillet, 166–167; Stendahl, *The Bible and the Role of Women*, 30; Zerbst, 50; L. Morris, 201–202.

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21. Examples of the view that disorderly speech is at issue can be found in Pape, 138. Scanzoni/Hardesty, 68–69, suggest a particularly noisy women’s section. Among the many who envision here an instructional situation are Daniélou, 10–11; Feuillet, “La dignité . . .”, 167; Bruce, 135–136; and Morris, 201–202. The discussion on the difference between *lalein* and *legein* and the significance of Paul’s choice of the former seem inconclusive. They range from seeing *lalein* as a term for preaching and teaching (Daniélou, 10–11; F. Refoulé, “Le problème des ‘femmes-prêtres’ en Suède,” *Lumière et Vie* 43 [1959]: 80), to “disorderly chatter” and “babbling” (Pape, 138–139), to “critical discussion of passages from the prophets,” and “questions asked for the purpose of achieving deeper comprehension or elucidation of things heard” (cited by Zerbst, 46).
22. This explanation would be strengthened by anthropological and historical parallels. This is exactly the sort of approach that would be taken by many societies. See the discussion in Chapter Seventeen.
23. See Strack/Billerbeck, 3:467–468, for a consideration of the parallels.
24. Among those suggesting that Genesis 3:16 is referred to are Barrett, 330; L. Morris, 201; J. O’Rourke, in *A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1969), 1158. Others such as F. F. Bruce, 135–136, and A. Feuillet, 165, suggest the Genesis 2 creation narrative, while Zerbst, 47, cites the suggestion of a reference to the wives of the patriarchs. Yet if he meant to indicate the Pentateuch, Paul would not likely have said “even the law,” because of the respect with which he spoke of the scriptures. The suggestion that some form of oral tradition stands behind this reference is made by Strack/Billerbeck, 3:468, and Crouch, 138–139, who quotes Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 2.201, as a likely parallel: “The Woman, says the Law, is in all things inferior to the man. Let her accordingly be submissive, not for her humiliation, but that she may be directed; for the authority has been given by God to the man.”

CHAPTER 8

THE COMMUNITY ▷ KEY TEXTS (1 TIMOTHY 2:8–15)

1. Among those who suggest that 1 Timothy reads as one of the earliest church orders, see M. Dibelius and H. Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 5–6, where it is compared with the *Didache*, another early church order.
2. A number of church orders are cited in Chapter Five, footnotes pp. 121–123. These early church documents give instructions concerning the order of worship, relationships, and other important elements of church life.
3. Selwyn’s discussion in *The First Epistle of Peter* (432–435) argues well for this view of the two passages.
4. For a helpful and fuller discussion of the basic concern in this instruction, see Zerbst, 51–52. See also the discussion of this passage and the citations made in Chapter Four, pp. 88–95.

5. Among writers who do not take such adornment admonitions seriously are Daly, 40; van der Meer, 24; McGrath, 37. Among the many Fathers who made this admonition were Clement of Alexandria, *Pédagogue* 2.10 (*Sources Chrétiennes* 108:195ff.); John Chrysostom, Homily 8 on 1 Timothy (*PG* 62:549–550); and Augustine, *Sermons* 32 (*PL* 38:196ff.).
6. The majority of commentators read *authentēin* in the first meaning given, as, for instance, Zerbst, 53 (who gives an extensive citation of others holding this interpretation); J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (London: A. & C. Black, 1963), 68; C. Spicq, *Les Épîtres pastorales* (Paris: Garabaldi, 1947), 70. Examples of the second meaning can be mostly found in popular feminist writers like James L. Beall, *The Ministry of Women* (Detroit: Bethesda Missionary Temple, n.d.), 21–25; and Scanzoni/Hardesty, 71. The third meaning is found in Pape, 150. There is some discussion as to the precise etymology of the term *authentēin* which appears to have been a relatively rare verb whose meaning changed over time. In its earlier usage, the verb referred to those who killed others or themselves with their own hands. Josephine Ford, in “Biblical Material Relevant to the Ordination of Women,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 10, no. 4 (Fall 1973): 683, makes the very unusual and unsubstantiated suggestion that *authentēin* should be translated “supreme authority,” referring specifically to the ultimate authority of a bishop to “formulate doctrine.” She distinguishes between this “supreme authority” of the bishop and the teaching authority of the elders, which, she holds, could be exercised by a woman.
7. There is a passage in the *Didascalia Apostolorum* 3.6.1–2 (Funk, 190.8–17), which prohibits widows from explaining Christian doctrines to pagans because they were not educated enough to explain the doctrines in a way that gained the respect of pagans. The *Didascalia* passage presents a contrast to the passage in 1 Timothy 2, a contrast probably explainable by the difference in social climate between cosmopolitan cities in first-century Asia Minor and in the towns in third-century Syria that the *Didascalia* was probably written for and by an attempt to deal with a different situation.
8. An illustration of those who see Paul as stating his own personal opinion can be found in J. M. Ford, “Biblical Material . . .,” 632.
9. The view that there was a high degree of “feminism” in the contemporary Roman Empire and especially in Asia Minor is argued for in L. Carle, “La femme et les ministères pastoraux d’après la tradition,” *Nova et Vetera* 47, no. 4 (1972): 284–285; J. Dauvilliers, *Les temps apostoliques* (Paris: Sirey, 1970), 417–424; J. Carcopino, *La Vie quotidienne à Rome à l’Apogée de l’Empire* (Paris: Hachette, 1939), 104–124; J. Broudéhoux, *Mariage et famille chez Clément d’Alexandrie* (Paris: Beauchesne et ses fils, 1970), 14–142.
10. Among the patristic commentators who understand 1 Timothy 2 in this way, often with an explicit reference, are Origen (*GCS* 33:273.9–19), Chrysostom (*PG* 62:543ff.), Theodore of Mopsuestia (*PG* 66:938), Theodoret of Cyrus (*PG* 82:310), John Damascene (*PG* 95:1005), Epiphanius (*GCS* 31:241.18–244.11), Ambrosiaster (*PL* 17:468), and Jerome (*PL* 30:878).
11. Some understand Eve to be given the blame in Sirach 25:24 (for example, Jewett, 117; McGrath, 15–16). This view of Sirach is an overinterpretation of the passage, because it rests upon a misunderstanding of its literary form (it is not a theological statement, but a humorous lament).
12. Among those stating such a view are A. T. Hanson, *Studies in the Pastoral Epistles* (London: SPCK, 1968), 76–77; R. Kress, 94; R. Wahlberg, “Is the New Testament Chauvinist? Paul: Yes!; Jesus: No!,” *New Catholic World*, May–June 1975, 103. The position taken in the text is simply that the two approaches are not incompatible, but are, in fact, complementary in

what they assert. That still leaves room for the view that the two approaches are different enough to point toward different authorship. Such a discussion goes beyond the scope of this book.

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13. For a discussion of Paul's founding of women's subordination, see Chapter Four, pp. 83–88. Among those who appear to interpret 1 Timothy 2:14 as founded upon the "curses" are Ida Ramig, *Exclusion of Women from the Priesthood: Divine Law or Sex Discrimination?* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1976), 111–116; and McGrath, 36–37. Zerbst, 54–56, provides a carefully argued view of the contrary, along with a useful survey.
14. The term "deceived" could mean "seduced" here. There was a Jewish tradition that Eve was seduced by the serpent, and Paul possibly refers to that tradition in 2 Cor 11:3. Hanson, 65–77, defends the view that the Jewish tradition lies behind both passages. Whether or not this is the correct interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:14 does not affect the discussion here, since 1 Timothy 2:14 is concerned with the fact that Eve was deceived as a basis for the rule about teaching. The interpretation of the deception as seduction would perhaps strengthen the point, since false teachers lead Christians into an adulterous relationship (cf. 2 Cor 11:2–4) by making them disloyal to Christ. A seduced teacher leads to a seduced people. This line of thought also would point to the husband's and father's role as the protector of the chastity of their women (cf. Sir 42:9–11).
15. Hanson, 66ff., cites a number of possible Jewish parallels to this notion, including the *Letter to Aristaeus* and Philo's *Questions on Genesis* 1.33. See further Strack/Billerbeck, 3:646.
16. For a discussion of these issues from a social scientific perspective, see Chapter Sixteen, pp. 390–392.
17. The prominence of women in the heretical sects of the early church is noted at times by the Fathers; as, for instance, Jerome (*PL* 22:1152f.). Zerbst analyzes this fact on 83–84. The tendency for women to cluster in higher proportions than men around new spiritual movements is illustrated by the contemporary charismatic renewal.
18. Although scholarly commentators rarely use this as the preferred interpretation, S. Jebb "A Suggested Interpretation of 1 Tm 2:15," *Expository Times* 81, no. 7 (April 1970): 221–222; and Dibelius-Conzelmann, 47f.; could be seen as holding a similar position. It is commonly advanced in feminist writing.
19. Exponents of this view include Kelly, 69, and Spicq, 72f.
20. Among those who take this position are C. K. Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 56f.; and E. F. Scott, *The Pastoral Epistles* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1936), 28.
21. Among those who recommend this approach is A. D. B. Spencer, "Eve at Ephesus (Should Women Be Ordained as Pastors According to the First Letter to Timothy 2:11–15?)," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 17 (1974): 215–222, who lists it as a possibility among others.
22. Among the Fathers, the position of woman in the resurrection and its correspondence with the position of woman in the Fall is a favorite theme. Among the many who comment upon it are Origen (*PG* 13:1819), Cyril of Alexandria (*PG* 72:941), Hippolytus (*GCS* 1/1:354f.), Ambrose (*PL* 15:1843ff.), Augustine (*PL* 38:1108), Gregory the Great (*PL* 76:1194).
23. For a development of this point, see R. Laurentin, *Structure et théologie de Luc 1–11* (Paris: Garabaldi, 1957), 176–178.
24. For instance, Justin (*PG* 6:710–711): "He is born of the Virgin, in order that the disobedience caused by the serpent might be destroyed in the same manner in which it had

originated. For Eve, an undefiled virgin, conceived the word of the serpent and brought forth disobedience and death. But the Virgin Mary, filled with faith and joy, when the angel Gabriel announced to her the good news that the Spirit of the Lord would come upon her and the power of the Most High overshadow her, and therefore the Holy One born of her would be the Son of God, answered: Be it done unto me according to your word.” In a similar vein see Origen (*PG* 13:1819), Irenaeus (*Sources Chrétiennes* 34:380ff.), Ambrose (*PL* 16:327–329), and Augustine (*PL* 40:186). Thrall suggests, probably mistakenly, that Paul is speaking of Mary in this way in 1 Corinthians 11:12; i.e., that, having mentioned the creation of the woman from the First Adam, he speaks of the birth of Christ, the Second Adam, from a human woman.

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CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY ▷ THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING AS A WHOLE

No notes

NOTE ON METHOD ▷ EXEGESIS

1. This aspect is what B. Lonergan calls “understanding the author” in *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1972), 160–161. In the sketch given in note 2 following of the exegetical task, this phrase primarily refers to what is involved in “understanding and restating the text.”
2. The exegetical task has the following main components:
 1. preliminary tasks
 - A. study of the text:
 - ▶ textual criticism
 - ▶ linguistic study (vocabulary, syntax, etc.)
 - ▶ literary study of the text (structure, literary form, etc.)
 - B. study of the situation from which the text comes:
 - ▶ study of the background (economic, social, political, intellectual, religious, theological, ecclesiastical; Old Testament, intertestamental, rabbinic, Greco-Roman, early Fathers, etc.)
 - ▶ situating the text in the flow of history
 - ▶ situating the text in the author’s thought and development (when possible)
 2. understanding and restating the text:
 - A. understanding the subject being discussed in the text (content and referent)
 - B. understanding the author’s intent
 - C. translating it to a new conceptual system or language
 - D. relating it to our situation
 3. judging the likelihood of our exegesis (possible, probable, certain)

Evaluation of what is said in the text, indicating how it can or should be applied, and

recommending how it should be approached are all outside the exegetical task, according to the definition used here.

The above schematization of the exegetical task is purely analytic. Concretely speaking, relating the text to our situation might go on as one is involved in the linguistic study of the text. All the elements can happen as simultaneous aspects of the one process.

3. In theory, modern discussions about hermeneutics should be concerned with this process, because of their focus on relating the horizon of the author to the horizon of the modern reader and being able to show the meaning of the text within the context of the reader's actual experience. For the most part, the hermeneutical question is more accurately related to questions of applicability and hence is treated in Chapter Twenty. In fact, however, as hermeneutical theory correctly observes, "prior understandings," including those concerning application, affect exegesis. The discussions connected with Bultmann, Fuchs, Ebeling, and others raise the hermeneutical question. However, their discussions seem to produce little useful material for the discussion of the roles of men and women. This is perhaps another instance of what Walter Wink in *The Bible in Human Transformation* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973), 1, would consider the inability of modern exegetical study to fulfill its purpose of relating the scripture to the lives of modern Christians, or what Peter Stuhlmacher in *Historical Criticism and Theological Interpretation of Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 65, describes as the way "historical criticism is the agent of a repeated and growing rupture of vital contact between biblical tradition and our own time."

One reason why most discussions proceeding from considerations of "the hermeneutical question" do not produce much for our area is possibly the fact that their concern is more with interpreting the kerygmatic or doctrinal parts of scripture, not scriptural teaching on Christian life. The latter area presents a different problematic. A more significant reason, however, in the current context is the general lack of attention given in such hermeneutical discussions to concrete questions of intercultural comparison. Perhaps if the discussions of hermeneutical theory had originated more from the influence of anthropological studies on scripture scholars and less from the influence of philosophical theories such as those of Gadamer and Ricoeur, the approach and results would have been different.

4. Examples of this sort of failure to understand the significance of social roles can be found throughout the book by Leipoldt, a book that seems to have influenced much subsequent writing on the social background of the scriptural texts on men's and women's roles. Derrett's *Jesus's Audience* is an example of a work which displays a recognition of such important social aspects.
5. The characteristic "liberationist" approach to scripture can also be found in Latin American Liberation Theology, some American Black Theology, European Political Theology as well as Feminist Theology. What is characteristic of each of these is that they subject the scriptural interpretation to an ideal of political, economic, and/or sexual liberation. (More will be said about this in Chapter Fifteen.) Many liberationist theologians ground their position in the revisionist Marxist sociology of knowledge of Jürgen Habermas and others of the Frankfurt School. They would agree with Bonino when he writes: "... this theology, with its insistence on praxis and the sociopolitical context as privileged theological *data*, gives the historical circumstances a determinative weight in theology" (Jose Miguel Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975], 72). Scripture is, for them, a radically historical document to be interpreted according to a neo-Marxist hermeneutic. See also Jürgen Moltmann, "Toward a Political Hermeneutic of the Gospel," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 23, no. 4 (Summer 1968): 303–323; Juan Luis

- Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology* (New York: Orbis Books, 1976); Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Feminist Theology as a Critical Theology of Liberation," in *Woman: New Dimensions*, ed. Walter J. Burghardt (New York: Paulist, 1977), 29–50; F. Herzog, "Liberation Hermeneutics as Ideology Critique?" *Interpretation* 28, no. 4 (October 1974): 387–403.
6. See Chapter One, footnote on p. 24.
 7. See Chapter One, footnote on pp. 25–26.
 8. See Chapter One, footnote on p. 26.
 9. See Chapter One, footnote on p. 25.
 10. This opinion is so unreasonable that it was not treated in Chapter One. It can be found in Tribble, "Eve and Adam: Genesis 2–3 Re-read," 251–258, and in Adams, 20ff.
 11. See Chapter One, footnote on p. 19.
 12. See Chapter Ten, pp. 249–302
 13. See note 17 to Chapter Ten, p. 727.
 14. See Chapter Five, pp. 120–121.
 15. See Chapter Five, p. 132.
 16. See Chapter Five, pp. 132–133.
 17. See Chapter Five.
 18. See Chapter Five.
 19. See Chapter Five.
 20. See Chapters Four and Seven.
 21. See Chapter Four.
 22. See Chapter Four.
 23. See Chapter Four.
 24. See Chapter Seven.
 25. See Chapter Seven.
 26. Boucher, 57–58.
 27. Cited in Stendahl, *The Bible and the Role of Women*, 8. Mascall, in *Women Priests?* (London: Christian Literature Association, 1972), gives an excellent description of the process in the Church of England's study commissions on the ordination of women. The change in approach and the reasons for the change are enlightening.

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CHAPTER 10
THE NEW TESTAMENT APPROACH ▷
JESUS AND PAUL

1. The most influential exponent of the cultural conflict view appears to be Leiboldt, whose book is built around this thesis.
2. "Canonized rabbinism" is a position held by, among others, van der Meer, 39–45; Ida Ramig, *Exclusion of Women from the Priesthood*, 111–116; Maertens, 166, 196; and V. Mollenkott, *Women, Men and the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1977), 90–106.
3. Among those who propose a conformity to culture view are Crouch, 152ff.; Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 156ff.; and Conzelmann, *First Corinthians* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 184ff.; who take this position in their studies of the *Haustafeln*. It is recommended by a variety of commentators on the 1 Corinthians 11 passage, and is a favorite among the popular feminist writers.
4. Those who propose a distinctive approach of some sort include Zerbst, 49; Refoulé, 70,

- 83ff.; Morris, 152; M. Barth, 618. Many authors cannot easily be classified as having an overall approach.
5. See, for instance, Otwell, 132–151; Leipoldt, 72; Oepke, 781; Vos, 46–50. See Vos in particular for a helpful explanation of the man-woman relationship in the Old Testament.
 6. Possibly for many that role was due primarily to prophetic gifts, as Deborah's and Huldah's seem to have been. However, whether later Judaism would have changed the way women exercised their prophetic gifts is unclear, since by the intertestamental period the prophet's role was restricted to the Essenes.
 7. On this subject, see Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, 370f.; Strack/Billerbeck, 4:1226; Leipoldt, 79–116; Derrett, *Jesus's Audience*, 31ff.; Oepke, 781ff.
 8. *Kid.* 49b, in *The Babylonian Talmud*, 34 vols., ed. I. Epstein (London: Soncino Press, 1936–1952).
 9. *Kid.* 1.7.
 10. *Yeb.* 62b.
 11. *Ber.* 16a.
 12. See Leipoldt, 119–146, for a vigorous presentation of the difference.
 13. The notion of Jesus as a revolutionary in his approach to women is often found in feminist writings (for instance, McGrath, 17–27, and Jewett, 94–103). It can also be found in a wide range of other commentators (as, for example, C. C. Ryrie, 26–32). The idea that Jesus departed little if at all from contemporary Jewish customs is clearly stated by K. Stendahl, *The Bible and the Role of Women*, 26, where he writes:

It would probably be difficult to find any element in the gospels which transcends the essentially Palestinian Jewish frame of ideas. Jesus' sayings touching on the relationship between men and women all fall within this fundamental view. The contrast between the sayings from the rabbinic schools as recorded in the Talmud and the more nonprofessional and popular character of Jesus' ministry explains full well the characteristic role women play in his activity and the characteristic place of domestic duties in the imagery of his parables. The lecture halls and court rooms of the rabbis give a different setting from the travels of the eschatological preacher Jesus.

The modified view of Jesus as new, but not totally revolutionary can be found in the essay by Bishop Albert Descamps of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, "Significance for Us Today of Christ's Attitude and of the Practice of the Apostles," in *The Order of the Priesthood* (Huntington: OSV Source Books, 1978), 66–67.

14. On the variety within Judaism before 70 AD, see Floyd Filson, *A New Testament History* (London: SCM Press, 1965), 48–57; Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, xii; Jacob Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70 AD*, pt. 3 (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 239ff.; Morton Smith, "A Comparison of Early Christian and Early Rabbinic Tradition," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 82, no. 2 (June 1963): 171–172. On the *am ha-aretz*, see Smith; A. Büchler, *Der galiläische 'Am-ha'ares des zweiten Jahrhunderts* (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1968); and A. Oppenheimer, *The 'Am ha-Aretz*, trans. J. H. Levine (Leiden: Brill, 1977). On the break in scribal-rabbinic tradition at 70 AD, see Neusner, *The Development of a Legend* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 2–3; *The Rabbinic Traditions* 1.6. See also Smith, 171–172; Strack/Billerbeck, 2:547.
15. On the difference between the role of the wealthy Jerusalem women and that of the poorer women in rural areas, see Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, 362–363.
16. Stendahl, *The Bible and the Role of Women*, 26, provides an example of interpreting Jesus'

approach to women and to his differences from the rabbis in terms of his role as a popular eschatological preacher.

17. The impression of Jesus as someone who broke radically with the customs and approaches to men-women relations in his Palestinian environment is sometimes increased by exegesis that misses the point of passages by interpreting them as if Jesus' concerns were that of a first-century proponent of women's liberation. For instance, the story of Martha and Mary in Luke 10 is sometimes used as an illustration of a woman doing woman's work (Martha) and a woman taking a man's place (Mary). Among those taking this position are A. Swidler, *Woman in a Man's Church*, 37–38; Mollenkott, 18–19; and J. M. Ford, "Tongues–Leadership–Women," 194–197. According to such an interpretation, Jesus was commending Mary for not being bound by feminine jobs. This interpretation distorts the story. The concern of the story is to show that the "one thing necessary"—hearing Jesus and learning from him—is more important than "much serving." Jesus chooses two women to make this point, and his choice is a significant indication of his desire to include women among those he taught. The point is that Jesus is commending a woman for valuing him and his teaching, not for being "liberated" from traditionally feminine tasks. The concern of the passage is not with sexual division of labor in work. Rather, its implication for the relations between man and woman is that in Jesus' view there is no secondary religious status for women in Israel.

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The story in Luke 7 of the woman Jesus forgives is sometimes cited as an instance of radical innovation. It is said that when Jesus let himself be touched by a woman, he broke with all custom in the area of men-women relations. However, none of the people surrounding Jesus seem to notice this aspect of the incident. Their concern is with the fact that the woman is a "sinner" and that Jesus allows himself to associate with her, even to be touched by her. The issue in the passage is not raised by the fact that she was a woman (except insofar as she may have been a prostitute, and getting too close to a prostitute might be a source of temptation for a man). The issue is raised by the fact that Jesus was willing to ignore some Pharisaic teachings to do his work. The focus of this passage is not Jesus' relations with women, but Jesus' forgiveness of sins and his willingness to associate with sinners for the sake of their salvation. If anything, this passage bears more directly on Jesus' relations to the Pharisees than on his relations to women. Among those overly focused on Jesus' relations with women in this passage are Wahlberg, 100–107, and Kress, 63–64. Being too sensitive to what now are called "women's issues" can lead to missing the point or seeing the passage anachronistically in a framework alien to the minds of Jesus and the gospel writer.

18. See Leipoldt's discussion of the rabbinic approach here, 91–92.
19. For a helpful presentation of rabbinic master-disciple customs see Aberbach, "The Relations Between Master and Disciple in the Talmudic Age," 1–24; for a comprehensive survey of the word in the New Testament see Rengstorf, *TDNT*, 4:390–461. Rengstorf, consistent with his normal approach, stresses the discontinuity between discipleship among the rabbis and Jesus.
20. One could conjecture that the woman mentioned in Luke 8:1–3 performed a role something like a deaconess and evangelized and even taught women. The passage itself, however, points to something like physical or material service rather than to evangelizing women.
21. On the rabbinic use of the term "daughter of Abraham," see Strack/Billerbeck, 2:200.
22. Sr. Margaret Brennan, I. H. M., "Women's Liberation / Men's Liberation," *Origins* 5, no. 7 (July 17, 1975): 102.
23. A. Swidler, 36. Such views can be found in a number of recent feminist writers, e.g., Wahlberg, 100–107.

24. Some versions of the New Testament translate this text in a significantly different way:

I appeal to Evodia and I appeal to Syntyche to come to agreement with each other, in the Lord; and I ask you, Syzygus, to be truly a “companion” and to help them in this. These women were a help to me when I was fighting to defend the Good News and so, at the same time, were Clement and the others who worked with me. Their names are written in the book of life. (Phil 4:2–3, JB)

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This would normally be considered the less likely, but not impossible reading. Such a translation would make Paul somewhat less warm to the women, but still showing a personal concern for them as his co-workers in their time of need.

25. Leipoldt, 182–183, gives a summary of the approaches of the different gospels. See also Brown, “The Role of Women in the Fourth Gospel,” 688–699, for a discussion of the approach to women in the Gospel of John.
26. Although some writers have chosen to interpret Luke 8:1–3 as an indication of women with Jesus functioning as deaconesses, the evidence from the text itself would not appear to support such a reading.
27. Some would hold that Paul, or whoever wrote the pastoral epistles, showed a disrespect for women in the way he spoke in 1 Timothy 2:15 and 2 Timothy 3:6. We have discussed 1 Timothy 2:15 adequately. 2 Timothy 3:6 does not have to be read as being disrespectful to women and probably should not be. The point is not that all women are in the situation that is described, but that those who are in that situation are prey to false teachers. The problem seems to be that false teachers are gaining access to women’s quarters and realizing some success among the weaker women there.
28. The issue of Paul’s authorship of various epistles is likewise not essential here. 1 Corinthians is undisputedly Paul’s, and by itself that is enough to make the point. The Pauline authorship of Colossians also has adequate consensus to be used for a discussion like this.
29. For descriptions of Gentile influences upon Judaism at the time of Jesus, see Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter During the Early Hellenistic Period* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974); Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 1–6; Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1959), 344–377; and W. F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (New York: Doubleday, 1957), 334–357.
30. See, for instance, Leipoldt, 50–72; Oepke, 776ff.; G. Delling, *Paulus’ Stellung zu Frau und Ehe* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1931), 3, 30; Carle, 284f.

CHAPTER II

THE NEW TESTAMENT APPROACH > SETTING AND CULTURE

1. The New Testament teaching and approach could be described as Pauline teaching in the broad sense of the word Pauline. The places in which we find the explicit teaching on the roles of men and women and the places which allow us to trace most clearly the patterns of the early Christian life in this area are all in the Pauline sphere of influence. The scripture which contains our main sources for the roles of men and women stem from churches composed of Jews and Gentiles in the area where Paul worked and are texts either written by Paul or written in close association with him (this would include Luke–Acts, and

- probably 1 Peter, as well as the whole Pauline corpus). There is, of course, much discussion in scholarly writings about how much of the Pauline corpus was actually written by Paul. Few letters have escaped being called into question. For the purposes of this book, there is no need to be involved in these debates. It is enough to note that the pastorals come to us under Pauline authority and most would accept the main lines of approach in the pastorals as Pauline, at least in the sense that they were shaped by Pauline teaching. Moreover, there is some consensus that the teaching in 1 Peter on Christian personal relationships is either influenced by Paul or based upon the same kind of instructional material that Paul's approach was based on.
2. On this aspect of diaspora Judaism, see Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*, 296–332; S. Appelbaum, “The Organization of the Jewish Communities in the Diaspora,” in *The Jewish People in the First Century*, vol. 1, *Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum*, vol. 1/1, ed. S. Safrai and M. Stern (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974), 464–503.
 3. For some discussions of the early Christian catechesis, see Crouch, 103–150; M. Barth, 608ff.; P. Carrington, *The Primitive Christian Catechism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940); Davies, 111–146; C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Development* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1950), 3ff.; and Lohse, 154ff. Daube, 90–105, makes a particularly helpful contribution from the point of view of the concerns of this chapter when he presents evidence for viewing the New Testament ethical instruction as Christian halacha.
 4. For helpful treatments of the difference see Crouch, 103–107; W. Lillie, “The Pauline House-tables,” *Expository Times* 86, no. 6 (March 1975), 179–183.
 5. This opinion is presented by Crouch, 166, concerning Colossians. See also Lohse, 156–157; Conzelmann (cited by Lohse, 156). For a penetrating analysis of such an approach, see Sproul, 13–15, 40.
 6. This point is noted by Crouch, 155.
 7. For helpful material here see Davies, 114ff.; Crouch, 95–97; G. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940), 1:247ff.; and *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, 7:648ff.
 8. For a basic presentation of the development of these ideas see the discussion in John Bright, *A History of Israel* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974), 450–453.
 9. See, for example, van der Meer, 39–45; Ramig, 111–116.
 10. See above, Chapter Six, pp. 142–145.
 11. Strack/Billerbeck, 3:610–613.
 12. Leipoldt, 147–155, among others, subscribes to this view. However, evidence such as that of 1 Corinthians 9:5, and the role of the woman Grapte in *The Shepherd of Hermas* may be taken as contradicting such a position. 1 Corinthians 9:5 indicates that women traveled, and possibly worked with, the Twelve, as well as with Paul. Grapte's role in *Hermas* (which is normally seen as a Judeo-Christian work) points to a similar conclusion. See Chapter Five on women as missionary workers for a related issue.
 13. Among those suggesting a countering of Greek cultural influences are Leipoldt, 172–173; and Carle, 172–173. For the opinion that the problem arose from an interpretation of Paul's message of freedom, see the discussion in Meeks, 201ff. For the suggestion of tendencies leading toward Gnosticism, see Crouch, 139ff. There is also the distinct possibility that the situation being countered in 1 Corinthians and that being countered in 1 Timothy are two different situations.
 14. Some people would hold that Paul's taking a stand was cultural adaptation in reverse: Paul could not have given women too great a role of leadership in the Christian community

because women were so prominent in pagan situations as priestesses and cult prostitutes. If they were leaders, women might have confused their new religion with their old, or they might have been encouraged to resume their old ways. This position rests upon a comparison with the way the Christian church took pains to distinguish itself from paganism in certain areas of life. This view is suggested by Thrall, 74–76, and taken up by J. M. Ford, “Tongues–Leadership–Women: Further Reflections on the Neo-Pentecostal Movement,” 186–197. See also A. Cunningham, “Christian Women in Ecclesial Ministry: The First Six Hundred Years,” in *Pro and Con on Ordination of Women* (Report and Papers from the Anglican–Roman Catholic Consultation), 66.

It does seem that at times the Christians would avoid a practice simply because it was pagan. On the other hand, it also seems that at times the Christians would take up a pagan practice and change its significance in order to counter pagan influences. However, such concerns both to reject and to take up pagan practices seemed to motivate Christians primarily in the area of worship forms where a symbol, ritual action, or confessional formula might have led new believers to be confused about what God they were worshipping or what kind of worship was fitting. The early Christians did try to guard against syncretism. But the same phenomenon does not seem to have operated in the area of social structure considerations. There is no evidence that the early Christians avoided certain approaches to personal relations and social structure to avoid confusing new Christians about the difference between Christianity and paganism. They did avoid certain approaches to personal relations and social structure that were characteristic of pagans because they thought such approaches were wrong, but not because they thought the practice would cause confusion of religions. However, the major objection to the theory of cultural adaptation in reverse is the lack of evidence for it. It has no more support in the key texts than the theories of cultural adaptation. There is no indication that in these texts New Testament writers were attempting to keep their female converts from relapsing into paganism. Such a view has to be counted as an unlikely guess. Moreover, presumably if Paul guided male converts who were used to male leadership in pagan cults to approach their new religion differently than they had approached their old, he could have done the same for women.

15. The list of writers proposing such theories, and a listing of the various theories proposed, would be lengthy. For a typical sampling see Scanzoni/Hardesty, 60–72, 88–105; McGrath, 28–44; Kress, 77–106; and Adams, 187–206.
16. For instance, in *Gaudium et Spes*, in *Documents of Vatican II*, ed. W. Abbott (New York: The American Press, 1966), 259f.
17. For a good summary of the anthropological definitions of culture, see Louis J. Lutzbetak, *The Church and Cultures* (South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1975), 59–72. Alfred Louis Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn in *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952) give a comprehensive overview and analysis of the attempts to define “culture.”
18. Talcott Parsons draws a similar distinction between the “social system” and the “cultural system.” For Parsons, the term “society” refers to the basic system of human relationships, and the term “culture” refers to the system of symbolic meanings (e.g., language and ceremony) which mediate communication within the relationships. See Talcott Parsons, *The Social System* (New York: The Free Press, 1951), 5–6, 10–11. The terms have been reworded in this book to deal with the (often confusing) ways in which “the culture question” is phrased. The structuralist distinction between deep and surface structures presents some

- analogies to this distinction. The distinction has been used earlier in the book, especially in Chapter Seven, pp. 174–176
19. For instance, Ramig, 116, and McGrath, 10–16, who describe it as Jewish custom; and Jewett, 129, and Conzelmann (cited in Lohse, 156–157), who regard it as merely a custom of the ancient world.
 20. Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), 69–70. Daly's total rejection of Christian belief is even more emphatic in her most recent book, *Gyn/Ecology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978).
 21. Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex*, 42.
 22. These two approaches can be found coexisting in such writers as M. Daly, *ibid.*, 40ff.; J. M. Ford, "Tongues—Leadership—Women," 194–197; and Scanzoni/Hardesty, 64–72, 202–209. It is, of course, common outside of feminist literature.
 23. The question of culture and Christianity has been extensively discussed by Christian thinkers in modern times. They often, however, fail to adequately focus on the issue of two particular opposed cultures, the Christian and the non-Christian, in their interpretation of the New Testament and early patristic writers. Richard Niebuhr in his influential and overall helpful book *Christ and Culture*, provides an example of this difficulty in chapter 2 ("Christ Against Culture"). He relies throughout the book on the universal sense of "culture" as human life insofar as it is developed by human beings and not simply given in an instinctual or semi-instinctual way by "nature" rather than using "culture" to refer to the way of life of particular cultures (see the discussion in the text, pp. 277–279). Hence, he does not clearly enough observe that Christians who were against "culture" were not against culture in general, but against the pagan culture that surrounded them. In fact, those who were most against pagan culture wanted to create a distinctly Christian culture.

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The same point could be made by saying that Niebuhr does not approach the issue sociologically or anthropologically (i.e., in terms of a Christian group and culture versus a pagan group or culture). Hence he does not clearly enough treat some of the important aspects of the question.

- Because of his basic framework, Niebuhr and others like him miss the great difference between the challenge of culture in a Christendom context (where culture is often approached as an element within a Christian society that has a relationship to religion) and the challenge of culture outside a Christendom situation (where "culture" often presents itself as the culture of an alien, unbelieving group). Niebuhr's book, therefore, is more valuable as a study of theological thought in a Christendom situation than as a study of the Christian approach in missionary situations—the context of the New Testament writings.
24. See for instance, Stendahl, *The Bible and the Role of Women*, 38–43. This is further discussed in note 25 to Chapter Twenty, p. 773.
 25. A very helpful presentation of Christianity as a culture is that of Lutzbetak, 5–7.

CHAPTER 12
CHRISTIAN TRADITION ▶
HUSBANDS AND WIVES

1. A very positive view of tradition among modern thinkers is often to be found among cultural anthropologists. For a helpful discussion of tradition from the cultural perspective see Lutzbetak, 115–116.

2. For a good summary of tradition in the New Testament, see Congar, *Tradition and Traditions*, 12–22. See also “Tradition” in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 14:225–228. Recent Catholic thinking tends to emphasize this latter aspect.
3. Examples of the consciousness of the early church that it had received its teaching from the apostles, and of the importance that it placed on that fact, can be found in Clement of Rome (Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, pt. 1, 2:135ff.), Irenaeus (*PG* 7:1056), and Tertullian (*PL* 2:32–33).
4. The primary focus here will be on the earliest tradition, that of the patristic era, which extended roughly over the first five or six centuries after the death of the last apostle. Not all early Christian writers are helpful as witnesses to tradition but, in general, early Christian writers of good reputation who appear to be giving accounts of what they understood to be Christian teaching passed on from the apostles can be of assistance in understanding what the scriptures say. There is an important sense in which the earliest tradition is more helpful and authoritative than later tradition, because an earlier writer is more likely to have received and preserved an undistorted version. For this reason, later teachers have given special weight to the writings of the patristic age. It is sometimes pointed out that later tradition is often more clear-sighted on particular issues than is earlier tradition, partly as a result of more reflection over the centuries and partly because of having issues clarified in the course of various controversies. Some would hold, therefore, that later teaching is more reliable. Catholics and Orthodox hold that some issues have been solemnly and deliberately decided by the teaching authority of the whole church and that such elements in later tradition are therefore more authoritative and reliable than many elements in earlier tradition. All other things being equal, however, in the case of a “chain” of tradition over the centuries, an earlier authority has more weight simply because it is earlier and there is less likelihood of distortion. The primary focus of these chapters, therefore, is with the earliest tradition, the tradition of the patristic era.
5. For the critical text, see J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, pt. 1, 2:11.
6. Lightfoot, pt. 1, 2:75–78.
7. Lightfoot, pt. 2, 2:347–350.
8. Lightfoot, pt. 2, 3:328–330.
9. For two helpful treatments of the Alexandrian Fathers and their views on marriage, see Jean-Paul Broudhoux, *Mariage et Famille chez Clément d’Alexandrie* (Théologie Historique, vol. 2) (Paris: Beauchesne et ses fils, 1970); and Henri Crouzel, *Virginité et Mariage selon Origène* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1962).
10. *PG* 8:260.
11. *PG* 8:1271.
12. *PG* 8:621–622.
13. *PG* 8:1182.
14. *PG* 8:1211.
15. *Sources Chrétiennes* 7:129.
16. For a somewhat balanced view of Tertullian’s writings on marriage, see Igino Giordani, *The Social Message of the Early Church Fathers* (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1977), 220–243. Tavard, 56–62, also makes some attempt to offer a balanced view of Tertullian’s views. Many feminist writers (for example, A. Swidler, 13) display no effort to present an accurate overview of Tertullian’s attitudes toward marriage, and toward women in general. Rather, they choose from among his most offensive statements to characterize his position.

17. *CSEL* 1:393–394.
 18. The *Didascalia Apostolorum*, probably written in Syria in the third century, adds its witness to the third-century church Fathers in teaching the following:

And let a woman also be subject to her husband; because the head of the woman is the man, and the head of a man that walks in the way of justice is Christ. After the Lord Almighty, our God and the Father of the worlds, of the present and of that which is to come, and the Lord of every breath and of all powers, and this living and Holy Spirit—to whom is glory and honour for evermore, Amen—woman, fear your husband and reverence him, and please him alone, and be ready to minister to him . . . (there follows a quote from *Prv* 31:10–31)

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19. The literature describing the views of marriage held by these great Fathers is not extensive in quantity or very helpful on the whole. See, however, the helpful treatment of Chrysostom in Moulard, *St. Jean Chrysostome, le défenseur du mariage et l'apôtre de la virginité* (Paris, 1923). Of some use in the study of Augustine's thought is K. E. Borreson's *Subordination et equivalence: Nature et rôle de la femme d'après Augustin et Thomas d'Aquin* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1968).
20. *PL* 14:357–358.
 21. *PL* 16:1218.
 22. *PL* 16:259.
 23. *PG* 61:292.
 24. *PG* 51:230ff.
 25. *PG* 61:290.
 26. *PG* 62:140–141.
 27. *PG* 62:136–137.
 28. John Chrysostom, Homily 20 on Ephesians (*PG* 62:143).
 29. *PL* 40:373.
 30. *PL* 32:1336.
 31. Examples from Protestant sources are numerous. From among the Reformers, see Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, in *Luther's Works*, vol. 1 (St. Louis: Concordia, 1964), 202–203; and Calvin, *Commentary on Genesis*, in *Commentaires de Jean Calvin sur l'Ancien Testament*, vol. 1 (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1961), 57, 81. See Zerbst, 96–103, for further Protestant examples.
 32. *Casti Connubii*, December 31, 1930, 19, 20.

CHAPTER 13

CHRISTIAN TRADITION ▸ GOVERNMENT OF THE COMMUNITY

1. For a description of this change, see Clark, *Unordained Elders*, 44–49.
 2. *CCL* 2:1218.4–1219.7. See also the following quote from *De Praescriptione Haereticorum* 41.2, written during his Catholic period: “And even the heretical women, how bold and indecorous they are! They dare to teach, to argue, to undertake exorcism, to promise healings, perhaps even to baptize” (*CCL* 1:221.13–15).
 3. *GCS* 33:273.9–19; see also the quotation from his *Fragments for 1 Corinthians* 74: “It is not

proper to a woman to speak at the Assembly, however admirable or holy what she says may be, merely because it comes from female lips” (cited in *Journal of Theological Studies* 10, no. 37 [October 1908]: 41–42). The Alexandrian Fathers Clement and Origen seem to have had little to say in general about woman’s official role in the church, as Ryrie (105–111) points out in his survey. Much of their teaching on the service of women, especially the teaching of Clement, focuses on the woman’s position in the home, which would point in the direction of the observations made in Chapter Five that much of the service to others that a woman would perform would be done out of the context of her home. Some further observations on the teaching of the Alexandrian Fathers, especially Clement, can be found in I. Giordani, *The Social Message of the Early Church Fathers*, 238–242.

4. This can be found in his *Letter to Cyprian* 75.10 (*PL* 3:1164) where he states:

Here suddenly there arises a woman who fell into ecstasy and pretended to be a prophetess and behaved as though she were full of the Holy Ghost. . . . This spirit had also duped one of the presbyters, by the name of Rusticus, and still another man, a deacon, so that they were involved along with this woman. . . . But that woman had also been so bold as frequently to do the following: amid an in no way contemptible invocation she affected to sanctify the bread and celebrate the Eucharist and offered the sacrifice to the Lord, not without the mystery of the usual customary words; and she undertook many baptisms with the use of the customary and proper formula of questions, so that she seemed not to deviate at all from the ecclesiastical rule.

5. On the significance of Epiphanius’s witness to tradition regarding the question of women as elders, see Daniélou, *The Ministry of Women in the Early Church*, 25–28, who says: “Epiphanius here assembles the whole of the official teaching on the question, finding his sanction for the exclusion of women from priestly functions in divine and apostolic authority.” See also R. Gryson, *The Ministry of Women in the Early Church* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1976), 77–80; and H. van der Meer, *Women Priests?*, 47–50. Unfortunately, van der Meer, who states that “Epiphanius of Salamis is without doubt by far the most important witness” (47) appears to be primarily interested in trying to find reasons to question the authority of Epiphanius’s witness. His efforts are unconvincing.
6. *GCS* 37:477.27–478.2.
7. *GCS* 37:478.16–478.31.
8. Didymus states in *The Trinity* 3.41.3 (*PG* 39:988–989):

Regarding female prophets, Scripture speaks of four daughters of Philip, Deborah, Mary, the sister of Aaron, and Mary the Mother of God . . . but there are no books written in their names. As a matter of fact, the Apostle Paul forbade this, in his first letter to Timothy, when he wrote: “I permit no woman to teach,” and again, in the first letter to the Corinthians, “Every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head.” This is to say that women are not permitted to write books impudently, for in this way, a woman insults her head, and “A woman’s head is man; man’s head is Christ.” The reason for imposing silence on women is obvious: the teaching of the first woman, in the beginning, caused a serious wrong to humankind, for so writes the Apostle, “it was not man who was deceived, but woman.”

9. “It is against the order of nature or of law for women to speak in an assembly of men” (Commentary on 1 Cor 14) in *PL* 30:762.

10. *PG* 48:633.

11. *On the Priesthood* 3,9 (*PG* 48:646):

Divine law has excluded women from the ministry; but they endeavor to force their way into it. Because they can do nothing of themselves, they seek to accomplish everything through others. They have gained such power that they can appoint to the priesthood and depose from it whomsoever they wish. Everything is topsy-turvy, and the saying of the proverb can be seen coming to pass: "those who are ruled lead their rulers." And would that it were men who do this, rather than those who are not permitted to teach. Did I say teach? The blessed Paul did not permit them even to speak in the church. Yet I have heard someone say that women now assume such liberties as to rebuke the bishops of the Church more sharply than masters do their slaves.

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12. *PG* 51:192.

13. *PG* 61:688–689.

14. *PG* 62:683.

15. Despite his expressed respect for women, and the personal relationships he had with Christian women, Chrysostom is much maligned by the feminists, who can tend to portray him as "misogynistic" and less than human. Tavad's description of Chrysostom's views on women is an example of the resulting distortion. Tavad, 82, says of Chrysostom that he "frequently falls into bad taste," that his work on remarriage is "particularly savage," but that he becomes "more human when he addresses himself to one particular person." Such comments demonstrate a failure to understand or to accurately analyze the mind of this Father of the church, partly because of proceeding from the view that all who hold a role difference between men and women must be undervaluing women, partly for reasons treated toward the end of this chapter.

16. Swete 2:93.10–95.8.

17. *PG* 82:309.

18. *PG* 82:801.

19. We might also quote Ambrosiaster (probably from the end of the fourth century) in this regard. Although little is known about Ambrosiaster, except as the author of some writings attributed to Ambrose, his work is a witness to the thought of the patristic age:

It is obvious that woman is submitted to man's power, and she has not authority. For she can neither teach, nor be a witness, nor give guarantees, nor administer justice, and so, how much less is she than capable of exercising power. (*Questions Relating the Old to the New Testament* 45.2–3; *CSEL* 50:82.14–83.7)

20. Funk, 190.8–17.

21. *Apostolic Church Order* 24.1–28 (Schermann, 31.10–33.6):

Andrew said: "It is helpful, brothers, to establish a ministry for women." Peter said: "We have already made preparations. But concerning the sacrifice of the Body and Blood, let us make ourselves clear." John said: "You have forgotten, brothers, that when our Master asked for the bread and cup and when he blessed it saying, 'This is my body, this is my blood,' he did not give permission to women to stand with us." Martha said: "That's on account of Mary, because He saw her smile." Mary said:

“It’s not because I laughed. For He had used to tell us, when He taught, that that which is weak will be saved by that which is strong.”

For a brief and helpful discussion of the *Apostolic Church Order*, and, in particular, of the above passage, see Gryson, 80–86.

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22. Funk, 199.21–201.17.
23. Heféle, *A History of the Councils of the Church*, vol. 2, trans. by H. N. Oxenham (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1876), 305.
24. *Ibid.*, 319.
25. *Ibid.*, 293. On this Council, see also Lafontaine, “Le sexe masculin, condition de l’accession aux ordres, aux IV^e et V^e siècles,” *Revue de l’Université d’Ottawa* 31, no. 4 (October–December 1961): 150.
26. Heféle, 2:420.
27. *PL* 59:55f.
28. *PG* 104:1025. Photius cites Canon 19 of Nicaea, which requires that returning members of the Paulianist heresy be re-baptized, and their clergy re-ordained. That canon makes clear that deaconesses are not to be considered a part of the ordained presbyterate: “We remind those deaconesses who are in this position, that as they have not been ordained, they must be classed merely among the laity.” See further Heféle, 1:430–431. Photius also cites Canon 15 of Chalcedon which regulates the laying on of hands for deaconesses, possibly as an indication that women are to be ordained to the diaconate but not the presbyterate. The fourteenth canon of the Quinisext (or Trullan) Council (692 AD) (viewed by Photius as providing the canons for the previous Sixth Ecumenical Council) reads: “Let the canon of our holy God-bearing Fathers be confirmed in this particular also; that a presbyter be not ordained before he is thirty years of age, even if he is a very worthy man, but let him be kept back. For our Lord Jesus was baptized and began to teach when he was thirty. In like manner let no deacon be ordained before he is twenty-five, nor a deaconess before she is forty.” See further Heféle, 5:226, for the text and some commentary. See also the very useful edition of *The Seven Ecumenical Councils*, ed. H. R. Percival, in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 14. It contains the texts of the Councils, as well as a selection of excerpts from ancient and modern commentaries on each canon under the heading “ancient epitome.” For the canons mentioned here, see 40, 129–130, 279, and 372.
29. It is clear that by the fourth century, bishops were receiving the vows of virgins. It is less clear what kind of process existed earlier, and precisely when a distinct order of virgins began under the bishop’s direction. It is possible that, at first, virgins made their vows privately and remained in their family’s home, under their father’s authority. On virgins, see H. Leclercq, “Vièrge, Virginité,” in *Dictionnaire d’archéologie Chrétienne et de liturgie*, vol. 15, pt. 2, 3094–3108.
30. This point is made generally by J. Gribomont, “Double Monasteries,” *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 9:1021. It is applied more specifically to Pachomius and the monasteries of women related to him in Derwas Chitty, *The Desert a City* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), 23.
31. On the subject of abbesses with so-called “quasi-episcopal” authority, see P. de Langogne, “Abbeses” in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, 1:17–22, and J. de Puniet’s article “Abbeses” in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, 1:57–61. In recent years, the role of these abbesses has been grossly misrepresented in feminist literature, perhaps, most notably by Joan Morris,

The Lady Was a Bishop (New York: Macmillan, 1973). Elizabeth Kennan accurately assesses Morris's book in a review in *America*, September 1, 1973, 125, where she states:

This is an exasperating book. It is a polemic with all the intellectual weaknesses and none of the rhetorical virtues of that genre. Joan Morris' intention is to recall the age-old prominence of some women in the ecclesiastical hierarchy and to lay the blame for the eclipse of their positions on Renaissance male chauvinism. To establish such a neat dialectical pattern, she has had to strip her history of all social context and misinterpret at least one important canonical category: exemption from episcopal jurisdiction.

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Much the same comment could be made of others who attempt to find in these abbesses a precedent which never existed.

32. There are four monasteries where the abbesses seem to have exercised even greater authority than most of the abbesses with "quasi-episcopal powers," namely the Cistercian abbeys of las Huelgas and Conversano and the abbeys of Fontrevault and Quedlinburg. These abbeys were for the most part beneficiaries of some significant royal patronage. Exactly what kind of jurisdiction they did have is not completely clear. Three points are to be noted: the abbesses were not ordained to the presbyterate or episcopate, their privileges were eventually taken away from them as being inappropriate, and they were not authoritative examples but exceptions. There is no reason not to judge these abbeys as abuses due to royal patronage and distortions introduced by feudal customs into Christian life. Just as the existence of chantry priests in the Middle Ages is commonly regarded as an abuse, the existence of such abbesses can also be regarded as an abuse. On these abbeys, see Langogne, *DTC*, 1:17–22.
33. Innocent III's prohibition is cited in Thomassin, *Vetus et nova Ecl. disciplina* (Venice, 1773), pt. 1, vol. 1, bk. 3, ch. 47, sec. 4.
34. Concerning patristic use of 1 Timothy 2, see Chapter Eight, p. 203. Among the Fathers citing 1 Cor 14 are Tertullian (*CCL* 1:291–292; 2:1210–1219), Epiphanius (*GCS* 37:478.16–31), John Chrysostom (*PG* 48:646), Theodoret (*PG* 82:348), Ambrosiaster (*CSEL* 81/2:163–164), and Jerome (*PL* 30:794).
35. This theme of weakness occurs in various patristic writings, as for example, Clement of Alexandria (*PG* 8:62of.), Origen (*PG* 12:296f.), Cyril of Alexandria (*PG* 68:1053), Epiphanius (*PG* 41:643), Augustine (*PL* 35:151), and Gregory the Great (*PL* 75:982–983).
36. *PG* 31:240–241.
37. Van der Meer is an example of both of these arguments. His general approach, while superficially appearing reasonable, is in fact problematic. The method he employs in his book, when its implications are drawn out beyond this single issue, makes it impossible to argue from tradition for anything. John Sheets ("Ordination of Women: The Issues," *American Ecclesiastical Review* 169, no. 1 [January 1975]: 26) summarizes his evaluation of van der Meer's book by saying that the "whole methodology is in fact questionable."
38. Some examples among the books that use this approach are: Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex*, 43–48; McGrath, 41–44; Kress, 109–146; and Rosemary R. Ruether, "Misogynism and Virginal Feminism," in *Religion and Sexism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), 150–183.
39. On woman as inferior, see for instance John Chrysostom (*PG* 51:230). Another passage from the same author (Homily 20 on Ephesians, *PG* 62:142) highlights the distinction

between worth (or here, “dignity”) and position. In speaking of the wife, he states: “She is second authority, possessing indeed an authority, and a considerable equality of dignity, but at the same time the husband has somewhat of superiority.” Here again, “superiority” as with “inferior” as mentioned above, refers to position, not to personal worth. In a similar vein, see Ambrosiaster (*PL* 17:239).

40. *The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas* 1.92.1 (Condon: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1922), 275–276:

As regards the individual nature, woman is defective and misbegotten, for the active force in the male seed tends to the production of a perfect likeness in the masculine sex; while the production of women comes from defect in the active force or from some material indisposition, or even from some external influence, such as that of a south wind, which is moist, as the Philosopher observes (*De Gener. Animal.* 4.2). On the other hand, as regards human nature in general, woman is not misbegotten, but is included in nature’s intention as directed to the work of generation. Now the general intention of nature depends upon God, who is the universal Author of nature. Therefore, in producing nature, God formed not only the male, but also the female.

41. An example of a quote which stems from the general lack of education among women of the time can be found in Cyril of Alexandria’s *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, bk. 12 (Pusey 3:133ff.). Augustine is an example of a Father who sees in women a stronger and less easily controlled sexual inclination.
42. *CCL* 1:343–344.
43. *CCL* 1:352.
44. Examples of such typology are abundant in the writings of the Fathers. See, for example, Ambrose (*PL* 16:325), Augustine (*PL* 35:1395), Origen (*PG* 12:296), Justin (*PG* 6:710–711), Gregory the Great (*PL* 75:982f.).
45. Van der Meer, 59.
46. The report on the ordination of women issued by the Pontifical Biblical Commission (*Origins* 6, no. 6 [July 1, 1976]: 92–96) illustrates this distinction between headship/eldership within the Christian community (as seen in the early church) and sacramental ministry. The report divides its final section (pt. 4) into these two subheadings. The vote of the Commission was based only on the latter subsection and on the fact that scripture does not treat the sacramental function traditionally ascribed to the “priest” (presbyter).
47. Van der Meer, 100.
48. J. H. Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1920), 3–32.

CHAPTER 14

THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

1. Kierkegaard presents one of the most penetrating analyses of the necessity of being addressed by God personally in scripture. See especially S. Kierkegaard, “For Self-Examination,” in *For Self-Examination and Judge for Yourselves*, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 50–74. He also makes this point forcefully in the *Philosophical Fragments* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), esp. 61–67, and in the

Concluding Unscientific Postscript (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), esp. 339, 536, 538.

2. For a contemporary example of the view of the authority of scripture flowing from the genius of its authors, see C. H. Dodd, *The Authority of the Bible* (London: Collins, 1900), 13–40, 264–274. Kierkegaard deals with this position with great insight in “The Difference Between an Apostle and a Genius,” in *Authority and Revelation*, trans. Walter Lowrie (New York: Harper & Row, 1956). Dodd significantly modified his views on this subject in later life.
3. For a helpful summary of the authority of scripture in the period of the New Testament, see R. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975): especially for Jewish exegesis, 19–20; for Jesus’ use of the Old Testament, 51–78; and for the Evangelists, 79–103. Important statements of the authority of scripture can be found in Theophilus of Antioch, *Ad autolyicum* 2.22, 3.12, 3.14; Athenagoras, *Apol.* 7; Athenagoras, *Legatio pro Christianis* 7, 9; Irenaeus, *Adv. Haereses* 3.11, 3.18; Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 2.2.9; Origen, *Philocalia* 13; Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunom.* 1.114, 1.126, 1.107; Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* 2.5.6; Aquinas, *S. T.* 1.1.8; Aquinas, *Quodlibeta* 12.26; Council of Florence (1442), DS 1334; Luther, *D. Martin Luthers Werke*, Kritische Gesamtausgabe (Weimar, 1883), 7:315, 7:317, 7:453, 7:455, 8:108; 30/2:420; 40/1:119; 50:206; Calvin, *Institutes* 1.7.1; Council of Trent (1556), DS 1501; Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion (1563), 4; Second Helvetic Confession (1566), 1; Westminster Confession (1646), 1.2.4; Twenty-Five Articles of Religion (1784), 5; Abstract of Principles (1859), 1; Second Vatican Council (1965), *Dei Verbum* 21.
4. The authority of the Bible in its traditional formulation is founded in the authority of God as someone other than man, over him, and deserving of man’s submission by the nature of who he is. The appropriate response to divinity is reverence and submission. The rightness of this response is not dependent upon God’s use of force (although the scriptural teaching indicates that he is willing to do so), nor upon his making the rightfulness of his demands evident. It is rather primarily dependent upon the intrinsic nature of the relationship between God and man. In this sense it is analogous to the authority of a father over his children which likewise is founded in the nature of the relationship. For this same reason, even though the term “authority” is “legal,” it is more than legal. It expresses an important aspect of many personal relationships.
5. Barr, in *The Bible in the Modern World*, 23–29, criticizes the use of the term “authority” for describing the status of the Bible. Much of the critique is centered upon the way in which the term is unacceptable to many modern thinkers because of their dislike of authority. He does not observe with the same clarity that the reality claimed by those who use the word is, in fact what is disliked and not just the word itself. The issue is fundamentally an issue about how God and the things of God are to be approached.
6. Augustine states the practical application of the authority of scripture by saying: “If I do find anything in these books which seems contrary to truth, I decide that either the text is corrupt, or the translator did not follow what was really said, or that I failed to understand it” (*Ep.* 82.1.3 [*PL* 33:277]).
7. The Sumerian root of the Greek *kanōn* has as its primary meaning “reed” (see, e.g., 1 Kgs 14:15; Job 40:21). In Greek it can mean a straight rod or bar, staves which preserve the shape of a shield, the line which carpenters and masons use, or metaphorically, a rule, standard, model, or paradigm. In the KJV New Testament it occurs as “rule,” (Phil 3:16;

Gal 6:16) and in the RSV as “limit” (2 Cor 10:13). It is first used in reference to scripture by Athanasius. For good summary descriptions of the concept, see R. H. Pfeiffer, “Canon of the Old Testament,” *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible (IDB)*, 1:499; Brown, “Canonicity,” *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 518.

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8. In various formulations this traditional understanding of the nature of scripture is shared by many contemporary theologians. Among those who reflect this approach are: Pierre Benoit, “Inspiration and Revelation,” in *The Human Reality of Sacred Scripture*, ed. P. Benoit, R. E. Murphy, B. van Iersel, Concilium 10 (New York: Paulist, 1965), 6–24; Louis Bouyer, *The Meaning of Sacred Scripture* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1958); Yves Congar, *The Revelation of God* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1968), 20–23; J. Norval Geldenhuys, “Authority and the Bible,” in *Revelation and the Bible*, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1969), 371–386; Rene Latourelle, *Theology of Revelation* (New York: Alba House, 1966), 444; Paul S. Minear, *Commands of Christ* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), 12–21; Anders Nygren, *The Significance of the Bible for the Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963); Karl Rahner, “Scripture and Theology,” in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 6 (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), 89–93; Herman Ridderbos, *Studies in Scripture and Its Authority* (St. Catherine’s: Paideia Press, 1978), 20–36; Karl Hermann Schelkle, “Sacred Scripture and Word of God,” in *Dogmatic vs. Biblical Theology*, ed. H. Vorgrimler (London: Burns and Oates, 1964), 11–30; Luis Alonso Schokel, *The Inspired Word* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1965).
9. For good discussions of this and related issues, see Carl F. H. Henry (ed.), *Revelation and the Bible*; J. Baillie, *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965); K. Rahner, *Inspiration in the Bible* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1961); K. Rahner and J. Ratzinger, *Revelation and Tradition* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1966); J. T. Burtchaell, *Catholic Theories of Biblical Inspiration Since 1810* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).
10. For a good discussion of this concept see C. K. Barrett, “Paul and the ‘Pillar’ Apostles,” in *Studia Paulina in hon. J. DeZwam*, ed. W. C. van Unnik and G. Sevenster (Haarlem: E. F. Bohn, 1953), 1–19. See also Rahner, *Inspiration in the Bible*, 26–28.
11. Clement 42.
12. The Second Vatican Council clearly enunciates the Catholic principle that all that the Catholic Church teaches must be measured by scripture. See Second Vatican Council, *Dei Verbum* 2.10, in Austin Flannery, OP (ed.), *Vatican Council II* (Northpoint: Costello, 1975), 756. On the relationship between the authority of the church and that of scripture in Catholic theology, see K. Rahner, *Inspiration in the Bible*, 77. See also footnotes in Chapter Twelve, p. 289.
13. Second Vatican Council, *Dei Verbum* 3.11, in Flannery, 756–757.
14. The canon has currently received a great deal of discussion. The issue is not only the formation of the original canon and its finality (see David L. Dungan, “The New Testament Canon in Recent Study,” *Interpretation* 29, no. 4 [October 1, 1975]: 339–351, for a good survey of this area), but more importantly calling into question scriptural material already received as canonical. Some researchers would consider significant portions of the New Testament as non-canonical in fact. Their approach would logically call for a new New Testament. One reason that a new canon constructed along these lines has not been published is the fact that the criterion of selection differs from scholar to scholar. There would be little agreement among them as to what should be considered canonical and what not.

There are also many who simply deny the authority of scripture, yet claim to be presenting a Christian approach. For an example of a straightforward denial of the authority of scripture see Robin Scroggs, “Tradition, Freedom and the Abyss,” in *New Theology No. 8*, ed. Martin E. Marty and Dean G. Peerman (New York: Macmillan, 1971), 86–87. He states, “Neither from a theological nor from a historical point of view can there be the slightest hope of claiming the New Testament as canon” (92). Others would accept the New Testament as the canon, but in fact deny it any normativeness other than that which each Christian reader gives it. Ernst Käsemann presents such an approach in “The Canon of the New Testament and the Unity of the Church” in *Essays on New Testament Themes* (London: SCM Press, 1964), 95–107. Dennis Nineham in *The Use and the Abuse of the Scripture* (London: Macmillan, 1976) presents a more fully developed view of such an approach. Gregory Baum in “The Bible as Norm,” in *New Horizons* (New York: Paulist, 1972), provides a Catholic example. Barr in *The Bible* works to reestablish a concept of canonicity that would be acceptable to most modern scholars. He expounds the view that the scripture contains the classical model for the Christian faith and asserts that faith must “relate itself to classically-expressed models” in order to be Christian (118). He recognizes the chaos that Christianity would be in without any canon, but is unable to provide it with enough authority to effectively function as a norm. His article “The Authority of Scripture,” *The Ecumenical Review* 21, no. 2 (April 1969): 135–166, provides a good synopsis of current challenges to scriptural authority.

Neoorthodoxy is more difficult to locate in relation to these issues. It attempted to bridge the gap between the traditional and Liberal interpretations of scripture by accommodating the modern critical approach of the Liberals to a more traditional understanding of scripture. Its champions held that, although scripture could be said to contain God’s word and revelation, not all of scripture was God’s word. This attempted accommodation was ultimately unsuccessful. For good critiques of this attempt see Langdon Gilkey, *Naming the Whirlwind* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1969), 80–101; Childs, 103–104; Barr, *Fundamentalism*, 213ff.

The result of the denial of the authority of scripture among many modern scholars is the loss of a consensus about the substance of Christianity. Their sources of authority are no longer in Christian revelation, but elsewhere. Hence, beyond agreement about historical views of the scripture and of Christianity, they are unable to agree upon or even present a statement of faith in Christ.

Childs, 99–107, gives an excellent analysis of the weakness caused to Christian biblical studies by a failure to accept the authority of the canon as well as a very helpful exposition of the role of an authoritative scripture.

At root, the issue is one of which authority people will accept for their lives. Occasionally this issue comes to clarity of expression among some who do not accept scripture as having authority. Baum, in “The Bible as Norm,” expresses his own personal choice this way: “I prefer to think that man may not submit to an authority outside of himself: the ground on which he builds his life must be within him. He must stand on his own feet” (49).

15. The word *hypotagē* is here used for submission to teaching. The term “submission” as used in the text is an English equivalent of a biblical usage and expresses another aspect of the concept of “subordination” described earlier.
16. For an accurate reflection of the role of personal freedom in modern secular thought, see Gilkey, 365–397. The *locus classicus* for modern man’s abhorrence of authority is Adorno

- et al., *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950). See also the critique of H. H. Wyman and P. B. Sheatsley, “The Authoritarian Personality,” in *Studies in the Scope and Method of ‘The Authoritarian Personality’* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1954). A good example of reading this modern notion of freedom back into the scriptural texts is found in Rudolf Pesch, “Jesus, a Free Man,” in *Jesus Christ and Human Freedom*, ed. E. Schillebeeckx and B. van Iersel, Concilium 93 (New York: Herder & Herder, 1974), 56–70.
17. Paul, “the apostle of freedom,” uses the vocabulary of slavery almost twice as much as he does that of freedom. See David Stanley, “Freedom and Slavery in Pauline Usage,” *The Way* 15, no. 2 (April 1975): 94.
 18. In the New Testament, freedom (*eleutheria*) is never presented as personal autonomy. Rather, it is presented as freedom from sin (Rom 6:18–23; Jn 8:31–36), freedom from access to God only through the performance of the Law (Rom 7:3f.; 8:2; 10:4; Gal 2:4; 4:21–31; 5:1, 13; but see also Rom 2:25; 7:12; 8:7; Gal 5:3; 6:13), and freedom from death (Rom 6:21f.; 8:21). For helpful summaries of the New Testament view of freedom, see Schlier, *TDNT*, 2:487–502; and Kleinknecht and Gutbrod, *TDNT*, 4:1022–1090. See also Stanislaus Lyonnet, “Christian Freedom and the Law of the Spirit According to St. Paul,” in Stanislaus Lyonnet and Ignace de la Potterie, *The Christian Lives by the Spirit* (New York: Alba House, 1971), 145–174.
 19. The “law” (*nomos*) can refer either to the obligations imposed by the Old Covenant (the “Mosaic Law”) or to the standard and judgment of God. Paul states that the law of the obligations of the Old Covenant is fulfilled and superseded in Christ and in the New Covenant. Thus he says: “Christ is the end of the law in its connection with righteousness to all who believe” (Rom 10:4). However, in Romans 2 and elsewhere he stands by the law as the continuing standard and judgment of God. The ethical prescriptions of both the Old and New Covenant are not abrogated in Christ. For helpful presentations of Paul’s approach to freedom from the law, see R. Longenecker, *Paul: Apostle of Liberty* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 144–147; C. E. B. Cranfield, “St. Paul and the Law,” in *New Testament Issues*, ed. Richard Batey (New York: Harper, 1970), 148–172; C. A. A. Scott, *Christianity According to Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927), 42; and C. H. Dodd, “Ennomos Christou,” in *Studia Paulina*, 110, where Dodd changes from his earlier view found in his *Meaning of Paul* (Manchester: John Rylands Library, 1934), 146–148. See also the discussion in Chapter Six, pp. 142–143.
 20. For descriptions of the development of the notion of “human rights,” see W. G. Andrews, *Constitutions and Constitutionalism* (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1968); Richard P. Claude “The Classical Model of Human Rights Development,” in *Comparative Human Rights*, ed. Richard P. Claude (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 6–50; Maurice Cranston, “Some Aspects of the History of Freedom,” in *Theory and Politics*, ed. Klaus von Beyme (Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), 18–35; C. H. McIlwain, *Constitutionalism Ancient and Modern* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1940).
 21. For helpful treatments of the Israelite constitution see John Bright, *History of Israel*, 140ff.; Adolphe Lods, “The Religion of Israel: Origins” in *Record and Revelation*, ed. H. Wheeler Robinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 187–215; Albrecht Alt, “The Origins of Israelite Law,” in *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966), 81–132, esp. 122–126, 129–132.
 22. There is an approach held by some theologians in the last sixty years that holds that scriptural revelation is not propositional. The real revelation of God is “the Christ event” (e.g.,

L. Thornton, P. Tillich, R. Bultmann) or God's acts (e.g., G. E. Wright, W. Pannenberg), or something similar. The position as a whole goes beyond the scope of this book to discuss. Chapter Eleven of this book contains the developed alternate understanding. There are many ways in which viewing scripture as primarily "propositional" is distorting, but the non-propositional view of scriptural revelation cannot be pushed to the point of leaving no role for the teaching in scripture without being seriously at odds with what the writers of scripture understood themselves to be doing. Barr makes a very helpful contribution to the discussion in *The Bible*, 122–126.

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23. On this point see Bartlet, *Church Life and Church Order During the First Four Centuries* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1943), 32; E. Schweizer, *Church Order in the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1961), ch. 12, 28e, 28f.
24. See, for example, Schweizer; W. D. Davies, "A Normative Pattern of Church Life in the New Testament?" in *Christian Origins and Judaism* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), 199–229; R. Brown, "Unity and Diversity in New Testament Ecclesiology," in *New Testament Essays* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1965), 36–47; J. D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1978), 103–123. This concern reflects a more general approach taken by some theologians to the diversity within the New Testament in general. This approach is related to the issues surrounding the "canon within the canon" and the "new quest for the historical Jesus." For some examples see Dunn; Käsemann, "The Canon"; and G. Ebeling, "The New Testament and the Multiplicity of Confessions," in *The Word of God and Traditions* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), 148–160.
25. This position is developed by R. E. Brown, "The Ordination of Women," in his *Crises Facing the Church* (New York: Paulist, 1975), 52–55.
26. This position is, of course, denied by the advocates of a "charismatic church order" in Pauline churches. The issue is treated in Chapter Five, footnote, p. 130.
27. The most developed treatment of the question of diversity in the New Testament, Dunn's *Unity and Diversity*, finds only one unifying factor: "Christ," "the unity between Jesus the man and Jesus the exalted one" (371). He observes that there are others, such as love of neighbor, but avers that they can all be "narrowed back down to" the one unifying strand. The book is valuable as the most complete study of the area available. His methodology, however, makes his view of the unity in the New Testament too narrow. The principles he uses that are most relevant to our subject are a tendency to assume diversity and expect unity to be proved, a tendency to assert diversity on the basis of difference in formulation when the realities being asserted could be identical, a tendency to neglect the unity that is not distinctive of Christianity in relationship to other groups, especially Judaism, and a failure to consider fully the stream of ethical teaching in the New Testament which provides some other strands of unity which are less tractable to his form of gospel reductionism. Finally, and most significantly, his methodology does not allow for combining the New Testament teaching into a synthesis, where all the elements of the synthesis are not presented by all the authors of the New Testament (an approach that someone who looks on the New Testament as a whole as a teaching authority would instinctively adopt). There is much diversity in the New Testament, but the New Testament approach to roles of men and women contains some important areas of uniformity.
28. Barr's critique of related approaches in *The Bible*, 77, is perceptive and helpful.
29. As, for example, in A. Kosnick et al., *Human Sexuality* (New York: Paulist, 1977), 86, 151–152.

30. With regard to submitting to scriptural teaching, there are two questions which regularly arise:

1. *Does submitting to scriptural teaching in the area of men-women roles mean that Christian women have to wear headcoverings in worship?* The answer depends on giving an answer to yet another question: Is the headcovering itself the point of the passage, or is it more likely some kind of external expression of men-women order? To put it another way, when Paul laid down the rule about headcoverings, was he mainly concerned with headcoverings as the only proper expression of men-women roles, or was he primarily concerned about men-women roles and order being properly expressed and would he accept a different expression that was culturally the proper one in that society? The question itself is difficult, as the discussion in Chapter Seven showed, but insofar as the question of submission to scripture is concerned, it would be easier to believe that somebody's concern was the intent of the passage if that person was working to find an expression that was suitable to our culture than if that person was simply content to leave the whole passage aside claiming uncertainty. This point is posed well in R. C. Sproul, "Controversy at Culture Gap," *Eternity* 27 (May 1976): 13-15, 40.

2. *How does a Christian submit to the Old Testament?* It is not enough to say that we are no longer obligated to follow the Old Testament. Jesus approached the Old Testament as his authority, as did Paul and every other New Testament author, as well as the early Fathers. The Old Testament is likewise inspired, canonical teaching that is God's message to us. However, a Christian cannot approach the Old Testament the same way a Jew would, either now or in the time just before the birth of Jesus. There is a Christian interpretation of the Old Testament that allows us to know which things were for a stage of God's dealing with man and which things are for the times after the coming of the Messiah. For example, divorce was given according to the law of Moses for hardness of heart, but a Christian would not approach divorce the same way a Jew following the law of Moses would, because followers of the Messiah would approach it according to what was established by God from the beginning (see Mt 19:3-9).

31. James Barr, in an appendix to his *Old and New in Interpretation* (London: SCM Press, 1966), proposed that we view Fundamentalists primarily in terms of their holding to traditional doctrinal orthodoxy. This has some merit in explaining the ensemble of opinions that the original Fundamentalists came up with as the fundamentals. They were certainly traditional Protestant Evangelicals and today's Fundamentalists are likewise. However, such a view misses the thrust of the anti-Modernist movement. The Fundamentalists have not been strong on tradition, not even their own. Their reaction was more on the basis that the Modernists were jettisoning Christian realities that were essential to a living Christian faith. Their commitment was more to the content of the fundamentals than to their own tradition. Barr's recent book *Fundamentalism* (London: SCM Press, 1977) takes up the discussion in a different and more developed way. He focuses, however, more on the approach of current Fundamentalists (and Evangelicals) to scripture interpretation. The issue of the origin of Fundamentalism in a response to Modernism-Liberalism, however, is not focused on in the book, perhaps as C. F. H. Henry points out in his review of Barr's book "Those Incomprehensible British Fundamentalists," in *Christianity Today* 22 (1978): 1092-1096, 1146-1150, 1205-1208, because Barr himself takes very much of the Modernist-Liberal

position. Barr's emphasis on the doctrine of inerrancy in analyzing Fundamentalism is perceptive and helpful, but the doctrine of inerrancy was more part of the intellectual underpinning of an attempt to defend what was seen as the essentials of the Christian faith.

For a good short summary of the history of Fundamentalism, see Sidney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 808–816, 909–915, 956–960.

32. A good summary of the fundamentals is found in William Bell Riley's "The Faith of the Fundamentalists," *Current History* 26 (1927): 434–435. He writes:

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Fundamentalism undertakes to reaffirm the greater Christian doctrines. . . . It does not attempt to set forth every Christian doctrine. It has never known the elaboration that characterizes the great denominational confessions. But it did lay them side by side, and, out of their extensive statements, elect nine points upon which to rest its claims to Christian attention. They were and are as follows:

1. We believe in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament as verbally inspired by God, and inerrant in the original writings, and that they are of supreme and final authority in faith and life.
2. We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man.
4. We believe that man was created in the image of God, that he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also that spiritual death which is from God; and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature, and, in the case of those who reach moral responsibility, become sinners in thought, word and deed.
5. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice; and that all that believe in him are justified on the ground of his shed blood.
6. We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in his ascension into Heaven, and in his present life there for us, as High Priest and Advocate.
7. We believe in "that blessed hope," the personal, premillennial, and imminent return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
8. We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God.
9. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting felicity of the saved, and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost.

Riley's premillennialism was by no means universal throughout the Fundamentalist movement. Premillennialists draw upon certain New Testament passages (especially Rv 20:4–6) to support the historicity of Christ's thousand-year reign with certain martyrs as an interregnum at the end of time. Premillennialists understand Christ's return to precede this reign, while postmillenarianists argue that his coming follows upon the millennium.

The importance of millennialism for Fundamentalists is sometimes overstressed. For example, see Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism 1800–1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); Barr, *Fundamentalism*,

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- 190–207. For a more balanced approach see George Marsden, “Defining Fundamentalism,” *Christian Scholars Review*, Winter 1971; and “From Fundamentalism to Evangelicalism: A Historical Analysis” in *The Evangelicals*, ed. David F. Wells and John D. Woodbridge (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975), 122–145.
33. See *Lamentabili* (The Holy Office, 1907) and the encyclical letter of Pius X, *Pascendi*, of the same year, for a statement of the official Catholic position.
34. The term “Fundamentalism” is used more in the United States and perhaps British commonwealth countries for these approaches to questions of scriptural interpretation. European Protestant scholars might be more inclined to use the term “Biblicism.” Since this term does not involve using a name of an existing group for an approach to scriptural interpretation that is not clearly coextensive with the group in question, it is much preferable.
35. See footnotes, p. 674. See also Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 188.
36. Those who hold what is often called a “dictation view” of inspiration (the view that the exact words of the text were given to the human author by the Holy Spirit) will also often be termed Fundamentalists by those who hold a different view. This, however, is not as common a concern as it once was and does not come into the scope of this book.
37. It is a measure of the prejudice against Fundamentalists that it is not recognized that Fundamentalist churches often contain scholars. They rarely obtain academic recognition outside of their own circles, because of a refusal to accept the dominant principles of scriptural interpretation. Their refusal, however, is often a thoughtful and educated refusal. The statement in the text is especially true if one includes scholars who would prefer the title Evangelical to that of Fundamentalist, but who likewise reject many of the principles in much of modern biblical criticism.

CHAPTER 15**BYPASSING SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY**

1. Elizabeth Farians, “Justice: The Hard Line,” *Andover-Newton Quarterly*, March 1972, 199.
2. This is the approach of many of the liberation theologians. See, for example, Hugo Assmann, *Theology for a Nomad Church* (New York: Orbis, 1976), 54–55; Bonino, 61–83; Fiorenza, “Feminist Theology,” 30–44; Moltmann, 103–105; Segundo, 120–122. The difficulties some liberation theologians exhibit in understanding scripture are pointed out by John Howard Yoder, “Exodus,” *Sojourners* 5, no. 7 (September 1976): 26–29; and Stanley Hauerwas, “The Politics of Charity,” *Interpretation* 31 (1977): 252–262. Liberation theology is often used as a basis for feminist thinking.
3. Wahlberg, 103.
4. J. M. Ford, “Tongues–Leadership–Women,” 195.
5. Devor, 368.
6. M. Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex*, 39.
7. J. M. Ford, 195.
8. Devor, 378, 379, 381.
9. Van der Meer, 45.
10. For an example of systematic evaluation of the worth of scriptural teaching on the basis of the “cultural setting” of the New Testament, see Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Understanding God’s Revealed Word,” *Catholic Charismatic* 1, no. 6 (February/March 1977): 7.

11. This approach is taken by Jewett, *Man as Male and Female*, 111–147, and V. Mollenkott, “Women and the Bible,” 20–25.
12. M. Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex*, 41–42.
13. This is a noticeable feature of much contemporary Christian literature. Some, for example, Robin Scroggs, in “Tradition, Freedom and the Abyss,” 94–95, simply equate the “insights” of contemporary culture with the truth and baptize them as “Christian.” The liberation theologians rally around the revolutionary *praxis*, while others take as their starting point the Western notion of personal freedom, or the doctrine of this or that psychological theory. In all of these, the search for a new foundation is generated by the inability to ground one’s Christianity in scripture as the authoritative word of God.
14. For the same point well made from the perspective of a literary critic, see C. S. Lewis, “Modern Theology and Biblical Criticism,” in *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1967), 158, 161–166.
15. The Bultmannian attempt to arrive at the authentic Christian message has been one of the most influential variants in recent years. Bultmann approached this area with the presupposition that in scripture we find not only the Spirit of God, but also “other spirits.” The task, then, is to ferret out what is genuine revelation from what is not. Bultmann writes: “. . . it is a matter not only of the relativity of the word, but also the fact that no man—not even Paul—can always speak only from the subject matter. Other spirits also come to expression through him than the Spirit of Christ. Hence the criticism can never be radical enough” (“Karl Barths *Römerbrief* in zweiter Auflage,” *Christliche Welt* 36 [1922]: 372f., cited in James M. Robinson and John B. Cobb, *The New Hermeneutic*, New Frontiers in Theology 2 [New York: Harper & Row, 1964], 31).

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- The search for a “canon within the canon” is part of the attempt to discover what is genuine revelation within the scripture and what is not. The “quest for the historical Jesus” is likewise a part of this attempt but, although more widely known, is only tangentially relevant to the issues in this book. The search for a “canon within the canon” is related to some traditional theological approaches which in fact and often in theory work with views of scripture which see parts of the scriptural material as more central than others. Luther’s approach to justification by faith would be a particularly influential example here. Some of the moderate approaches to “the canon within the canon,” like that of Dunn in *Unity*, 374–376, seem close to such traditional approaches insofar as the accent is on certain parts of scripture having greater weight or centrality. Käsemann, on the other hand, in “Begründet der neutestamentliche Kanon die Einheit der Kirche?” in *Das Neue Testament als Kanon*, ed. Ernst Käsemann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1970), makes very explicit that the concern is to find a canon which is authoritative within the New Testament because, in his view, the various strands within the New Testament are too much at odds with one another to be a unified canon. Nonetheless, a gulf divides approaches like Dunn’s from the traditional discussions because of the failure to accept the whole New Testament as authoritative and inspired. Barr’s approach in *The Bible in the Modern World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 159–161, is only superficially closer, because of his inability to find a successful place for the inspiration of the whole canon. Brevard Childs in *Biblical Theology in Crisis* analyzes the shortcomings of these approaches very well (see esp. 102).
16. There are other places where contradiction has been asserted, e.g., between Genesis 1 and 2, between 1 Timothy 2:1 and Romans 5:12–21, etc. The two major purported contradictions are between Jesus and Paul, and between Galatians 3:28f. and the rest of Paul’s teaching. Some, like Devor, 380, see the contradictions even within one passage in Paul.

17. It would be difficult to overestimate the influence of Hegel upon modern Christian thought. In bringing together the results of modern philosophical reflection and Lutheran Christianity, he was able to convince many Christian thinkers that the traditional distinctions between the human and the divine, secular history and salvation history, etc., were no longer tenable. This was foundational for contemporary theological reflection.

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Where Christianity saw itself as different from secular philosophy, Hegel understood this dialectical opposition as finally overcome in the *aufgehoben*. The result is a secular philosophy called “Christianity.” Kierkegaard correctly assesses the effect of this maneuver in the following journal entry:

The greater honesty in even the most bitter attacks of an earlier age upon Christianity was that the essentially Christian was fairly well allowed to remain intact.

The danger in Hegel was that he altered Christianity—and thereby achieved agreement with his philosophy.

In general it is characteristic of an age of reason not to let the task remain intact and say: No—but to alter the task and then say: Yes, of course, we are agreed.

The hypocrisy of reason is infinitely treacherous. That is why it is so difficult to take aim. (X⁴ A 429, n.d., 1851)

On Hegel’s understanding of Christianity see Stephen Crites, *In the Twilight of Christendom* (Chambersburg, Pa.: American Academy of Religion, 1972), 35–57; Crites, “The Gospel According to Hegel,” *The Journal of Religion* 46 (1966): 246–263; and Emil L. Fackenheim, *The Religious Dimension in Hegel’s Thought* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967).

- Although not many contemporary thinkers would identify themselves as Hegelians, most have been deeply affected by him—either directly or indirectly. For the history and effect of Hegelianism see Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 537–571; and Richard J. Bernstein, “Why Hegel Now?” *Review of Metaphysics* 31, no. 1 (September 1977), 29–60. For Hegel’s influence on modern theology, see Gilkey, 49–57, 65, 73–78, 186n, 187. On Hegel as the father of the modern secularization of Christian thought, see R. Bultmann, *History and Eschatology* (New York: Harper, 1957), 56, 62–70, 73, 82, 89, 120; Karl Lowith, *Meaning in History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), 1–19, 52–59; 189–223; Lowith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1964); and Kenley R. Dove, “Hegel and the Secularization Hypothesis,” in *The Legacy of Hegel*, ed. J. J. O’Malley et al. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), 144–155.
18. The analytical, oppositional tendency has prevailed since the advent of the historical-critical method and is dominant today. The Biblical Theology movement, with its concern for the unity of the New Testament, has been perhaps the major exception to this statement.

CHAPTER 16

MEN’S AND WOMEN’S DIFFERENCES ▷ INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. For a vivid description of the Victorian image of woman’s nature and role, see Janet Dunbar, *The Early Victorian Woman* (London: George G. Harrap & Co., 1953).
2. Such statements are common in both the social and natural sciences and are referred to as

- “probabilistic generalizations” or “statistical assertions.” For a good concise discussion of their role in the sciences, see Ernest Nagel, *The Structure of Science* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1961), 503–504.
3. See E. Maccoby and C. Jacklin, *The Psychology of Sex Differences* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 65. The entire organization of the Maccoby/Jacklin book is based on the distinction between “Intellect and Achievement” and “Social Behavior.”
 4. For a helpful treatment of the relationship between descriptive and experimental methods, see Wolfgang Kohler, *Gestalt Psychology* (New York: Liveright, 1947), 34–57. Kohler uses the terms “qualitative” and “quantitative” in a way closely approximating “descriptive” and “experimental.”
 5. Kohler, 40–41, briefly chronicles the history of natural science in order to demonstrate that qualitative methods must precede quantitative methods.
 6. This preference for experimental methods is found in most striking form in the literature of behaviorist psychology. For two classic popular expositions of behaviorism, see John B. Watson, *The Ways of Behaviorism* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1928) and B. F. Skinner, *Science and Human Behavior* (New York: Macmillan, 1953). In principle, neither Watson, 8–19, nor Skinner, 37–39, object to descriptive methods. Though they place a higher value on experimental methods, they also recognize the need for accurate description to precede experimentation. The main clash between behaviorist and descriptive social scientists concerns rather those aspects of human experience that are valid objects for scientific description. For the behaviorist, only objective external action, “behavior,” can provide the subject material of social science. Though one must begin with crude description, “behavior” is always potentially measurable and quantifiable. Many social scientists are dissatisfied, however, with this limitation on the range of human experience that is fit for scientific study. For a helpful phenomenological critique of behaviorism, see Maurice Roche, *Phenomenology, Language and the Social Sciences* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), 105–110. Roche also takes behaviorism to task for its “physicalism,” “reductionism,” and “determinism,” 85–104.
 7. For a forceful statement of this approach, see R. Carlson, “Understanding Women: Implications for Personality Theory and Research,” *Journal of Social Issues* 28, no. 2 (Spring 1972): 20. Carlson recommends psychological study of the differences between men and women involving “naturalistic observation, sensitivity to the intrinsic structure and qualitative patterning of phenomena studied, and greater personal participation of the investigator.”
 8. See S. M. Dornbusch, “Afterword,” in *Development of Sex Differences*, ed. by E. Maccoby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), 216; Judith Bardwick, *Psychology of Women* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 2–3; E. Maccoby and C. Jacklin, 3–8. Also, see Richard I. Evans, *Konrad Lorenz: The Man and His Ideas* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), 4, 152–180.
 9. Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Man and Woman* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1965), 13.
 10. Edith Stein, *The Writings of Edith Stein* (London: Peter Owen, 1956), 142.
 11. F. J. J. Buytendijk, *Woman: A Contemporary View* (New York: Newman Press, 1968), 140.
 12. *Ibid.*, 154.
 13. Erik H. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crises* (New York: Norton, 1968), 28.
 14. The female quality of emotional immediacy may have some relationship to what was described as her being “susceptible to spiritual influences” in an earlier chapter (in reference to 1 Tm 2, see Chapter Eight, pp. 206–208). In this usage, susceptibility does not mean

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greater perceptiveness or sensory intake, but instead the tendency of women to respond to social and spiritual situations in a more total, immediate, and personal fashion.

15. Bardwick, 100.
16. J. Guitton, *Feminine Fulfillment* (New York: Paulist, 1965), 3.
17. I. C. Castillejo, *Knowing Woman* (New York: Putnam and Sons, 1973), 14–15.
18. Stein, 161–162.
19. Karl Stern, *The Flight from Woman* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1965), 42.
20. Sherry B. Ortner, “Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?” in *Women, Culture and Society*, ed. M. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 67–68.
21. For a discussion of some other significant expressions of this difference, see Bardwick, 21–46, 70–82.
22. Buytendijk, 7.
23. Bardwick, 73.
24. Helene Deutsch, *The Psychology of Women*, vol. 11 (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1944), 77–78.
25. Margaret Mead, *Male and Female* (New York: Dell, 1949), 104–105.
26. *Ibid.*, 229.
27. Buytendijk, 310–314.
28. Buytendijk is working with an ideal or pure type. In the realities of daily life, the distinction between “work” and “care” is not so absolute. “Work” is often directed to values, and “care” usually involves attention to goals and objectives. Nonetheless, the distinction between “work” and “care” is a valuable one. These terms do represent contrasting attitudes and orientations, and they express relevant categories for the study of men’s and women’s differences, as the experimental material presented later in this chapter will substantiate. The terms themselves, however, are potentially confusing, because much of what he describes as “care” often occurs in what would be considered “work” in most languages, and some of what he describes as “work” also overlaps with the common usage of the word “care.”
29. *Ibid.*, 317.
30. Mead, 168, 230.
31. Buytendijk, 348.
32. Stein, 123.
33. Hildebrand, 63.
34. There are several helpful volumes available which survey the experimental evidence. In this chapter we have drawn our survey largely from: Bardwick; Julia Sherman, *On the Psychology of Women* (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1971); Corinne Hutt, *Males and Females* (Ontario: Penguin, 1972); E. Maccoby, *The Development of Sex Differences* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966); Maccoby/Jacklin; R. Friedman and R. Richart (eds.), *Sex Differences in Behavior* (New York: Wiley, 1974).
35. The physicians and scientists of the Victorian era tended to greatly exaggerate the biological differences between men and women. For some examples, see Elaine and English Showalter, “Victorian Women and Menstruation,” in *Victorian Studies* 14, no. 1 (September 1970): 83–89; and Jill Conway, “Stereotypes of Femininity in a Theory of Sexual Evolution,” *ibid.*, 47–62. They are, of course, used as a point of comparison in contemporary polemics to show that modern science, compared with Victorian opinions, shows differences between men and women to be insignificant.
36. See Chapter Seventeen, pp. 434–437

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37. For the narrow definition, see R. A. Hinde, *Biological Bases of Human Social Behavior* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1974); Maccoby/Jacklin, 227; Maccoby, "Sex in the Social Order," *Science* 182, no. 4111 (November 2, 1973): 470; and Evans, 35–36.
38. For the wider definition, see Hutt, 108–119, and Lionel Tiger, *Men in Groups* (New York: Vintage Books, 1969), 201–223. For Anthony Storr in *Human Aggression* (New York: Atheneum, 1968), aggression is required for "the achievement of dominance, the overcoming of obstacles, and the mastery of the external world," though Storr does not explicitly define aggression in these terms (see introduction and p. 19).
39. For a review of the behavior customarily recognized by researchers as "aggressive," see Maccoby/Jacklin, 227–243.
40. *Ibid.*, 230–233; Roberta M. Oetzel, "Annotated Bibliography," in Maccoby, *The Development of Sex Differences*, 323–326.
41. Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox, *The Imperial Animal* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971), 213–216; Kenneth Moyer, "Sex Differences in Aggression," in Friedman/Richart, 335–339; Hutt, 108.
42. See Money/Ehrhardt, 99, for a solid argument for a positive relationship between dominance and aggression in male and female behavior.
43. Maccoby/Jacklin, 247–254.
44. *Ibid.*, 179–182.
45. Hinde, 164; Tiger/Fox, 60–65. Also, see the discussion in Chapter Seventeen, pp. 437–439.
46. Maccoby/Jacklin, 214–220.
47. Money/Ehrhardt, 98–103. This experiment was replicated and confirmed by Ehrhardt and Baker, "Fetal Androgens, Human Central Nervous Systems Differentiation, and Behavior Sex Differences," in Friedman/Richart, 33–50.
48. B. Whiting and C. Pope Edwards, "A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Sex Differences in the Behavior of Children Aged Three to Eleven," *Journal of Social Psychology* 91, no. 2 (December 1973): 171–188.
49. Sherman, 38–40; Oetzel, 332–334.
50. Maccoby/Jacklin, 188.
51. *Ibid.*, 172–182.
52. Oetzel, 334–338.
53. Maccoby/Jacklin, 75–85.
54. *Ibid.*, 91–98.
55. Hutt, 92.
56. Sherman, 23.
57. Sherman, 8–9; Frank Wesley and Elaine Wesley, *Sex-Role Psychology* (New York: Human Sciences Press, 1977), 39–40.
58. David A. Hamburg and Donald T. Lunde, "Sex Hormones in the Development of Sex Differences in Human Behavior," in Maccoby, *The Development of Sex Differences*, 19; Wesley/Wesley, 36–38.
59. Hutt, 79–81; Wesley/Wesley, 39–40.
60. Bardwick, 26–33; Harold Persky, "Reproductive Hormones, Moods, and the Menstrual Cycle," in Friedman/Richart, 455–476. Pierre L. van den Berghe, *Age and Sex in Human Societies: A Biosocial Perspective* (Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 1973), 50.
61. Sherman, 9; Beatrix Hamburg, "The Psychology of Sex Differences: An Evolutionary Perspective," in Friedman/Richart, 386–389; Wesley/Wesley, 41.

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62. Sherman, 8; Wesley/Wesley, 40-41.
63. Sherman, 8.
64. Wesley and Wesley also review the research methods used to study the causality of sex differences, 17-21. They examine four methods: cross-sectional, longitudinal, cross-cultural, and cross-species studies.
65. Anneliese F. Korner, "Methodological Considerations in Studying Sex Differences in the Behavioral Functioning of Newborns," in Friedman/Richart, 197-206; Bardwick, 90-92.
66. B. Whiting and C. Pope Edwards, 171-188.
67. J. Kagan and N. Kogan, "Individuality and Cognitive Performance," in P. H. Mussen (ed.), *Carmichael's Manual of Child Psychology* (New York: Wiley, 1970), 1337-1340.
68. B. Whiting and C. Pope Edwards, 171-188.
69. These conclusions apparently contrast with those found in one of Mead's earlier works, *Sex and Temperament*, first published in 1935. The apparent conflict between *Sex and Temperament* and *Male and Female* becomes most evident when Mead discusses nurturance and aggression. The following passages are found in *Sex and Temperament* (New York: William Morrow, 1963):

We have assumed that because it is convenient for a mother to care for her child, this is a trait with which women have been more generously endowed by a carefully teleological process of evolution. We have assumed that because men have hunted, an activity requiring enterprise, bravery, and initiative, they have been endowed with these useful attitudes as part of their sex temperament. . . . If a society insists that warfare is the major occupation for the male sex, it is therefore insisting that all male children display bravery and pugnacity . . . (286)

If those temperamental attitudes which we have traditionally regarded as feminine—such as passivity, responsiveness, and a willingness to cherish children—can so easily be set up as the masculine pattern in one tribe, and in another be outlawed for the majority of women as well as for the majority of men, we no longer have any basis for regarding such aspects of behavior as sex-linked. (279-280)

Mead takes a different stance regarding nurturance and aggression in *Male and Female*:

It is probable, however, that the young male has a biologically given need to prove himself as a physical individual, and that in the past the hunt and warfare have provided the most common means of such validation. . . . At this point in history, young males are in a particularly difficult spot, threatened with a worldwide catastrophe which no individual heroism can prevent and without new means to exercise their biologically given aggressive protectiveness or desire for individual bravery. (31)

Women may be said to be mothers unless they are taught to deny their child-bearing qualities. Society must distort their sense of themselves, pervert their inherent growth-patterns, and perpetrate a series of learning-outrages upon them, before they will cease to want to provide, at least for a few years, for the child they have already nourished for nine months within the safe circle of their own bodies. (197)

Mead thus evaluates the data on nurturance and aggression differently in these two books. These two areas of difference represent a wider difference in tone and approach between *Sex and Temperament* and *Male and Female*.

On several occasions, Mead has publicly claimed that these two volumes are not contradictory. She has done so mainly by asserting that *Sex and Temperament* was widely misunderstood. She never intended to attack the existence of biological differences between men and women. This is the burden of the following quotes:

Nowhere do I suggest that I have found any material which disproves the existence of sex differences. . . . This study was not concerned with whether there are or are not actual and universal differences between the sexes, either quantitative or qualitative. (Goldberg, 44)

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This is my most misunderstood book. . . . I have been accused of having believed when I wrote *Sex and Temperament* that there are no sex differences . . . (Preface to the 1950 edition of *Sex and Temperament*)

Though Mead's intentions in these two books may not have been strictly contradictory it is clear that the books were written in such a way as to readily invite such criticism. (For further comments from Mead, see *Blackberry Winter*, 221–222.) Nonetheless, we can at least take *Male and Female* as the book which Mead in her mature judgment would see as most accurately reflecting her views on sex differences.

Further, Mead did not even think of *Sex and Temperament* as being primarily concerned with the differences between men and women. *Male and Female*, however, is about sex differences:

I went into the field, in 1931, to study one problem, the “conditioning of the social personalities of the two sexes.” I hoped that such an investigation would throw light on sex difference. I found, after two years' work, that the material which I had gathered threw more light on temperamental differences, i.e., differences among innate individual endowments, irrespective of sex. . . . But when this book came out and often since, oftenest perhaps since I published *Male and Female* (in which I did discuss sex differences), I have been accused of having believed when I wrote *Sex and Temperament* that there are no sex differences . . . (Preface to the 1950 edition of *Sex and Temperament*)

Therefore, according to Mead's own testimony regarding her intentions, we are justified in assigning special prominence to *Male and Female* in the context of the present chapter which is discussing the evidence concerning the differences between men and women.

70. Hamburg and Lunde, 12–15; Charles H. Phoenix, “Prenatal Testosterone in the Nonhuman Primate and Its Consequences for Behavior,” in Friedman/Richart, 19–32.
71. For a brief discussion of imprinting and its application to human behavior, see van den Berghe, 27, 34; Money/Ehrhardt, 177–178; and Evans, 12–16.
72. Gene P. Sackett, “Sex Difference in Rhesus Monkeys Following Varied Rearing Experiences,” in Friedman/Richart, 99–122; Leonard A. Rosenblum, “Sex Differences in Mother-Infant Attachment in Monkeys,” *ibid.*, 123–142.
73. Money/Ehrhardt, 96–103.
74. Money's results do not say anything about girls who are not affected by the Adrenogenital Syndrome who display tomboyish behavior. It would go beyond his data to conclude that such girls suffer from some type of hormonal imbalance.
75. Reports on these other longitudinal studies are found in Money/Ehrhardt, 117–125, 151–160. Money's emphasis here on the learning process in the formation of gender identify has not

- gone uncriticized, see, for example, B. G. Rosenberg and Brian Sutton-Smith, *Sex and Identity* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1972), 35–36; and Hutt, 69–75.
76. Persky, 455–476; Bardwick, 26–33; van den Berghe, 50.
77. Bardwick, 33–39.
78. Wayne Sage, “The Split Brain Lab,” *Human Behavior*, June 1976, 25–28; Craig Buck, “Knowing the Left from the Right,” *ibid.*, 29–34; Maccoby/Jacklin, 125–127; Hamburg, 386–389.
79. Erik Erikson has taken a psychoanalytic approach to the difference between men and women. Erikson observed children setting up human scenes with toys and found that boys preferred to set up outdoor scenes with much action, whereas girls preferred indoor scenes with toy characters in more stationary positions. Erikson then hypothesized that the male preference for external space and action relates to the external location of the male genitals, and the female preference for internal space relates to the internal location of female genitals (268–286). Bardwick supports this hypothesis (see 15).
80. Bardwick is critical of traditional psychoanalytic explanations of the differences between men and women, 5–20. However, she insists on the importance of the female reproductive system in forming and expressing female identity, 70–82, and she makes considerable use of Erik Erikson’s work.
81. Bruno Bettelheim, *Symbolic Wounds* (New York: The Free Press, 1954); Mead, *Male and Female*; Karen Horney, *Feminine Psychology* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967), 60–62.
82. Another method is the heritability study. See Maccoby/Jacklin, 120–122, for the application of this method to the area of visual-spatial ability. The method is so far of minor importance compared to the other six, and hence had not been treated in the text.
83. Sherman, 13; Maccoby/Jacklin, 3–6.
84. Maccoby/Jacklin, 166.

CHAPTER 17

MEN’S AND WOMEN’S DIFFERENCES ▸ SOCIAL STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. For a description of the mentality of primitive societies, see C. Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1969).
2. On the variety of family systems found in human societies, see Robin Fox, *Kinship and Marriage* (London: Penguin, 1967), esp. 33–53.
3. Margaret Mead notes the variety of possible activity assignments in *Male and Female*, 168.
4. R. G. D’Andrade, “Sex Differences and Cultural Institutions,” in Maccoby, *The Development of Sex Differences*. Also, see G. Murdock, *Social Structure* (New York: Macmillan, 1949), 7, 213; and van den Berghe, 52–56.
5. See E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Position of Women in Primitive Societies and Other Essays in Social Anthropology* (London: Faber & Faber, 1965), 49; Mead, *Male and Female*, 190–199; Michelle Rosaldo, “A Theoretical Overview,” in Rosaldo/Lamphere, 23–24.
6. Rosaldo, 23.
7. For a discussion of the existence of universal female subordination, see D’Andrade, 188–191; Evans-Pritchard, 49–51; S. Goldberg, *The Inevitability of Patriarchy* (New York: William Morrow, 1974), 30–33, 39–44; R. Fox, 31–32.

8. Ortner, in Rosaldo/Lamphere, 70.
9. Goldberg, 31–32.
10. Pierre van den Berghe, 59–60. On differences in character traits, see Ortner, in Rosaldo/Lamphere, 81–82.
11. For a description of the Chinese approach to dress, see R. Sidel, *Women and Child Care in China* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1972), 39–40.
12. Rosaldo/Lamphere, 3; van den Berghe, 53.
13. Joan Bamberger, “The Myth of Matriarchy: Why Men Rule in Primitive Society,” in Rosaldo/Lamphere, 263–280. Also, see B. Yorburg, *Sexual Identity* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1974), 11.
14. Fox, 112–114.
15. On matrilineality, see L. Lamphere, “Women in Domestic Groups,” in Rosaldo/Lamphere, 106–109; and Fox, 97–131.
16. See Fox, 111–114.
17. For helpful research on economic systems and men’s and women’s roles, see Peggy R. Sanday, “Female Status in the Public Domain,” in Rosaldo/Lamphere, 194–200; Bette S. Denich, “Sex and Power in the Balkans,” in Rosaldo/Lamphere, 244–260; Murdock, 137, 206; D’Andrade, 181–184, 189–190.
18. Agriculture and horticulture are closely related forms of subsistence, but they can influence social structure in very different ways. In an article entitled “Sex and Power in the Balkans” (in Rosaldo/Lamphere), Bette S. Denich discusses these two sets of economic activities and their impact on men’s and women’s roles:

Worldwide cross-cultural correlations demonstrate that the nature of basic subsistence activity and the sexual division of labor act together in demarcating strategic advantages for local group formation, tending to favor those forms that keep together the sex responsible for the most crucial tasks. Thus, nearly all matrilocal, matrilineal societies are found among horticulturists, where women are gardeners, and it is advantageous to maintain groups of kinswomen as the basic work force. In contrast, both pastoralism and agriculture assign the primary herding and plowing tasks to men. The predominance of patrilocal residence among surviving pastoral and agricultural societies attests to the ecological adaptiveness of arrangements that keep together male kinsmen, maintaining continuity in their attachment to workmates and property. (244–245)

19. See Sanday for a useful treatment of this issue, 194–197.
20. On economics and male absenteeism, see Sanday, *ibid.*
21. On war and male absenteeism, see Sanday, *ibid.*
22. On social disintegration and male absenteeism, see Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* (Washington, DC: Department of Labor, 1965); Carol B. Stack, “Sex Roles and Survival Strategies in an Urban Black Community,” in Rosaldo/Lamphere, 113–128; N. Tanner, in Rosaldo/Lamphere, 150–154.
23. For a discussion of roles among the Eskimos, see Lamphere, 103–104, 111–112. Also, see Goldberg’s discussion of the Pygmies, 120–121.
24. For further discussion of technological society, see Chapter Eighteen.
25. Rosaldo, in Rosaldo/Lamphere, 17–42.
26. For a picture of the relationship between public and private spheres in Victorian society,

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- see Judith Blake, "The Changing Status of Women in Developed Countries," *Scientific American* 231, no. 3 (September 1974): 137-139; Christopher Lasch, "What the Doctor Ordered," *New York Review of Books*, December 11, 1975, 50-54.
27. For a helpful statement of the relation of ideology and family, see William J. Goode, *World Revolution and Family Patterns* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1963), 20-22, 369; and van den Berghe, 107.
 28. For a discussion of men's and women's roles in the Soviet Union, see H. K. Geiger, *The Family in Soviet Russia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 184-185, 225-230; in China, Sidel, 21-43, and C. K. Yang, *The Chinese Family in the Communist Revolution* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1959), 105-136; in the Kibbutzim, see L. Tiger and J. Shepherd, *Women in the Kibbutz* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975).
 29. Tiger/Shepherd, 26-33.
 30. For division of labor, see *ibid.*, 75-117; for overall male authority, 118-158; for women in childcare, 225-229.
 31. *Ibid.*, 272.
 32. Ortner, 67-68.
 33. For summaries of the research, see Corrine Hutt, 123-131; Maccoby/Jacklin, 207-211, 225-226, 254-260; Tiger/Fox, 102-107; Tiger/Shepherd, 147-158, 278.
 34. For summaries of the research, see Hutt, 123-131; Maccoby/Jacklin, 265-274; Mead, *Male and Female*, 196-199, 230; Tiger/Fox, 60-68; Tiger/Shepherd, 272-275.
 35. See L. Tiger, *Men in Groups* (New York: Vintage Books, 1969), 199-244; Money/Ehrhardt, 10, 103; and Maccoby/Jacklin, 254-265.
 36. Though their book can prove very useful as a thorough summary of the experimental research on the differences between men and women, and though their comments on the gathered body of data can be perceptive and illuminating, Maccoby and Jacklin's work can also convey an inaccurate impression of the literature they survey. The book's general approach is to examine those areas which have been assumed in the past to demonstrate a difference between men and women, point out the inadequacy of past formulations, offer a more subtle understanding of the available data, and then conclude, leaving the impression that no significant differences between men and women exist in most of the areas. In fact, the social structural differences which Maccoby and Jacklin observe may be more significant and full of implications than those differences which they initially critique, though the authors seem genuinely unaware of the potential importance of their new interpretations. This procedure is carried out when studying compliance (265-268), dominance (254-262), affiliation (207-211, 225-226), activity rates (176-177), achievement orientation (135-138), and task and person orientation (146-147). Though Maccoby and Jacklin's volume is generally an excellent piece of scholarship, in this area their feminist viewpoint may influence their manner of presentation so that they either fail to see the implications of their evidence, or else fail to communicate them, explicitly and clearly. For additional discussion, see the Note on Method on social science following the present chapter.
 37. Maccoby/Jacklin, 191-214.
 38. *Ibid.*, 227-242.
 39. *Ibid.*, compliance: 265-268; dominance: 254-262; affiliation: 207-211, 225-226; activity rates: 176-177; achievement orientation and competition: 135-138; task and person orientation: 146-147.

40. For a brief discussion of the relationship between ethology and social anthropology, see Michael R. A. Chance and Clifford J. Jolly, *Social Groups of Monkeys, Apes and Men* (New York: Dutton, 1970), 16–17.
41. For a presentation of the variety in the ethological data, see Hinde, 342–348. Hinde points out that variety exists not only among different species, but also within a species. Factors in an animal group's ecology appear to affect the social structure of the group even as they also affect the social structure of human groups.
42. For studies of the male role, see Hinde, 350–353; Chance/Jolly, 154, 173–191, 208; P. van den Berghe, 30–32; Tiger/Fox, 31–32; and Storr, 59–60.
43. For studies of male and female peer groups, see Hinde, 382; Tiger, 25–53; Hutt, 128; and Chance/Jolly, 146–147, 157–161.
44. For studies of male dominance hierarchies, see Tiger, 25–53; Hinde, 339–354; Maccoby/Jacklin, 255–257.
45. Also see Chapter Sixteen, p. 406. Though there may be isolated cases of mammalian species which include a strong paternal role (e.g., the African lion, see George B. Schaller, *The Serengeti Lion* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972]), and though males in a few isolated primate species display paternal behavior (see Gary Mitchell and Edna M. Brandt, "Paternal Behavior in Primates," in *Primate Socialization*, ed. Frank E. Poirier [New York, Random House, 1972], 173–206), the nearly universal mammalian pattern involves a much higher degree of female attention to infants. See van den Berghe, 9, 27; Chance/Jolly, 114–122, 142–143 (maternal behavior); *ibid.*, 125–127 (paternal behavior).
46. For studies of differential maternal responses, see Maccoby/Jacklin, 312–313.
47. See footnote on p. 412 in Chapter Sixteen on human and non-human animal analogies. Arguments about evolutionary theory are common in some Christian and academic circles. Chapters Sixteen and Seventeen of this book attempt to proceed without assuming either side of the argument.
48. For example, see Karen Horney, 60–62; G. Gilder, *Sexual Suicide* (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1973), 14–21. Gilder, though not himself a psychoanalyst, relies strongly on a psychoanalytic approach.
49. See footnote on pp. 416–417 in Chapter Sixteen on psychoanalysis and a biological explanation of the differences between men and women.
50. See Rosaldo, and, for a similar position, see Peter Swerdloff, *Men and Women* (New York: Time-Life Books, 1975).
51. An example of this sort of radical feminist "anthropology" can be found in Roxanne Dunbar, "Female Liberation as the Basis for Social Revolution," in *Sisterhood Is Powerful*, ed. Robin Morgan (New York: Random, 1970), 477–492.
52. For a good presentation of these Gestalt principles, see D. Katz, *Gestalt Psychology* (New York: The Ronald Press, 1950), 18–48, 91–94, 160–165; H. Helson, "The Psychology of 'Gestalt,'" *The American Journal of Psychology* 36, no. 3 (July 1925): 342–350.
53. For an introductory discussion of structuralism, see Michael Lane, *Structuralism: A Reader* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970); and J. Ehrmann, *Structuralism* (Garden City: Anchor, 1970).
54. N. Chomsky, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1965), 47–59.
55. Tiger/Fox, 16.
56. *Ibid.*, 58–59; also, see van den Berghe, 114–117.

57. *Ibid.*, 59.
58. Tiger, 145. Chance and Jolly support Tiger on this particular question, 206–207.
59. Tiger/Fox, 58–84; Chance/Jolly, 142–147.
60. Maccoby/Jacklin, 191–214.
61. *Ibid.*, 207–211, 225–226, 254–260; Hutt, 123–131; and also note 39 above.
62. Hamburg, 374–375.
63. Chomsky, 47–59.
64. The ecological principle also applies to culture. The importance of this application becomes apparent when considering the changes brought about in primitive and traditional societies through the introduction of Western technology and culture. For an overview of this set of concerns, see Margaret Mead (ed.), *Cultural Patterns and Technical Change* (New York: Mentor, 1955); and Peter Berger et al., *The Homeless Mind* (New York: Random House, 1973). See also Lutzbetak's useful treatment where he cautions the missionary about making hasty changes in various cultural patterns (9), and explains the importance of the "structural integration" of cultures (135–154).
65. For some similar views, see Gilder, 240–250, and Armand M. Nicholi II, "The Fractured Family: Following It into the Future," *Christianity Today*, May 25, 1979, 12.
66. For some similar views, see Harold M. Voth, MD, *The Castrated Family* (Kansas City: Sheed Andrews & McMeel), 1–6, 212–213; and Gilder, 104–108. Margaret Mead also emphasizes the tenuousness of the male paternal role in contrast to the female maternal role in a chapter in *Male and Female* entitled "Human Fatherhood Is a Social Invention," 190–205.
67. Nicholi and Voth are very insistent about the weakening of the modern family and its consequences for the children produced. Voth places special emphasis on the breakdown of men's and women's roles and its contribution to the weakening of the family and its children.
68. See Gilder, 22–23; Tiger/Shepher, 241; and Virginia O. Abernethy, "Dominance and Sexual Behavior: A Hypothesis," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 131, no. 7 (July 1974): 813–817.
69. All problems with impotency in men and frigidity in women are not to be attributed to the breakdown of men's and women's roles. This is not the argument here. The intention of this point is merely to assert the likelihood of some connection between a breakdown in men's and women's roles and problems in sexual functioning.
70. See Gilder, 226–228; Nicholi, 14; and Voth, 1–3, 6, 217–219.
71. See Mead, *Male and Female*, 110; and Storr, 63.
72. See Voth, 4, 214–216; Nicholi, 12; and Lasch, *Haven in a Heartless World* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 167–189.
73. See Patricia Cayo Sexton, *The Feminized Male* (New York: Vintage, 1969), 12–22, 29–39; and Gilder, 226–237.
74. For some studies indicating this, see Natalie Gittelson, *Dominus: A Woman Looks at Men's Lives* (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Co., 1978); and Caroline Bird, "The Best Years of a Woman's Life," *Psychology Today* 13, no. 1 (June 1979), for a review of some recent mental health studies that indicates a serious decline in the mental health of younger women in the US.
75. Barbara Seaman, "Image Breakers," *The Ann Arbor News*, August 1, 1978, p. B-1.
76. The failure of feminists to lay out a positive social program is scathingly described by Gilder, 7, who states: "The liberationists have no idea where their program would take us. The movement is counseling us to walk off a cliff, in the evident wish that our society can be kept afloat on feminist hot air."

77. Mead, *Male and Female*, 40.
 78. Though van den Berghe is sympathetic with the feminist position, he is still able to see the crucial question:

What is at stake is not the *feasibility* of reversing or neutralizing these predispositions, but rather the *social cost* of fighting instead of going along with physiology. The empirical rarity of such learned reversals and the virtual absence of sexual undifferentiation suggest that the cost would be high, or that the cost would not be commensurate with the gain, which amounts to the same thing. (48, emphasis added)

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NOTE ON METHOD ▷ SOCIAL SCIENCE

1. The psychological survey approach is taken in Bardwick, Hutt, Maccoby/Jacklin, and Sherman.
2. The most common type of interdisciplinary survey of men's and women's differences is the scientific anthology (for an example, see E. Maccoby, *The Development of Sex Differences*). However, there have been more homogenous interdisciplinary works, such as van den Berghe, *Age and Sex in Human Societies: A Biosocial Perspective*, and Carol Tavris and Carole Offir, *The Longest War* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977).
3. Kuhn's discussion of paradigms has some bearing on the present topic of conceptual frameworks in science, see Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 10–42.
4. Maccoby and Jacklin organize their study around the distinction between intellectual abilities and social behavior.
5. For several different perspectives on the history of the nature/nurture controversy, see Theodosius Dobzhansky, *Mankind Evolving* (New York: Bantam Books, 1962), 53–78; Tiger, 3–24; van den Berghe, 1–5; and Jessie Bernard, *Women, Wives, Mothers* (Chicago: Aldine, 1975), 5–29.
6. Friedan's critiques are found in *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Dell, 1963), 95–141.
7. For example, modern "bieterminism" is a major point of controversy in Barbara Lloyd and John Archer, *Exploring Sex Differences* (New York: Academic Press, 1976).
8. Steven Goldberg, *The Inevitability of Patriarchy* (New York: William Morrow, 1974).
9. See Bardwick, Hutt, Tiger, and Erikson.
10. Friedman/Richart, *Sex Differences in Behavior* (New York: Wiley, 1974).
11. See Maccoby, Money, P. van den Berghe, and Ehrhardt.
12. See Sandra Bem, "Androgyny vs. the Tight Little Lives of Fluffy Women and Chesty Men," *Psychology Today* 9, no. 4 (September 1975): 61–64; Janet Chafetz, *Masculine/Feminine or Human?* (Ithaca: F. E. Peacock, 1974); Betty Yorburg; Tavris/Offir; Lloyd/Archer.
13. Connie Bruck, "Professing Androgyny," *Human Behavior*, October 1977, 24.
14. Chafetz, 4.
15. One good example of the methodological critique can be found in Barbara Lloyd, "Social Responsibility and Research on Sex Differences," in Lloyd/Archer, 6–10.
16. Bernard, 5.
17. Lloyd, 16.
18. Tavris/Offir, 99.

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19. Nancy Chodorow, "Family Structure and Feminine Personality," in Rosaldo/Lamphere, 43.
20. For selective use of Money, see Yorburg. Money himself notices this tendency among his interpreters, Money/Ehrhardt, xi.
21. This clouding of the evidence occurs in Tavis/Offir, and Paul C. Rosenblatt and Michael R. Cunningham, "Sex Differences in Cross-Cultural Perspective," in Lloyd/Archer, 71-94.
22. This problem with arrangement of data is especially evident in Tavis/Offir.
23. Phyllis Chesler, "Men Drive Women Crazy," *Psychology Today* (July, 1971), 18, 22.
24. Bem, 61.
25. *Ibid.*, 64.
26. See, for example, "Opting for Androgyny," *Human Behavior*, November 1978, 51, for a critique of Bem based on further research utilizing her model.
27. Ortner, 67-70.
28. John Archer, "Biological Explanations of Psychological Sex Differences," in Lloyd/Archer, 260.
29. Lloyd, 13.
30. Bardwick, 3.
31. In the last paragraph of her article, Lloyd in fact recognizes that Bardwick is not a "biode-terminist": "Bardwick, Hutt, and others who acknowledge the interactive nature of social and biological variables yet nonetheless stress the latter in order to right what they see as an imbalance, fail to appreciate the danger of their approach" (19). However, Lloyd has already labeled both Bardwick and Hutt and "biodeterminists" in a polemical attempt to discredit their work as extreme.
32. Rosenblatt/Cunningham, 72, 89.

CHAPTER 18

THE NEW SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT ▷ TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY

1. The change in human society that occurred among some peoples in the third millen-ium BC could be seen as the first significant shift from primitive to traditional society. This shift was characterized by such things as the first growth of cities, the development of political kingdoms, and the invention of writing, and appears to have occurred first among societies of the Middle East, especially those in Egypt and Mesopotamia. For a similar historical perspective on these three periods of history and the radical changes involved in the transition from one period to another, see Kenneth Boulding, *The Meaning of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 1-26. For further use of the terms "primitive society," "traditional society," and "technological society," see p. 480.
2. For a simple discussion of the issue of escalating change and its possible outcome, see Paul E. Lutz, "The Environmental Crises: Business as Usual?" Division of Theological Studies, Lutheran Council in USA, 1975. The Club of Rome report, published in Dennis L. Meadows et al., *The Limits to Growth* (New York: Universe Books, 1972), has perhaps been the most successful in popularizing this concern.
3. Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost* (London: Methuen, 1965), 233, emphasis in original.
4. The following books are helpful in understanding both the historical development of technological society and its many unique characteristics: Raymond Aron, *Progress and*

- Disillusion* (New York: Praeger, 1968); Peter L. Berger, *Facing Up to Modernity* (New York: Basic Books, 1977); Peter Berger et al., *The Homeless Mind*; Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society* (New York: Knopf, 1973); Lasch, "The Family and History," *New York Review of Books*, November 13, 1975, 33–38; Peter Laslett; Marion J. Levy Jr., *Modernization: Late-comers and Survivors* (New York: Basic Books, 1972); Herbert J. Muller, *The Children of Frankenstein* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970); Robert A. Nisbet, *The Quest for Community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969); and Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1975).
5. On some of the differences between primitive and traditional societies, see note 1, above.
 6. For a perspective on how different societies are affected by "modernization" in our area of concern, see William G. Goode, *World Revolution and Family Patterns*, and Pierre L. van den Berghe, *Age and Sex in Human Societies: A Biosocial Perspective* (Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 1973), 97–98.
 7. There were other aspects of Western European society of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that could be considered advance developments toward technological society. Order, efficiency, regimentation, and mass numbers were becoming important values in the military sectors of society. One popular history which alludes to these new values is E. J. Hughes, *The Church and Liberal Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944). The ideal of the conjugal family had begun to spread among a broad cross-section of the bourgeoisie (tracing the development and varied manifestations of this ideal is one of the central purposes of Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood* [London: Jonathan Cape, 1962]). Also, an ideal of individualism became current. This ideal focused on the individual man (not the individual woman or child) and on his freedom to act independent of the restrictions of others (a concise but clear description of the development of this ideal is found in Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971]). In addition, the emergence of the Western nation-state foreshadowed and contributed to the development of technological society. The nation-state was closely associated with bureaucratic government, an organized military corps, and rapid economic expansion. Crane Brinton is one among many historians who have noted this association, see *The Shaping of Modern Thought* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1950), esp. 45–49, 144–148. Some of the basic features of technological society were thus already emerging in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Western Europe. For two further helpful discussions of these types of issues, see Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 137–142; and Goode, 23–33, 370.
 8. Accounts of the development of technological society can be found in a variety of places. Two useful summary accounts can be found in David Reisman et al., *The Lonely Crowd* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1950), and in Ellul.
 9. Goode, 1, exemplifies the modern recognition of the emergence of a global technological society.
 10. The distinction made in this chapter between relational and functional groupings is similar in many ways to distinctions found in some of the classic writings of sociology. Tönnies's description of the difference between community (*gemeinschaft*) and society (*gesellschaft*) has been perhaps the most influential, but Weber's discussion of traditional and rational groupings and Sorokin's discussion of familistic and contractual relationships have also been of great importance. For a brief survey and comparison of these three classic sociological "types," see *Community and Society* (*Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*), Ferdinand Tönnies,

- trans. and ed. Charles P. Loomis (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1957), 12-29.
11. The term "functional" as used in this chapter is similar to Ellul's "technique." Ellul uses the term "technique" to describe a systematically organized procedure for efficiently accomplishing some end. He sees modern society as the place where technique dominates all human activities and interactions. Though extremely similar, these two terms differ in one significant way. Whereas "technique" can refer to all ordered goal-directed behavior, the "functional principle" applies specifically to a task-efficiency orientation. This narrower term allows for discussion of "relationship value" as found among relational groupings without confusing this quality with the "task efficiency" concern found in functional groupings.
 12. Among those who note the contrast between functional and relational groupings are Levy, 121-126, and Fox, 13-15. Terminology in this area varies, but the basic referents are the same.
 13. The distinction between purposive, goal-oriented activities and expressive activities used here has parallels in the work of Talcott Parsons. He chooses the terms "instrumental" and "expressive" to capture the distinction. See, for example, *The Social System* (New York: The Free Press, 1951), 49, 79-88, 100, 384-407; and *Toward a General Theory of Action*, ed. Talcott Parsons and Edward Shils (New York: Harper & Row, 1951, 1962), 8, 149, 165-167. For a brief discussion of some aspects of the division of instrumental and expressive spheres in modern society, see Levy, *The Structure of Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), 528-541.
 14. For the classic presentation on bureaucracy and impersonality, see Max Weber, *On Charisma and Institution Building* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 38, 66-77. Further development of this analysis in sociology is popular, as seen in such books as Victor Thompson, *Modern Organization* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), 10-24; and Berger et al., 41-62. A helpful discussion of the relationship between bureaucracy and technological approaches is found in Berger et al., 41-62, esp. 41-43.
 15. Goode articulates clearly some aspects of the functional approach and the concern for task competency, see *The Family* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964), 108; and *World Revolution*, 11-12, 24.
 16. It is generally agreed that the division between public and private spheres is particularly marked in technological society. For examples of various viewpoints on this modern division, see Ariès, 411-415; Berger et al., 28-30; Blake, 138; Lasch, "What the Doctor Ordered," 51; P. Laslett, 1-21. Rosaldo's theory concerning public and private spheres and men's and women's roles (see Chapter Seventeen, pp. 429-430) is also worthy of consideration in this context.
 17. Specialization and standardization are commonly associated with technological society. For a few examples of this association, see Thompson, 25-57; Berger et al., 63-68; Ellul, 11-12, 132, 211-215.
 18. For an explicit statement on people in technological society as individual bearers of skills, see Goode, *The Family*, 108; and Goode, *World Revolution*, 11-12.
 19. Some useful perspectives on this instability can be found in Richard M. Titmuss, *Essays on "The Welfare State"* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1958), 111-112; Levy, 124-126; Laslett, 4-5.
 20. M. F. Nimkoff, *Comparative Family Systems* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 34-35.
 21. The pure or "ideal" type plays an important role in sociological theory and analysis. For examples of the pure type in early sociological work, see Weber, 47; and Thomas Burger, *Max Weber's Theory of Concept Formation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1976), 115-179.

22. The term "technological society," whatever its origin, has probably obtained common usage mainly through Jacques Ellul's book of the same name. "Post-industrial society" and "technocratic society" are common equivalents. "Technetronic society" is often used for more recent phases of "technological society." There are also various uses of "modern society" which are close equivalents.
23. Among those who discuss perceptively some of the pre-technological manifestations of the functional approach are Hughes, 164; Weber, 37; and Ellul, 30-32, 43.
24. Goode especially discusses the "fit" between technological society and a type of life pattern. See *The Family*, 108-109; *World Revolution*, 369-370.
25. Many modern people recognize the development of the mass collective and its individualizing tendencies. For two examples of this recognition, see Philip E. Slater, *The Pursuit of Loneliness* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), 5-9; and Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda* (New York: Knopf, 1965), 90-99.
26. Goode and Ellul are especially alert to the tendency of technological society to eliminate non-functional groupings. See Goode, *The Family*, 108; and Ellul, *Technological Society*, 49-52.
27. Among those who express concern over the development of the mass collective, are Laslett, 18-19; Lasch, "The Emotions of Family Life," *New York Review of Books*, November 27, 1975, 40; and Lasch, *Haven in a Heartless World*, 91, 189; Philip Slater, *Earthwalk* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1974), 55; Ellul, *Technological Society*, 49-52, 332-335; Nisbet, 98-120, 198-203; and Peter Berger's essay "In Praise of Particularity: The Concept of Mediating Structures," in *Facing Up to Modernity*, 130-141.
28. Ellul, *Technological Society*, 50-51.
29. For basic descriptions of governmental structures in traditional and technological society, see Levy, *Modernization and the Structure of Societies*, vol. 2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 454-471; Levy, *Modernization: Latecomers and Survivors*, 124-125; Ellul, *Technological Society*, 83, 255-267.
30. Ellul and Slater pay special attention to the question of "social control" in technological society. See Slater, *Earthwalk*, 55; Slater, *The Pursuit of Loneliness*, 89; Ellul, *Propaganda*; and Karl Mannheim, *Man and Society* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1940), 274-311. Mannheim uses the terms "direct" and "indirect" control.
31. A similar view is expressed by Christopher Lasch in *Haven in a Heartless World*. Lasch sees the demise of the "authoritarian family" as the doorway to greater political despotism rather than to greater individual liberty:

The gradual erosion of authoritarianism and the authoritarian family, which went on throughout the liberal phase of bourgeois society, has had an unexpected outcome: the reestablishment of political despotism in a form based not on the family but on its dissolution. Instead of liberating the individual from external coercion, the decay of family life subjects him to new forms of domination, while at the same time weakening his ability to resist them. (91)

32. A simple description of the general institutionalization of human services in technological society is found in Nimkoff, 352-354. Of particular interest regarding the study of the institutionalization of education are Ariès, 269-285, and John Bremer, *The School without Walls* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971), 1-8.
33. The concepts of achieved and ascribed status are standard ones in sociology. For examples of their definition and use, see Parsons, 64-65, 180-200; Nisbet, *The Social Bond* (New York: Knopf, 1970), 156-158; Goode, *World Revolution*, 369-370.

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34. Many sociological accounts note the prevalence in technological society of partial functionally-specific commitments. Two of the most helpful are S. N. Eisenstadt, *Modernization: Protest and Change* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966), 21-25, 37; and Levy, *The Structure of Society*, 255-262.
35. For a brief but vivid description of the medieval guilds and their relational structure, see Ariès, 245-246.
36. See, for example, "Arranged Marriages," by Carol Stocker, *Detroit Free Press*, March 20, 1977, pp. 1F, 12F.
37. In addition, technological society has also brought a functional approach to religion, as can be seen in the various cults of the 1970s. For a brief, helpful exploration of this trend, see James Manney, "The Consciousness Movement II: 'Salvation' through Techniques," *New Covenant* 6, no. 10 (April 1977), 18-21.
38. The breakdown of kinship ties in technological society was an unquestioned sociological observation until recent years. For examples of traditional approaches, see E. W. Burgess, H. J. Locke and M. M. Thomas, *The Family* (New York: American Book Company, 1963), 18-20; Talcott Parsons and Robert F. Bales, *Family, Socialization and Interaction Process* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1955), 10-14; Paul E. Mott, *The Organization of Society* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965), 163; and Clifford Kirkpatrick, *The Family as Process and Institution* (New York: The Ronald Press, 1955), 137. However, two new sources of data have recently called this observation into question. First, historical demographers have documented the relative absence of the extended family as a residential unit in the middle ages. Similar investigations of other cultures have shown the extended family residence to be a less frequent arrangement than was once thought. Secondly, certain sociological studies purport to demonstrate the enduring strength of extended kin ties in industrial societies. Upon further examination, each of these objections is seen to carry little weight. (1) Even given that the historical demographers have compiled accurate statistics, the new data need not call for a serious readjustment in the picture of the traditional extended family. Residential data is not the major index of level of commitment, support, resource sharing, and common life. All other evidence points to much higher levels in each of these areas for the traditional extended family relative to its technological counterpart. Some misleading images of traditional family life may be dismissed by the new demographic data, but the general assertion of greater kinship solidarity in traditional society vis-à-vis technological society remains valid. In addition, one should consider Goode's helpful distinction between ideal and actual family models (see *World Revolution*, 7-10). In most traditional societies the extended kinship grouping is seen as the ideal residential unit, though lack of economic resources often prevents the majority from living in such a fashion. In modern technological society, on the other hand, the conjugal family of husband, wife, and children is the ideal residential unit, and even the wealthy usually maintain this pattern. Though the predominant residential unit in both types of societies may be the conjugal family, the existence of varying residential ideals has an impact on the quality of the extended kinship relationships. (2) The modern sociological studies on kinship networks in industrial societies also fail to seriously alter the picture of the relative isolation of the nuclear family in technological society. These studies tend to highlight the friendship relationships that sometimes exist among extended family members, and the continued prominence of family social gatherings of various sorts. A more important focus would be on questions of commitment, stability, resource sharing, and corporate identity. Also, these studies gain much of their effect from

contrast with the supposedly nonexistent kinship relationships of technological society. Given that some form of extended kinship relationships still remains in modern technological society, one does not gain an accurate historical perspective unless the modern form is compared with the traditional form. Such a comparison once again supports the assertion that kinship ties tend to be severely weakened in technological society. For two helpful discussions of these recent questions, see Lasch, "The Family and History," 34–36; and Goode, *World Revolution*, 70–76. For a good recent restatement of the traditional view of the breakdown of kinship ties and communal groupings, see Shorter, 3–4, 22–53.

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39. For an extensive treatment of the internal changes in the conjugal family wrought within technological society, see Goode, *World Revolution*, 7–10, 27–86.
40. For more on emotional intensity in the technological family, see p. 506.
41. For examples of the traditional sociological statement on the loss of family functions, see Norman B. Ryder, "The Family in Developed Countries," *Scientific American*, September 1974, 123; C. Christian Beels, "Whatever Happened to Father?" *New York Times Magazine*, August 25, 1974, 11, 52; and Nimkoff, 27–31, 362–365. Some sociologists take exception to this formulation, insisting that while some functions have been lost, others have been added or increased in importance. Such items as leisure functions, family planning functions, and "therapeutic" functions are offered as the additional roles brought to family life by technological society. For example, see F. Ivan Nye and Felix M. Bernardo, *The Family: Its Structure and Interaction* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), 247–248; and Nimkoff, 365–369. However, the significance of these added functions is questionable. A leisure function and a therapeutic function were also elements of the traditional family. Though leisure activities are corporately pursued by some modern families, in many other families these activities are the specialized realm of the peer groups of the various family members. This is increasingly the case as children in a family reach older ages. Though some modern families engage in family planning, it is still comparatively rare, and it is not clear that this added function contributes markedly to the commitment or solidarity of the family grouping. The "therapeutic" function of the modern family is certainly increased in importance by the pressures and demands of technological society, but it is of dubious value as a support for family life. Rather than constituting a helpful new family function, the heightened demand for emotional release, healing, and fulfillment within the conjugal family threatens to further weaken the family unit, for in most cases the family relationships are not capable of meeting the demand. Therefore, it seems clear that the functions lost by the family in technological society are far more significant than those gained, if in fact it is reasonable to say that any positive functions are gained.

The loss of family functions in technological society should be viewed against the background of the erosion of all relational groupings through a transfer of functions to mass institutions; see Nisbet, 52–62.

42. The isolation of the conjugal family as a modern social problem has received attention in many quarters. For some popular examples, see Urie Bronfenbrenner, *Two Worlds of Childhood* (New York: Russell Sage, 1970), 95–97; Lasch, "The Emotions of Family Life," 40; "The Parent Gap," *Newsweek*, September 22, 1975, 50, 56; Slater, *The Pursuit of Loneliness*, 6.
43. Useful observations on the burden of emotional support and the modern family are found in Goode, *World Revolution*, 12–14; Ryder, 127–130; and Shorter, 277–279.
44. Ryder, 127–128. See also Nisbet, 62, for a similar description.
45. Ryder, 130. Also see Goode, *World Revolution*, 34–35; Shorter, 270–276; and Lasch, 130.

46. Modern consciousness of the change in the paternal role is high, and is reflected in such popular presentations as Beels's.
47. Judith Blake clearly describes the isolation and dependence of modern women, 138.
48. Some supportive statistics can be found in Titmuss, 91–102.
49. Ryder, 128. For other helpful discussions of role conflict in women, see Bardwick, 188–202, and Nisbet, 63–64.
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50. For some supportive statistics on females unattached to families, see Blake, 139.
51. Ryder, 128.
52. This idea of traditional roles resulting in the isolation of the American housewife was a major thrust of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1963), which was an early and highly influential book in the feminist movement. See, for instance, 15–32.
53. A typical depiction is found in Sidel, 3–18. The Chinese Communists talk about pre-revolutionary life as “the bitter past.”
54. For one helpful examination of the status of women in modern society relative to traditional society, see Evans-Pritchard, 37–57.
55. For an example of this contrast, see Susan Lydon, “The Politics of Orgasm,” in *Sisterhood Is Powerful*, 201ff.
56. For a helpful study of the question of the elderly in technological society, see James Manney, *Aging in American Society* (Ann Arbor: The Institute of Gerontology, 1975), 6–10, 53–57. Problems faced by the elderly are more briefly treated by Ryder, 130; Slater, *The Pursuit of Loneliness*, 14–15; and Nisbet, 65–66.
57. For a few helpful studies on the problems faced by youth in technological society, see J. H. Plumb, “The Great Change in Children,” *Horizon* 13, no. 1 (Winter 1971): 6–12; Ariès, 269–285; and Bremer, 1–8.
58. See pp. 508–509.
59. Nisbet also discusses the relationship between the following type of psychological problems and the new social circumstances of technological society, 14–19.
60. Studies of neurosis and psychosis in traditional societies are unavailable.
61. Peter Laslett alludes to the correlation between suicide and industrialization, 137–138.

CHAPTER 19

THE NEW INTELLECTUAL ENVIRONMENT ▸ IDEOLOGY AND CHRISTIANITY

1. Some of the meanings assigned to the term “ideology” are general while others are more specified and technical. Four of the more common meanings, ordered according to increasing levels of specificity, are as follows:
 1. In common usage, “ideology” can refer to any system of ideas, especially ideas related to some aspect of human life. According to this definition, psychoanalysis can be called an ideology, as can also Transcendental Meditation.
 2. In a political context, the term is frequently used as a way of describing theoretical systems which include definite sociopolitical programs and implications. This is the way that the term is often used by Communists (for one example, see V. I. Lenin in

Carl Cohen, *Communism, Fascism, and Democracy* [New York: Random House, 1962], 212). Social scientists also sometimes use the term in this way (for an example, see Berger et al., 159).

3. Sociologists often use “ideology” to refer to the sum of the fundamental beliefs, values, theories, and assumptions held by a social group. This definition allows the sociologist to focus upon the way individuals have their ideas and values conditioned by their social environment. One could thus speak of the Christian ideology of medieval Western Europe or the Islamic ideology of the Ottoman Empire.
4. A fourth usage of “ideology” is in fact merely an elaboration of the third usage cited above. Some sociologists further refine the term by applying it only to bodies of thought and belief that justify an existing social system. Any popularly held set of beliefs, values, theories, and assumptions which does not buttress the existing social system is called by another term. In a classic sociological study, Karl Mannheim calls revolutionary systems of thought and belief “utopias” (Mannheim applies this new term to movements such as the sixteenth-century Anabaptists), see Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1936), 55–84.

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The definition of “ideology” used in the present volume is primarily definition 2. However, the particular form of definition in the text places a focus upon ideology as a force conditioning the popular opinions and values of individuals within society and in this sense approximates some aspects of 3. The definition in the text is used because the primary concern in the chapter is with modern systems of thought which have affected the fundamental beliefs of modern social groupings, especially in their vision of how society should be structured.

2. Berger et al., 159.
3. As discussed above (n. 1), some sociologists distinguish between ideologies which justify an existing system and those which prepare the way for a new system. Such a distinction is not directly relevant to the purpose of this chapter.
4. William Goode gives helpful descriptions of the interconnection between social structures and modern ideologies in technological society, see his *World Revolution and Family Patterns*.
5. An example of a European Liberal Party is the Belgian Liberal Party.
6. As stated by Berger et al., “In the United States, liberalism as a political ideology has been a major representation of modernizing forces” (198). For a few helpful books on Liberalism, see Theodore Meyer Greene, *Liberalism: Its Theory and Practice* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1957); Harold J. Laski, *The Rise of European Liberalism* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1936); Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1955).
7. John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (Boston: Ticknor & Fields, 1863), 23. Elsewhere in the same essay, Mill defines civil or social liberty as “the nature and limits of the power which can be legitimately exercised by society over the individual” (7).
8. For one description of the individualistic and anti-authoritarian tendencies of Liberalism, see Crane Brinton, *The Shaping of Modern Thought* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1950), 150–157.
9. Liberal theories of self-interest are usually associated with eighteenth-century economists such as Adam Smith or nineteenth-century social Darwinists such as Herbert Spencer.

10. An old, but useful, volume dealing with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century continental Liberalism is Guido De Ruggiero, *The History of European Liberalism*, trans. R. G. Collingwood (London: Oxford University Press, 1927).
11. See, for example, Brinton, 152–168.
12. The connection between Liberal ideology and the middle class was an essential aspect of the Marxist critique of Liberalism. This connection has also become an aspect of non-Marxist critiques. For a Catholic attack on Liberalism from this perspective, see Hughes, 23–24.
13. Philippe Ariès makes a similar observation about the *Code Napoléon* in “The Family, Prison of Love,” *Psychology Today*, August 1975, 53–58, esp. 57.
14. Not all nineteenth-century Liberals opposed the extension of “individual rights” to women. John Stuart Mill is one prominent exception as seen by his famous essay on *The Subjection of Women*. The birth of the feminist movement can be traced back to this period. Nonetheless, this was a minority opinion among Liberals of the mid-nineteenth century.
15. For a few different perspectives on the anti-Christian tendencies of French Revolution Liberalism, see R. R. Palmer and Joel Colton, *A History of the Modern World* (New York: Knopf, 1971), 388–392; Hughes, 124–127; Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution* (1856; Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1955), 148–157; Alec R. Vidler, *The Church in an Age of Revolution* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1961), 11–21.
16. See, for example, Tocqueville, *Old Regime and the French Revolution*, 153–154; *Democracy in America*, 287–301, 542–546; and Murray.
17. For helpful introductory works on Socialism, see G. Lichtheim, *A Short History of Socialism* (New York: Praeger, 1970); and G. D. H. Cole, *A History of Socialist Thought*, 4 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1953–1966).
18. The connection between Marxist Socialism and technological society has been noted by many who study the characteristics of modern society, including Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society*, 81–82, 144; Goode, 24, 320; and Berger et al., 161–162, 171–174.
19. For an extensive study of collective and personal forms of social control, see Mannheim, 274–311.
20. Geiger has some useful observations on private life and state authority in the Soviet Union, see Geiger, 60–62, 329–330.
21. For some examples of how collective social control functions in Communist China and the Soviet Union through regulation and education, see Sidel, 111–154; and Geiger, 292–320.
22. For a brief description of the dialectical revolutionary strategy used initially in China, including mention of “consciousness raising,” see Sidel, 17–18.
23. Two firsthand accounts of the approach to lying and traditional morality in Communist strategy are V. I. Lenin in Cohen, 220–222; and Douglas Hyde, *The Answer to Communism* (London: Sands & Co., 1949), 21–35.
24. Berger et al. give an excellent description of the romantic reaction in its most recent forms, 181–184, 201–214. These authors view this reaction as one of the three most important ideological developments in modern society. They categorize these ideologies in the following manner:

There are three different types of ideological response to modernization. First, there are ideologies that directly endorse or legitimate modernization [e.g., Liberalism, Socialism]. Next, there are ideologies developed in opposition or resistance to modernization; these might be called counter modernization ideologies [or, as discussed

here, the romantic reaction]. Third . . . there are ideologies that seek to control or contain modernization in the name of values that are conceived to be independent of that process. (159–160, brackets ours)

This third category, according to Berger et al., includes some forms of modern Islam and some forms of third-world Nationalism and Socialism.

25. For a general introductory work on Romanticism and the Romantic Movement, see Jacques Barzun, *Romanticism and the Modern Ego* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1943). Barzun is partial toward the Romantic movement, and attempts to distinguish it clearly from such later phenomena as Fascism. Nonetheless, Fascism and Romanticism do share some significant features, though they are neither identical nor connected to one another in a direct cause-and-effect relationship.
26. See Berger et al., 201–214, for a similar approach to these varied phenomena.
27. “The antagonism to institutions logically extends to institutional roles on the level of everyday life. To play a role is, ipso facto, to engage in hypocrisy. The real self (that spontaneous, un-“repressed,” to-be-intuited entity) is presumed to lie beneath or beyond all roles, which are masks, camouflage, obstacles to the discovery of the real self.” Berger et al., 213.
28. On the dichotomy of personal and functional spheres, see Chapter Eighteen, pp. 498–500.
29. Berger et al. have an excellent analysis of the division between public and private spheres and its relationship to the romantic reaction, 185–188.
30. The philosophical foundations of some American feminist and liberation thought is to be found in the Marxist sociology of knowledge of the Frankfurt school. The feminist and liberation movement outside of America, while sharing the same Marxist foundations, is usually militant and nationalistic. On feminist theology as part of the liberation movement, see Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Feminist Theology as a Critical Theology of Liberation,” 29–50; on the Frankfurt school, see Albrecht Wellmer, *Critical Theory of Society* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1971); on liberation theology, see note 2 of Chapter Fifteen, p. 74.6.
31. For examples of feminist advocacy of consciousness-raising techniques, see Hole and Levine, *Rebirth of Feminism* (New York: Quadrangle, 1971), 137–138; J. Mitchell, *Woman’s Estate* (New York: Vintage Books, 1971), 61–63; and M. L. Carden, *The New Feminist Movement* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1974), 33–37.
32. Examples of this appeal to the authority of personal experience are to be found throughout radical feminist literature. The Redstockings Manifesto states: “We regard our personal experience, and our feelings about that experience, as the basis for an analysis of our common situation.” The “Principles” of the New York Radical Women included: “We regard our feelings as our most important source of political understanding.” (Both documents can be found in *Sisterhood Is Powerful*, 520–535.) Some women’s liberationists would describe this approach as “the politics of experience.” See Juliet Mitchell’s discussion of this concept in *Woman’s Estate*, 13–14.
33. For one example of such a feminist attack on functional society, see Patricia Cayo Sexton, *The Feminized Male* (New York: Random House, 1969), 151–156.
34. This point is made well by Carden, 78–81, and by G. Gilder, 7.
35. Depending upon which definition of ideology one chooses (see note 1, above), it is possible to argue that traditional society did not have “ideologies” as such. If ideologies are clearly articulated theoretical systems which advocate a particular approach to social structure, then ideologies may not have existed in fully developed form until the eighteenth century. If,

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however, ideologies are defined in a more technical sociological fashion, or in a looser and more popular fashion, all societies have their ideologies.

36. The new consciousness of social life and social change is described well by Lionel Trilling, 26–27, and Berger et al., 177.
37. Among those historians who have used a term like “Western Christian Society” are Christopher Dawson, *Understanding Europe* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1960, 1952); and Arnold Toynbee, *An Historian’s Approach to Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956). Troeltsch called it the “Church-directed civilization.” See also Peter Gay, “The Unity of the French Enlightenment,” in *The Role of Religion in Modern European History*, ed. Sidney A. Burrell (New York: Macmillan, 1965), 83–89.
38. The following discussion of the three main stages in Christian social history is further developed in Clark, *Building Christian Communities* (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1972), 40–46; and Clark, *Unordained Elders and Renewal Communities*, 28–30.
39. Two brief articles in the Burrell anthology give a general sense for the eighteenth-century societal rejection of Christianity in Western Europe, see Peter Gay and Joseph N. Moody, “The Dechristianization of French Working Classes,” 89–98. Carl Becker’s *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932) is also a good introduction to this area.
40. On equality, see pp. 526–527.
41. Some examples of a genuine Christian response to modern society can be found in, among others, the work of John Henry Newman, C. S. Lewis, Peter Berger, Jacques Ellul, George Parkin Grant, and in papal social teaching.

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CHAPTER 20

APPLYING SCRIPTURAL TEACHING

1. This could be understood as a chapter on hermeneutics. “Hermeneutics,” however, is a word with many uses. The traditional use of the word refers to the study of the principles of exegesis. Hermeneutics, then, would be the theory, exegesis the practice. Such an understanding would be, for example, the one which Lonergan works with in *Method in Theology*, 153. Recently, “hermeneutics” has shifted its meaning. Stendahl, for instance, uses it in a way that is identical with “applicability” as used in this chapter (*The Bible and the Role of Women*, 8–10). The kind of discussions of hermeneutics that are common among scholars influenced by existential-phenomenological approaches are closer to Stendahl than to the traditional understanding. For all these, hermeneutics is something that follows upon exegesis and is at least logically subsequent, if not actually subsequent, to exegesis.
2. Exegesis cannot be considered “objective” in the sense that one can divorce the explanation of scripture from one’s personal stand. On the other hand, an exegesis which interprets scripture in its meaning for now is not therefore “subjective” in the sense of “arbitrary” or in the sense of giving an application that is just “its meaning for me.” It is possible to state “objectively” what God is saying now through the scripture to the human race, or to the Christian people, or to a particular group of Christians. The way scripture applies now is “objective” to the readers, because it is God who is speaking to them now through the scripture. They must discern *his* meaning. They cannot merely decide on what application they want to make of it.

3. The phrases “gap between the centuries,” “play First Century Semite,” and “play First Century Bibleland” come from Stendahl, *The Bible and the Role of Women*, 12, 17, 40. He does not use them to deny the applicability of the scriptural teaching on the roles of men and women but to raise the question of applicability. The section on “Some Background Problems” sets forth his view in a helpful way. It is developed in his article on biblical theology (“Biblical Theology, Contemporary,” *IDB*, 1:418–432) in a broader way and most helpfully in *Paul among Jews and Gentiles*, where he treats the question of the application of Pauline teaching on justification by faith. His first essay in *The Bible and the Role of Women* is significantly different from the second, which is the one which actually determines his stand on the question of ordination. The crux of his case is an interpretation of Galatians 3:28 that has already been discussed in Chapter Six, not his principle of application, although the latter plays some role in his view. However, the phrase “the gap between the centuries” has become a popular term somewhat independently of Stendahl, and all the uses of the term should not be attributed to him. (For example, S. Brown and R. Corney, 39–56, use the phrase “the gap between the centuries” to summarize a constellation of approaches which say that modern men should not apply various elements of scripture at all, rather than to refer to a reality which raises the question of the intent of scripture, as Stendahl does.)
4. Van der Meer uses a form of this second approach to “the gap between the centuries” in his *Women Priests in the Catholic Church*, 34–36. Invoking the logical principle that if an argument is to be valid then the subject of the argument must remain the same throughout, he maintains that the logical subject of the teaching under consideration, namely, woman, has changed so much in the past two thousand years that the texts are not referring to the same subject matter. Thus, what could be applied to women in the first century cannot be applied to what are called “women” in the twentieth century, since they are not the same thing. In raising this issue van der Meer draws an analogy with the usury question. Money has changed so much that the old arguments against usury can no longer be applied to the modern form of capitalism. “Money” and “lending” are simply not the same thing any more. It is certainly worth asking the question whether the intent of the scriptural teaching is men and women as such, or men and women as found in the cultural conditions of the first century. That question has been raised in Chapters Nine and Eleven of this book. The answer to that question is that the intent of scripture is men and women as such as God created them “in the beginning.” It is more ingenious than helpful to raise the question of the same “logical subject.” No first-century person transported to the twentieth century would have any doubt as to which human beings would properly be referred to as “men” and which as “women.” Sex is not so culturally dependent that a change in culture involves an essential change.
5. Stendahl, in *Paul among Jews and Gentiles* (see esp. 1–7) raises this point convincingly.
6. The phrase “the signs of the times” became popular in the 1960s (especially in the Catholic Church in the period following Vatican II). While the actual term is seldom used today, the ideas behind it appear frequently. Such ideas are reflected in Scanzoni/Hardesty, 202–209; A. Swidler, 11–23; McGrath, 99–115; and L. Swidler, “Two Christian Views of Women,” *National Catholic Reporter*, March 29, 1974, 17.
7. There are a variety of ways of asserting that modern social currents represent God’s will. They often amount to saying that the main trends of modern society are produced by God. Many who take such approaches would like to hold out the possibility of distinguishing good currents in modern society from evil ones. They would also like to let the scripture

have some role in the process. In the final analysis, however, their effective criteria are drawn from their own choices of values, ethical judgments, or ideologies rather than from revelation.

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8. An example of this approach can be found in Arthur Gouthro, "Women's Equality in the Christian Churches," *Ecumenical Trends*, June 1978, 82. See also G. W. H. Lampe, "Church Tradition and the Ordination of Women," *Expository Times* 76, no. 4 (January 1965): 125.
9. See, among others, Robin Morgan, introduction to *Sisterhood Is Powerful*; Mitchell, 99–112, 152–172; Hole/Levine, 218–222, 278–302. It is also worth noting that among many "Christian feminists," the same principles which they use to support their feminist position are now leading them to sanction homosexuality in the church. See, for example, L. Scanzoni and V. Mollenkott, *Is the Homosexual My Neighbor? Another Christian View* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978).
10. On the feminist lack of respect for the facts in scripture and examples of justifying Eve for her part in the Fall, see the lists in the Note on Method: Exegesis, pp. 231–234. With regard to social science, see the discussion in the Note on Method: Social Science, pp. 469–476.
11. See Emile Comar, "Xerox' Book Back," in the New Orleans *Clarion Herald*, June 3, 1976.
12. Among those who use "development of doctrine" for setting aside scriptural teaching in this area are Gouthro, 82; and Sr. Elizabeth Carroll, "The Proper Place for Women in the Church," in *Women and Catholic Priesthood: An Expanded Vision*, ed. Anne Marie Gardiner (New York: Paulist, 1976), 18–19. The notion of a "dynamic" rather than a "static" view of tradition can also move in the same direction. For many who speak of it, a "dynamic" view is one which allows change in doctrine. See Gouthro, 82; G. Tavard in *Perspectives on Scripture and Tradition*, ed. Joseph Kelly (Notre Dame: Fides, 1976), 122ff.
13. John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*.
14. Sheets, 30, notes the distinction. J. Walgrave, "Doctrine, Development of," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 4:940–944, draws some helpful distinctions between "logical," "theological," and "transformistic" theories of the development of doctrine. An approach which sets aside scriptural teaching in this area would be "transformistic." Newman's would be "theological." Baum uses the term "non-homogeneous development" for what Walgrave calls "transformistic" in "Infallibility and Doctrinal Development," *New Horizons* (New York: Paulist, 1972), 28–36. For other valuable treatments of the subject of development of doctrine, see Jaroslav Pelikan, *Development of Christian Doctrine* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), and Walgrave, *Unfolding Revelation* (London: Hutchinson, 1972).
15. Newman's criteria were rather "Catholic," as Pelikan has observed. Pelikan's discussion of Newman provides a good perspective from a sympathetic Protestant. See Pelikan, 12–24.
16. Phyllis Trible, "Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation," *The Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 41, no. 1 (March 1973): 30–48.
17. Lonergan makes this point in *Method in Theology*, in the section on Dialectic, 235ff.
18. Among those who exemplify "the current church practice" argument are Perry; Scanzoni/Hardesty, 70, 179 (from an Evangelical perspective); and Kress, a Catholic, 311–318, who proposes in an appendix on ordination of women the remarkable argument that the Roman Catholic Church has already admitted women to the sacrament of Holy Orders by making them special ministers of the eucharist, therefore the issue of women's ordination in the Catholic Church has already been resolved by that church's current practice.
19. Troy Perry, "God Loves Me Too," in *Is Gay Good?*, ed. W. Dwight Oberholtzer (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1971).
20. See van der Meer, 32–34.

21. Both the word “interpretation” and the word “adaptation” carry with them some potential confusion in terminology. “Interpretation” in this chapter refers to the faithful re-translation of the first-century statement into its twentieth-century equivalent. However, it is common in contemporary scripture scholarship to use “interpretation” to refer to the entire process of applying scripture, or even more broadly, to the entire process of making the teaching of scripture clear (a process which includes translation and exegesis as well as application). Here, it is used in a more specialized sense, as one possible element of application. “Adaptation,” too, can be understood in more than one way. Even after the elements of a passage are “interpreted” into their contemporary equivalent, they can be followed somewhat differently than the passage specifically instructs, shifting the way the teaching is carried out so as to accomplish the actual intention more faithfully. In this chapter, this shifting process is called “adaptation.” Some people, however, would tend to use the term more broadly, referring not only to changes in the way the passage is followed, but also to changes which we might make in our circumstances (creating a “space” for the teaching to be applied).
22. To make this statement is not to eliminate the role of tradition, or that of church authority, in interpreting scripture.
23. This principle does not rule out the role of tradition in the process. Christian churches differ at this point. The fundamental issue, however, is that where God has revealed his will to us (whether in scripture or tradition), the intent of his will is the prime factor in determining the kind of response we make to problems of applicability to our circumstances.
24. The latter part of Brown and Corney’s essay, 47–54, is a good example of an approach which suffers from the failure to be clear on models of interpretation and hence illustrates the problem well. While many of their individual observations are helpful, they are considering the whole problem of application of the scriptural teaching on the roles of men and women as if it were simply a matter of scripture dealing with a particular situation. They miss the fact that different principles operate for different types of material and more of the material in our area is, in fact, instructional. They also could consider more fully the “logic” of argumentation from particular to particular. Newman’s discussion of “The Illative Sense” in *A Grammar of Assent* (New York: Longman’s & Green, 1947) is particularly helpful here. Many discussions of “hermeneutics” fail to distinguish clearly enough the different types of material and the different models of understanding and application.
25. Stendahl in *The Bible and the Role of Women*, 38–41, correctly observes the scriptural teaching on women’s place in the Christian community is not a discussion of “ordination” but of women’s place in society. He operates, however, with a Christendom mentality. For him, the fact of a woman’s “emancipation” in society is decisive for the life of the church. He does not fully consider the possibility that we might be dealing with two societies, a Christian one existing in the midst of a worldly one. The distinction between secular society and Christian society was drawn very forcefully by A. Nygren in an intervention in the 1954 Synod of the Swedish Lutheran Church. Nygren pointed out that a change in the laws of secular society does not necessarily entail a change in the organization of the church, for, as the body of Christ, the church receives its laws from scripture. See the discussion in Refoullé, 85.
26. There are, of course, certain principles which apply both inside and outside the community. For instance, Christians are to love all people, and are to be compassionate and merciful to all.
27. Dunn, 69, 77, calls this “interpreted tradition.” “Interpretation” here is used in a broader

sense than the text of the chapter does, but the concepts and the understanding behind them are very similar. Dunn's key formulation is, "Paul regards the ethical tradition drawn from the traditions about Jesus not as a series of laws which have to be obeyed whatever the circumstances, but more as a set of principles which have to be applied in the light of circumstances." Dunn, however, confuses the issue when he says that Paul therefore does not regard this tradition as having "binding force on all his converts." It would be better to say that he regards them as having binding force where applicable according to the intention of the teaching. The idea, however, seems to be the same.

CHAPTER 21

THE BASES OF A CHRISTIAN APPROACH TODAY

1. For further development of the idea of forming communities and for a treatment of some of the necessary principles, see the author's *Building Christian Communities*.
2. This usage is both acknowledged and criticized in Heinrich Popitz in "The Concept of Social Role as an Element of Sociological Theory," in *Role*, ed. John A. Jackson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 11–39. Popitz holds that "informal social roles" are not properly social roles at all, 16–20.
3. This second use of the term "social role" can be clearly seen in J. Scherer, *Contemporary Community* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1972), 96–103. Scherer explicitly identifies social roles with functional organizations, and contrasts them to the approach taken in a more communal environment.
4. These three uses of the term "social role" are sometimes mixed. For example, some would view both relational and functional roles as social roles, and only exclude informal roles from the definition. See Popitz, 16–20.
5. On ascribed and achieved roles, see Chapter Eighteen, p. 497.
6. Margaret Mead, *Male and Female*, 173.
7. This objection is raised or noted by Scanzoni/Hardesty, 81–82, 183; Mollenkott, *Women, Men, and the Church*, 85; and Carden, 11, 159; among others.
8. Among those raising the objection of inauthenticity are Scanzoni/Hardesty, 205–206, and Hole/Levine, 201–202.
9. For a helpful discussion of this, see Nisbet, *The Quest for Community*, 229–230.
10. In *The Homeless Mind* this question is discussed as the "underinstitutionalization" of private life:

The individual is given enormous latitude in fabricating his own particular private life—a kind of "do-it-yourself" universe.

This latitude obviously has its satisfactions, but it also imposes severe burdens. The most obvious is that most individuals do not know how to construct a universe and therefore become furiously frustrated when they are faced with a need to do so. The most fundamental function of institutions is probably to protect the individual from having to make too many choices. The private sphere has arisen as an interstitial area left over by the large institutions of modern society. As such, it has become underinstitutionalized and therefore become an area of unparalleled liberty and anxiety for the individual. Whatever compensations the private sphere provides are usually experienced as fragile, possibly artificial and essentially unreliable. (186–187)

11. Among those voicing or mentioning this objection on the basis of discrimination are Carden, 13–14; Mitchell, 99; and Hole/Levine, 122.
12. On the inaccuracy of a comparison between sexism and racism, see A. Dummett, “Racism and Sexism: A False Analogy,” *New Blackfriars* 56, no. 666 (November 1975): 484–492. Pierre van den Berghe treats the issue well, saying: “The essential difference between race and sex, however, is that the former is a biologically trivial if not meaningless category, whereas the latter is a fundamental one” (48).
13. This objection concerning sex-role stereotyping is mentioned with great frequency. See, for instance, Scanzoni/Hardesty, 34, 81, 182–183; Carden, 12; A. Swidler, 17; Hole/Levine, 197–200; Mollenkott, 75ff.
14. See Chapter Sixteen, p. 385, and Chapter Seventeen, pp. 434–437.
15. Epistle to Diognetus, trans. Maxwell Staniforth, in *Early Christian Writings* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1968), 181–182.
16. Though not an approach based on scripture or tradition, the socialist model has been taken by some Christians in their attempts to build community. In some ways these community attempts parallel the Jewish Kibbutzim. The community has a Christian commitment, but the social structure is socialist. A collective of people relating as individuals is understood as an expression of Christian brotherhood. Leaders assume the role of administrators and as facilitators of democratic (collective) decisions, and this role is understood in terms of service.
17. The various elements of the monastic model can best be seen in some of the early rules, such as *The Rule of St. Benedict*, ed. J. McCann (Westminster: Newman, 1952); *The Ascetic Works of St. Basil*, ed. W. K. L. Clarke; and *The Rule of St. Augustine*, trans. T. Hand (Westminster: Newman, 1956).

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CHAPTER 22 GUIDELINES FOR A MODERN CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO MEN’S AND WOMEN’S ROLES

No notes

CHAPTER 23 SPECIAL ISSUES IN CONSTRUCTING A MODERN CHRISTIAN SOCIAL STRUCTURE

1. Some of the problems experienced by men are described in Mead, *Male and Female*, 104–120, 164, 169; Gilder, *Sexual Suicide*, 14–25, 103–108; and Vance Packard, *The Sexual Wilderness* (New York: David McKay, 1968), 118–134, 380–395. On the subject of gender and social problems, Gilder writes: “Men commit over 90 percent of major crimes of violence, 100 percent of the rapes, 95 percent of the burglaries. They comprise 94 percent of our drunken drivers, 70 percent of suicides, 91 percent of offenders against family and children” (*Sexual Suicide*, 6).
2. On the problem of the socially disruptive male, see Gilder, 105–106, and Sexton, 1–11. For discussions of feminization, see Sexton, *ibid.*, and Sexton, “How the American Boy is Feminized,” *Psychology Today* 3, no. 8 (January 1970): 23–27, 66–67; Ann Douglas, *The*

Feminization of American Culture (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977); Levy, *Modernization: Latecomers and Survivors*, 112–120; Berger et al., 210.

3. For different uses of the term “feminization,” see Sexton, and Douglas. Sexton’s treatment is especially relevant to this chapter. She sees the “feminized male” as a man “whose normal male impulses are suppressed or misshapen by overexposure to feminine norms” (4).
4. For a similar distinction, see Money and Ehrhardt’s discussion of gender identity and gender role, 4, 15–23, 162–165, 176–179, 243–247.
5. Sexton clearly distinguishes between the feminized male and the homosexual male:

The feminized male is not necessarily a sissy; some are, most are not, though many lean in that direction. Nor is the feminized male a homosexual; some are, most are not. So far as we know, no evidence shows that the two are synonymous, or even closely related. Sex habits may be one thing, and personality quite another. (16)

By “sissy” Sexton may mean “effeminate” as the term is used in this chapter. If so, Sexton discusses the same three terms distinguished in this chapter.

It is helpful to notice that the connection between effeminacy and homosexuality in males seems to be closer than that between homosexuality and feminization in males.

6. Levy, *Modernization: Latecomers and Survivors*, 117, 119–120.
7. Money/Ehrhardt, 147–149; Mead, *Male and Female*, 121–123, 165–169; Gilder, 14–25, 78–88, 92–97.
8. On the problems experienced by this type of woman, see Bardwick, 114–126, and Chesler, 22.
9. See Mead, *Male and Female*, 110.
10. See Evans-Pritchard, 51–52.
11. An excellent study of the development of the modern ideal of man-woman companionship is found in Shorter. One of his main themes is the important role of sentiment in the modern family. He defines romantic love using such terms as “empathy” and “spontaneity,” thus highlighting the aspect of companionship (15–17). Shorter’s discussion of courtship customs (138–167) and the nuclear family (205–254) are also useful for gaining an understanding of the modern ideal of man-woman companionship. Among many Christian feminists, the “companionship marriage” ideal is often praised, and such features as “role-interchangeability” and the abolition of complementarity in marriage are heavily espoused. For a typical example, see Scanzoni/Hardesty, 106–118.
12. For a description of patterns of celibate life, see Clark, *Unordained Elders and Renewal Communities*. Also helpful is P. Camelot, “Virginity,” *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 14:701–704.

CHAPTER 24

ORDINATION, OCCUPATION, LEGISLATION

1. See the brief account of Olympia Brown in *Sojourners*, November 1975, 11–13. There had been an earlier ordination of women in a local Congregationalist Church in 1853 in South Butler, New York, but it had been unofficial and not formally recognized.
2. From the Catholic Church, see especially *Declaration on the Question of the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood*, Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, October 15, 1976. See also Paul VI’s statement of April 18, 1975 to the Study Commission

for International Women's Year in *L'Osservatore Romano* (English edition), May 1, 1975, 5; and Archbishop Joseph Bernardin's statement on behalf of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in the United States of October 3, 1975, in USCC News Release of October 7, 1975. From the Eastern Orthodox Churches, see among others the statement of Archbishop Athenagoras, Ordinary of the Orthodox Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain, given on May 14, 1975, quoted at length in the English edition of *L'Osservatore Romano*, July 3, 1975, 9–10.

3. This point is made by Sheets, "Ordination of Women: The Issues," 30. See also Alexander Schmemmann, "Concerning Women's Ordination: A Letter to an Episcopal Friend," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 17, no. 3 (1973): 239–243; and Mascall, *Women Priests?*, 3–4.
4. See the report of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, published in *Origins*, July 1, 1976, 92–96. The report is a composite document, and is simply intended to be a study document. See the comment in note 46 of Chapter Thirteen (p. 738) concerning the report's distinction between government/eldership and sacramental ministry.
5. For a fuller discussion of this difference, see Clark, *Building Christian Communities*, 20–46.
6. Here it is instructive to read the Kenyon case of 1974 in the United Presbyterian Church in the USA. Walter W. Kenyon appeared for ordination and stated in the course of the examination that he would not ordain women to the session. He would not oppose the ordination of women, and would even call in someone else to do it, but he would not do so himself. His position was based upon scripture, primarily 1 Timothy 2:12. That position was not argued either in the original examination before his presbytery (which agreed to ordain him), or in the trial before the synod (which overruled the presbytery) or before the general assembly (which sustained the synod). The grounds given for rejecting Kenyon's ordination was his refusal to abide by the order of the United Presbyterian Church. That decision has a great deal of wisdom behind it. The fundamental issue in such a case is not what the scripture says, but what kind of a body a particular church is and what principles it follows. A summary of the case is recorded in *Maxwell v. Presbytery of Pittsburgh* (Remedial Case 1), in the minutes of the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA, 1975, 254–259.
7. See S. B. Clark, "Social Order and Women's Ordination," *America*, January 17, 1976, 32–33.

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