

Women in Christian Ministry by D. Hagb.org

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Introduction:

Serving in other cultures, we often see only too clearly various aspects of our host cultures that are in conflict with biblical teachings. Sometimes we ask ourselves, "Where then are our own cultures in conflict with biblical teachings?" Of course materialism easily comes to mind, especially if we as missionaries are less subject to the forces encouraging materialism in modern western society. However, study of passages like 1 Timothy 2:9-15 suggests that our own evangelical culture has also drifted into unbiblical anti-authority attitudes and unbiblical attitudes concerning men's and women's roles in ministry and in other arenas.

Only in the areas where our personality or culture are in conflict with Scripture is our obedience to the Word of God actually tested. When the authority over a calm and patient man requires him to be calm and patient, his obedience is not tested. When his authority goes against his personality and requires him to take violent action, then his obedience is tested. If this study is correct, and if we have drifted from biblical standards into cultural norms in these areas, then it is in these very areas that our faith in Scripture and our obedience to Scripture is tested. Some have certainly failed this test, and simply rejected biblical teaching in this area. Others try to re-interpret the texts, but their efforts do seem to be efforts to get Scripture out of the way so we can do things the right way, right being defined by modern social norms.

Discussion:

Gal. 3:28 says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

How sweeping a statement is Paul making in declaring this? Is he saying that Christians are no longer to make distinctions between male and female, in exactly the same way as we are no longer to make any distinction between races? How sweeping is this statement? For Christians, does it include all realms of our existence? Or should we somehow narrow its sweep? Upon

what grounds do we narrow the scope of this powerful statement of Paul's? We dare not say, "Ah, he didn't mean that in this area of human experience or in that area of human existence," unless we have a very good reason. Well, what are the possibilities for the scope of Gal. 3:28?

- 1) Absolutely unlimited application.
- 2) Limited, does not include the question of who may marry whom.
- 3) Limited, does not include the area of leadership roles.
- 4) Limited, does not include the area of how people should dress or wear their hair.
- 5) Limited, does not include slaves having to obey their masters.
- 6) Limited, does not include matters of propriety.
- 7) Limited, with some combination of the above five limitations.

When I was in the secular university, I knew people there that were convinced that 1) above was the right position. They used to be called *avant guard*, but perhaps there are other terms for them now. However, I doubt any evangelical feminists would agree with 1), that there are absolutely no acceptable limitations on the declaration of Galatians 3:28. So the real questions that should be thought out are simply:

"What is your defense for the particular limitations that you agree with?"

and

"What are your reasons for rejecting the other limitations?"

If we are evangelicals, if we have a high view of Scripture, then our reasons must be drawn not from our culture, not from our personal preference, but from the Bible.

How can someone say that Paul's strident denunciation of homosexuality in Romans 1:20-27 is biblical and appropriate grounds for 2) above, "Limited, does not include the question of who may marry whom", and yet reject 1 Timothy

2:11-14 as biblical and appropriate grounds for 3) above, "Limited, does not include the area of leadership roles"?

1 Timothy 2:12 says, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent."

This text is very difficult for us. What follows are various means of escaping this difficulty that people have suggested in the past 20 years, and my comments about them. Often those comments are further developed in an appendix. Sometimes Greek words are given in the discussion or appendices for those that are interested, but a knowledge of Greek is not necessary to follow this discussion.

“Can’t we just eliminate 1 Tim. 2:12 as a limitation on the scope of Gal. 3:28 by just saying that Paul was referring to the particular situation in Ephesus, which was well known as a center of radical feminism in that area and in that era?” In other words, could he have meant "*There in Ephesus I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, because the radical feminism of that city has gotten out of hand*"?

This view is a common one, and on first glance it appears to be a strong position. However, there are two distinct problems making this view untenable:

1) Paul specifically grounds this difficult statement in the universal history of all mankind, by saying in the very next two verses, "For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner." That grounding, that basis for the prohibition, is universal, not limited to the context in Ephesus. Those two verses would be totally inappropriate if Paul's intent was purely local.

2) Ephesus simply was not at all a center for radical feminism, or any other kind of feminism. Although some feminist authors have made claims about this, their statements are surprisingly far from historically accurate.

Appendix A below gives more detail about those surprising claims and the actual historical situation as shown by primary source materials.

“Can’t we just eliminate 1 Tim. 2:12 as a limitation on the scope of Gal. 3:28 by just saying that in writing ‘to teach or have authority’ Paul was using a figure of speech called a hendiadys?” In other words, could he have meant "I do not permit a woman to teach in a domineering manner over a man"?

It is true that there is a figure of speech named "hendiadys." It is defined as follows: "a figure of speech in which two words connected by a conjunction are used to express a single notion that would normally be expressed by an adjective and a substantive, such as *grace and favor* instead of *gracious favor*."

If this verse had a hendiadys in it, then it might very well mean "to teach in a domineering manner," a translation which would remove the difficulty we have with this verse.

However, a detailed study of the grammar of this verse shows that this explanation is grammatically untenable.

The exact syntax of this difficult verse is οὐδε/oude (which means "or") linking two infinitives governed by a negated finite verb. That means it's like this:

"to do this
or
to do that

not allowed"

In the New Testament only Acts 16:21 has the exact same syntax (that is, οὐδε/oude linking two infinitives governed by a negated finite verb), but if you include verbal forms other than infinitives, you get a list of 53 NT passages. They are *all* either:

- two activities or concepts that are usually good, but in the particular context given in the text they are bad
- two activities or concepts that are always bad

If you broaden your search to all the ancient Greek literature that we have, one finds 48 examples of the exactly identical syntax. Looking carefully at all those

48 examples of this syntax one finds that there are only two possible patterns, which are the same as the two patterns mentioned above from the New Testament. More specifically they are:

"Pattern #1, where two activities or concepts are viewed positively in and of themselves, but where their exercise is prohibited or their existence denied due to circumstances or conditions adduced in the context".

"Pattern #2, where two activities or concepts are viewed negatively and where consequently their exercise is prohibited or their existence denied or to be avoided."

The crucial thing to see in these two patterns is that in the first one BOTH the two activities are generally good but in the particular circumstances they become bad, and in the second one BOTH the two activities are always bad.

The proposed hendiadys would be one good thing (teaching) and one always bad thing (domineering), but a good thing and a bad thing are *never* combined in this grammatical construction. The text can either mean that Paul does not allow women to teach error or domineer men, both always negative activities, or that Paul does not allow women to teach or have authority over men, both activities generally being positive, but in this context (women doing the activities towards men) they are negative activities. Since Paul does not modify "to teach" with anything about error or false doctrines, the meaning "to teach in a domineering manner" is not consistent with the way this grammatical construction was always used throughout ancient Greek literature. Nobody in all the vast ancient Greek literature we have ever used this grammatical construction to say:

"To do this generally good thing (to teach)

or

to do this bad thing (to be domineering)

not allowed."

Appendix B below gives more detail about this grammatical construction in the Greek New Testament and in ancient Greek literature.

“Can’t we just eliminate 1 Tim. 2:12 as a limitation on the scope of Gal. 3:28 by just saying that the verb Paul used which the NIV translates ‘to have authority’ actually has some other meaning?”

It is true that this word is used only once in the entire New Testament (as are many other words), but it is used many times in ancient Greek literature, and in a sentence like 2 Timothy 2:12 it really does mean, "to have authority". In other contexts it might have any of the following meanings, but in this context really only meanings 2, 2a, 3a, and 3c are even real possibilities, and deciding between them requires a close look at the grammar, as described above. That close look at the grammar excluded meaning 3c, because it is negative.

1. To rule, to reign sovereignly
2. To control, to dominate
 - a. to compel, to influence someone/thing
 - b. middle voice: to be in effect, to have legal standing
 - c. hyperbolically: to domineer/play the tyrant
 - d. to grant authorization
3. To act independently
 - a. to assume authority over
 - b. to exercise one's own jurisdiction
 - c. to flout the authority of
4. To be primarily responsible for or to instigate something

This verb is well translated "to have authority", and just choosing some other meaning is not an acceptable way to eliminate 1 Tim. 2:12 as a limitation on Gal. 3:28.

Appendix C below gives more detail of the possible meanings of the word which the NIV translates as "to have authority".

Can’t we just say that Galatians 3:28, which reads “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” contradicts and overrides this difficult verse? In other words, it is just Paul giving his own limited perspective, bound in his own culture in 1 Timothy 2:12, but in Galatians 3:28 the Holy Spirit has "broken

through" and given the divine and universal perspective on the issue of women's roles in Christian ministry.

Although it is certainly tempting to say that, there are two problems with that approach:

1) Galatians 3:28 is right in the midst of a context that discusses justification by faith, not ministry roles, so it is not at all in contradiction with our difficult verse. *As regards coming into the Kingdom by the blood of Jesus Christ*, the huge spiritual divide between Jew and Greek, the huge legal divide between slave and free, and the huge social divide between male and female, are of *absolutely no significance*. There is only one way to a personal relationship with God for every single member of the human race: faith in Christ. As regards ministry and family roles, of course there are distinctions to be made between male and female, or slave and free. These distinctions are elaborated in Ephesians 5. The phrase "adult or child" could also fit just as well into this Gal. 3:28, but would we also then be forced to say that in the context of Christian life or church life, the authority relationship between parent and child is dissolved in Christ? So Galatians 3:28 is not at all about ministry roles, teaching, or leadership, it is about the amazing fact that one Gospel provides life for Jews and Gentiles, for slaves and free, and for male and female. Limiting this statement to its context of justification by faith might seem trivialize it to us but not to the original readers, and not in many contexts throughout the world in which women, slaves, and particular ethnic groups are told they do not enjoy identical access to God.

2) To say that in one verse (which we like) God is speaking, and in another verse (which we don't like) God is not speaking, is a very bad way to handle the New Testament. There is a great deal that could be said about this approach to Scripture, but it is simply outside of our framework. Even someone that does not hold the more absolute position of inerrancy, but just holds to "the infallibility of Scripture in faith and practice" cannot claim that Galatians 3:28 is wrong, because it specifically describes the practice of the faith - it is not an obscure text that might somehow contradict (supposing that were even possible) the truth "as it is now known to modern science"! To say this is not relevant as "a guide to faith and practice" is to simply draw the lines of "faith and practice" in a place more convenient to modern western values.

In fact whenever someone says that these two passages in the New Testament contradict each other, and this one or that one is true, but the other one is false, that person is actually just giving a presentation to us of how a low view of Scripture works!

It is actually a shame that a verse or a context which does not once use words like "leadership" or "teach", and which makes no reference to ministry roles at all, can be said to be more relevant to the issue of women leading or teaching men in Christian ministry than a text like 1 Timothy 2.

Feminist authors say that Galatians 3:28 is the principle verse from which other verses on the subject of male-female relationships must be interpreted. They say that it is the "interpretive key" which must be used to unlock the more difficult verses on the subject. They say that it has "hermeneutical priority" over the other passages on the subject. Their approach means that all the influence flows from Galatians 3:28 to the other verses, but the other verses' plain meaning must never influence how Galatians 3:28 is interpreted. That approach makes the way they take Galatians 3:28 out of its own context all the more dangerous, because the other verses cannot be allowed to affect their interpretation of Galatians 3:28. It is a hermeneutic driven by an agenda.

Normally evangelicals seek to determine the meaning of each text in the light of its own immediate context and in the light of all relevant texts. If indeed the Bible is the Word of God, then no one text needs to conquer any other text, or have "hermeneutical priority" over any other text.

But if the interpreter has his or her own agenda, that normal interpretational process is not followed!

As an aside I would add that some Complementarians/Traditionalists say that Galatians 3:28 is about the fact that before God men and women have equal value, equal worth. I think this idea is perfectly true, but it seems to be an application or extrapolation from this text about justification by faith.

Can't we just eliminate 1 Tim. 2:12 as a limitation on Gal. 3:28 by just saying that 1 Timothy was written specifically to Timothy in Ephesus,

and isn't meant for us all? In other words, why should this command, written to Timothy, limit our freedom any more than the command Paul wrote to Timothy to bring his cloak?

This command applies to all Christians in all ages everywhere because it is a specific situation (women as church leaders in first century AD Ephesus) that is dealt with by the application of a universal principle (Adam being created first, and Eve, not Adam, being deceived), rather than a specific situation (Paul not having a cloak) that is dealt with without the application of a universal principle.

We that are outside that specific Ephesian situation are given an example of how to apply that norm from Genesis. In other words, Paul is not merely handing down a rule, he is coaching us about how to "do theology"! He offers us a lesson that we should consider: if that is how Paul applied the Genesis history to the situation in Ephesus, how should we apply the Genesis history in our ministry? This coaching approach that Paul is using also means that we should learn to apply that norm from Genesis not only in our own churches, but wherever else it should be applied. We need to "do theology" Paul's way, and not just try to obey a list of New Testament rules.

In addition, Paul's stern words to the Corinthian congregation, while specifically addressed to the situation of church worship services, is never-the-less boldly applied to "all the congregation of the saints". "As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches" (1 Cor. 14:33b-34). In that same passage, Paul is quite clear that he did not want to hear about exceptions. In verses 36-37 he closed the discussion with the following admonishments, "Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command." Furthermore, Paul clearly wants his readers to understand that he is not simply giving a private opinion, this is "the Lord's command."

Appendix D below gives more detail on this particular process.

Can't we just eliminate 1 Tim. 2:12 as a limitation on the scope of Gal. 3:28 by just saying that Paul was saying that since women in Ephesus

are uneducated, they should not be allowed to teach or lead men? In other words, could he have meant "*There in Ephesus I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, because the women of that city are so poorly educated*"?

It is true that Ephesus was known for its schools, and that Ephesian women did not enter in to those schools. In fact such formal education was a privilege restricted to very very few. But there were many opportunities for informal education, and women were known to avail themselves of those opportunities. Apparently there were upper class women among the believers in Ephesus (1 Tim. 2:9 and 6:17-18), and it is very likely that they would have availed themselves of some of those opportunities. Besides all that, would it not be very odd of Paul to say that a formal education is a requirement for a teaching ministry in the church, given the fact that many of the apostles themselves were un-schooled?

Appendix E gives more detail about the education of women in Ephesus and how that relates to our difficult verse.

Can't we just eliminate 1 Tim. 2:12 as a limitation on the scope of Gal. 3:28 by just saying that women in Ephesus were teaching false doctrines, and Paul wanted them to be stopped?

As pointed out in chapter 5 of *Women in the Church*, the problem with this explanation of Paul's prohibition of women (which would have been specific to the peculiar situation in Ephesus) is that in the Pastorals it is always men that are passing on the false teaching (1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:17-18; cf. 2 Tim. 4:14) and women are portrayed as being influenced by the heresy (1 Tim. 5:11-15; 2 Tim. 3:5-9), not as false teachers. If this is what Paul had in mind, why did he only stop women from teaching? It was men that were teaching the heresy. Shouldn't he have impartially restricted the false teachers, regardless of their gender?

Can't we just eliminate 1 Tim. 2:12 as a limitation on Gal. 3:28 by just saying that the difficult verse is about husbands and wives, not men and women? In other words, shouldn't 1 Peter 3:1 control the interpretations of this verse?

As developed in chapter 5 of *Women in the Church*, Gordon Hugenberger suggests that 1 Peter 3:1-7, which is similar but is certainly about husbands and wives, should control the interpretation of ἀνερ/aner and γυνή/gune (which can mean man and woman or husband and wife). In 1 Peter these words mean "husband" and "wife", and Hugenberger says that shows that the words should mean the same thing in 1 Tim. 2:9-10, so the prohibition is about a man's wife, and not all women.

Although there are impressive parallels between 1 Tim. 2 and 1 Peter 3, there are some significant differences too. 1 Peter 3:1 is about unbelieving husbands, but they are not mentioned in 1 Tim. 2. In 1 Peter 3:7 husbands' specific responsibilities towards their wives are mentioned, but not in 1 Tim. 2. Peter makes it clear that he is writing about husband-wife relationships because he says that wives should be subject to their own (ιδιος/idios) husbands (1 Peter 3:1) but 1 Tim. 2 never makes that clarification. Those three elements are missing, and so it is not demonstrable that the two texts are talking about the same thing.

The fact that in many cases ἀνερ/aner and γυνή/gune mean husband and wife is hardly proof that these words mean that in our text, because in most all (or all) of those cases the context clearly indicates that husband (not man) and wife (not woman) are meant. The very volume of all those texts that have to spell it out when husband (not man) and wife (not woman) is meant becomes evidence that the *unmarked* meaning (or what we might call the "default meaning") of the words are just what Hugenberger does not want in our (unmarked) text: "man" and "woman".

Does the whole context of 1 Tim. support a discussion about husband-wife relationships in chapter 2? It seems unlikely that Paul would insert teachings about husband-wife relationships at home in the midst of a polemic against false teachers.

Can't we just ignore the interpretations of the traditionalists, because they are hypocrites, and don't apply verses 9-10 (or 1 Tim. 5:3-16) with the same vigor that they would have us apply verse 12?

To say that the traditionalists are hypocrites because they insist upon a literal application of the prohibition on women in leadership, but do not insist upon a literal application of the prohibition on women wearing gold or pearls is an ad hominem argument. If proper exegesis were to show that women should be prohibited from leading or teaching men and from wearing any gold or pearls, then that is the position all should hold. If the traditionalists are hypocrites, they should change. If the wife of a traditionalist wears expensive clothing, seductive clothing, or elaborate hairstyles with gold or pearls, then that traditionalist could be said to be hypocritical. That doesn't mean he should change his exegesis about whether his wife should become an elder in the church!

The same thing applies to those that say we are selective in what we accept as universally valid, because we don't deal well with 1 Tim. 5:3-16 in connection with widows. If we fail to exegete and apply one text, that does not mean we should give up applying another text. 1 Tim. 5:3-16 as a part of the New Testament does need to be understood and applied properly, and if the church has failed to understand and apply it properly, then the church is subject to rebuke, and should repent.

If they are hypocrites, then they are hypocrites, and they should be rebuked for their sin. But that doesn't change the text we have before us.

Can't we just eliminate 1 Tim. 2:12 as a limitation on Gal. 3:28 by just saying that the expression "I do not permit" implies that this is a temporary restriction?

Some say that the intrinsic meaning of the verb "permit" contains a time limitation, that the verb used is inappropriate for universal prohibitions. If we limit our study of this verb ("permit") to the New Testament, this seems like a stronger argument, because all the other NT examples in one sense or another are about specific contexts, except 1 Cor. 14:34, which is so similar to 1 Tim. 2:12 that whatever conclusions one comes to about 1 Tim. 2:12 will probably apply to 1 Cor. 14:34 too. There is much stronger support for examples of επιτρέπω/epitrepo (permit) with a timeless meaning in the extra-biblical texts. 1 Clem. 1:3 ["You instructed (επιτρέπω/epitrepo) the young to think temperate and proper thoughts"] is about a timeless command (to think temperate and

proper thoughts). Ign. Eph. 10:3 (but my text has it as 10:1) reads, "Pray continually for the rest of mankind as well, that they may find God, for there is in them hope for repentance. Therefore allow (επιτρεπω/epitrepo) them to be instructed by you, at least by your deeds." This is a timeless command to permit people to be instructed by one's deeds.

In these two extra-biblical texts there is no limiting context. Therefore it should not be said that the intrinsic meaning of the verb επιτρεπω/epitrepo ("permit") contains an intrinsic time limitation. This verb can be used in time bound situations and it can be used in timeless settings as well. The context of the passage must determine whether it is time bound or timeless.

Can't we just eliminate 1 Tim. 2:12 as a limitation on Gal. 3:28 by just saying that the Present Tense (or the Indicative Mood) of the verb "permit" implies that that was for when Paul was around? Again, the question remains, "Was it a temporary restriction, or only Paul's opinion?" It is a Present Tense Active Indicative verb. Many say this verb is never intended as a permanent prohibition anywhere else in the NT. If Paul had written "I myself do not permit..." (providing the emphasis by moving the phrase to the beginning of the sentence, adding αυτος/autos or εγω/ego) there would be textual support for this view. The use of a Present Tense Active Indicative verb in texts like Rom 12:1; 15:30; 16:17; 1 Cor. 1:10; 4:16; 7:10; 2 Cor. 10:1; Eph. 4:1; Phil. 4:2; 1 Thess. 4:1, 10; 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:6, 12; 1 Tim. 2:1, 8; 5:14; 2 Tim 1:6; Titus 3:8 show that Present Tense Active Indicative verbs can be used to give universal and timeless commands, so saying that the verb form suggests a time bound or limited command goes against the evidence of the use of the verb form in the New Testament.

Can't we just eliminate 1 Tim. 2:12 as a limitation on Gal. 3:28 by just saying that Col. 3:16 or Eph. 5:21 imply that sometimes women will lead men, and teach men?

Col. 3:16 says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God."

This "one another" is similar in concept (though it is a different term) to Eph. 5:21, "submit to one another". Neither requires women teaching men or having authority over men. In Eph. 5 Paul goes on to delineate just how this "one another submission" should take place. Interestingly, the Colossians passage is followed by a very similar delineation of authority, an explanation of how submission works in a believing community. At any rate, "teaching and admonishing one another" and "submitting to one another" need not describe random or spontaneous activity. They are both very possible to do within the parameters of 1 Tim. 2.

Can't we just eliminate 1 Tim. 2:12 as a limitation on Gal. 3:28 by just saying that Priscilla teaching Apollos shows that it is OK for women to teach men?

This passage is more difficult passage for the traditional position, a difficulty which is entirely separate from the cultural questions of much of this discussion. Even if an evangelical interpreter accepted the idea, for instance, that for some reason 1 Timothy 2 was only for the Ephesian congregation of that era, he or she would still apparent contradiction between 1 Timothy 2 and Acts 18:26, which reads, "He (Apollos) began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately." This seems to be in contradiction to Paul's stance that women should not teach men, whether or not that restriction was limited to that context.

Feminist interpreters may just use this passage to demonstrate that 1 Timothy 2 is not valid, but if they have a high view of Scripture then all they have done is call into question the inerrancy they hold!

Some traditionalist might say that since her husband was there, then it was alright for Priscilla to teach a man because she was operating under the authority of a certain man, in this case her husband. However, Paul said, "I do not allow a women to teach or have authority over a man." But with this explanation, that is precisely what Aquila would be doing! Are we to understand that Paul says, "I do not allow a woman to teach a man" but Aquila says, "Because I am present here with her, I can allow this woman to teach a man"? That hardly seems to be consistent with the rest of the New Testament teaching on the subject, especially considering Paul's emphasis on the silence of women in 1 Corinthians 14:34-38 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12.

Perhaps we have forgotten how important the sanctioned teaching of the Word of God is in Christian ministry. When the God-ordained leadership of a Christian ministry says to those over which it has that divinely appointed authority, "This is the teaching of the Word of God," something special happens. Acts 18:26 falls outside that arena and is simply a theological conversation in which Priscilla certainly participated, rather than a divinely sponsored teaching ministry. In other words, Paul did not want the authority of the church to sponsor a woman teaching a man, but it was fine for a woman to teach a man in an informal setting that did not involve any divinely appointed leadership structure.

Can't we just eliminate 1 Tim. 2:12 as a limitation on Gal. 3:28 by just saying that women can prophesy in the church, and that's the same as teaching? In other words, since prophecy is just as authoritative as teaching (prophets are listed between apostles and teachers in 1 Cor. 12:28, apostles and prophets are the foundation in Eph. 2:20, and in Eph. 4:11 prophets are listed between apostles and evangelists), and because women are allowed to prophesy in the church (Acts 2:17-18; 21:9; and 1 Cor. 11:5 are given as support of this assertion), therefore women should also be allowed to teach in the church?

As discussed in chapter 5 of *Women in the Church*, this is a weak argument. If it is valid, it leaves us with a biblical contradiction of 1 Tim. 2. But the logical process involved is as follows:

- 1) We can be sure enough that prophesy is the same as teaching.
- 2) We can be sure enough that women were prophesying in the church.
- 3) We can therefore be sure enough that somehow 1 Tim. 2:12 is superseded.

All three of these statements are dubious assertions, as discussed below:

1) *Prophecy is not the same as teaching:*

As discussed in chapter 5 of *Women in the Church*, prophecy and teaching are different in that teaching is based on the apostolic deposit of the church, but prophecy is spontaneous revelation in which truth might be mixed with error, and has to be sifted. The nature and authority of prophecy are very different from the nature and authority of teaching. By their headcoverings, women

prophesying guard male headship according to 1 Cor. 11: 2-16. Male headship is guarded in the area of teaching by prohibiting women from teaching men.

2) *We cannot be sure at all that women were prophesying in the churches*

Acts 2:17-18 is the Joel prophecy, but it simply does not say that women will prophecy in the church

Acts 2:17-18 In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

Similarly, Acts 21:9 tells us that the daughter of Philip the evangelist were prophetesses, but not that they prophesied in the church:

Acts 21:9 He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.

1 Cor. 11:2-16 is about the propriety of women praying and prophesying, and it is often given as proof that the commands for women to be silent in the church (1 Cor. 14:34 and 1 Tim. 2:11-12) are contradicted in the NT, or are not universally applicable. However, a closer look at the text suggests that 1 Cor. 11:2-16 is about Christian husband and wife relationships in general, but at verse 17 there is a shift to the issue of what happens "in your meetings" (vs 17) and "when you come together as a church" (vs 18), "when you come together" (vs 20), and "when you come together" (vs 30). In other words, at verse 17 the discussion has narrowed to the context of Christian church services.

If that is the case, then Paul is saying that women really should be quiet in the church, and when they pray or prophesy outside the church, they should do it with a sign of authority on their heads.

There is no New Testament proof of women prophesying in church, and there is no contradiction between 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Corinthians 14:34.

3) *We cannot at all say that somehow 1 Tim. 2:12 is superseded.*

As discussed above, 1 Tim. 2:12 cannot be deleted from the Word of God because we find it difficult, not if the Bible is inerrant or even infallible.

Doesn't the parallel with slavery show that limiting women's roles is an outmoded concept? In other words, might we not say: "Just as Paul did not feel the church was ready for the full story on slavery (which is that slavery must be and will be abandoned as evil), so he felt that the church was not ready for the full story on women in Christian leadership (which is that since women and men are functionally interchangeable in this arena, excluding women from leadership roles in Christian ministry must be and will be abandoned as evil)"?

But is this a valid parallel? Paul said, "I do not allow a woman to teach or have authority over men in the church." So we are told by some that Paul himself was a part of the "chauvinistic male leadership" which he knew would be destroyed as the church matured into a greater spirituality. So are the two issues really parallel?

Had Paul said, "(Even though slavery is evil and will be destroyed as the church grows in spiritual maturity) I myself am a slave holder and do not allow my slaves freedom" and in parallel fashion "(Even though disallowing women in leadership over men in Christian ministry is evil and will be destroyed as the church grows in spiritual maturity) I myself do not allow a woman to teach or have authority over men", then there would be a valid parallel between the women's issue and slavery. However, as far as we know, Paul did not participate in or condone the evil of owning another human being, even though he did say that slaves should submit to their masters (this not for the sake of supporting an evil social order, but because submission demonstrates not weakness, but rather Christlikeness.) Furthermore, Paul included slave traders in a list with adulterers, perverts, liars and perjurers in 1 Tim. 1:10.)

However, Paul did condone *and even participate in* the so called evil of forbidding women to have authority over men in Christian ministry.

It is good that much of the world is free from slavery, but in Paul's mind it seems to be more important that slaves submit to their masters. Preferring violent anti-slavery revolutions rather than the inner character issues related to submission would be parallel to supporting violent anti-Roman revolutions rather than the inner character issues that Jesus preached so clearly, and that caused so much disappointment among even His closest followers!

The approach that says that the women's roles issue is parallel to the slavery issue requires the view that the Word is incomplete, and we will grow or evolve into a more spiritually mature state in which we will recognize some New Testament practices as spiritually primitive. The Upper Room Discourse text about "...I have many more things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now..." is used to support this idea. But that text is abused - the Spirit inspired the rest of the New Testament, which is in some sense all we need for life and ministry. This approach undermines all the authority of the New Testament. What godless principle, introduced to us by a world increasingly removed from a biblical worldview, could not be defended in the very same manner? The arguments we have to reject and refute abortion, euthanasia, and homosexuality would all fail under that approach to the Word of God. (In writing this I do recognize that there is a huge divide between many that believe women should be allowed leadership over men in the church, and people that support those sins, however there nevertheless is a hermeneutical link between their arguments.)

Doesn't the fact that God has given all the gifts to women mean that women should not be restricted from using those God-given gifts among men?

This is a common argument in the feminist literature, and can be put forward very powerfully through various examples and experiences. However, it is fundamentally flawed. The first question is whether it is God's will for women to teach men and have authority over men in Christian ministry. If it is not, then clearly God does not intend for any gifts, talents, abilities, or resources that He has given to be used by women in any way against that principle. Just because someone has a gift, does not mean that person - male or female - has the right to decide how to use it regardless of the teachings of the New Testament. If 1 Timothy 2:12 means that no women should teach or lead any men, then unless the New Testament is flawed, God does not gift women so that they can teach or lead men. (In the context of this discussion, the term "teach" is defined as using a platform or setting that is endorsed by ministry leadership to present the Word of God to Christians. Unendorsed events like Priscilla and Aquila explaining the Way more accurately to Apollos are outside this concept of teaching, as explained above in the discussion of Acts 18:26.)

Doesn't the fact that many women feel a calling from God to teach or lead men mean that those women should not be restricted from using those God-given gifts among men?

This question is very similar in nature to the question above. The subjective experience or feeling of being called by God to teach or lead men cannot be more authoritative than the objective truth of 1 Timothy 2:12 unless the Word of God is flawed.

Rebecca Jones' critique of Joan Winfrey's "In Search of Holy Joy: Women and Self-Esteem", which was published in the Spring 2005 Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, answers this question, and more. She writes,

"To what does God call me, a woman in his Kingdom?" We do not have the right to answer that question. Only God can, and if he has already defined that purpose, then we have no right to redefine it. It is true that each woman is unique and will serve Christ as an individual, but she is not free to define her calling according to her gifts, if she steps outside the boundaries God has drawn.... However, one mistake that sometimes blinds us is to think of calling as the sum of our passion and our gifts... even the sum of *gifts + passion* ≠ *calling*.... Jesus passionately wished that the cup could pass from him, but it was not the Father's will, to which he obediently submitted himself in spite of the suffering he endured. It was Jesus' God-given calling to save his people. How urgently he must have longed to march into Jerusalem, set himself up as king, and shepherd the lost sheep of Israel. Did he have the gifts to be their king, priest, and pastor? Absolutely. Did he have the desire and passion? Definitely. Was it God's calling? Yes, but he was not to accomplish it that "easy" way. This is the case for every Christian. We have godly passions to serve the kingdom, and we have gifts God has given us to accomplish his purposes, but we must submit our gifts and passions to God and follow the path he lays before us. That path for women's service is defined in Scripture. She was created after Adam, as a "helper fit for him" (Gen 2:18). This pre-fall creation definition does not change in Christ's kingdom, though we understand it more deeply and have greater power to accomplish it.

Doesn't the fact that today women are successfully teaching and leading men show that this activity should not be restricted?

This is again a similar question. There is a proper role for pragmatism, but when an activity's pragmatic value is promoted above a clear prohibition in the Word of God, then our pragmatism has gone beyond its proper role, unless, again, the Word of God is flawed.

Can't we just say that there were unidentified women on Jesus' apostolic ministry team, or that the gender limitations He put on His recruitment parameters are irrelevant in today's world?

I wonder that people who have thought through and hold to the egalitarian position are not more *afraid* to take that position despite the fact that Jesus Himself clearly had some reason to make a distinction in the area of leadership between his twelve male disciples (eleven of whom became the apostles), and the women that attended Him. (Despite odd arguments to the contrary, "the disciple whom Jesus loved" was clearly male; he is called "son" to Mary - see Appendix F below.) Before we decide to not follow Christ's example, shouldn't we be careful to determine His reasons? Do people feel that somehow the time has come for women to be in positions of leadership in Christian ministry? Have we evolved into such a time? Is that to say that despite how Jesus unabashedly had no respect for social norms when He spoke *privately* to the woman at the well in John 4, in the *public* matter of the gender of His disciples He compromises with social norms that are evil? It is difficult to actually put that idea of such a compromise into words in a way which is not a serious allegation against the Lord.

Shouldn't we just refuse to take the side of those that in the past have despised and humiliated women?

It is inappropriate to prejudicially associate all traditionalists with people that state that women are intellectually or spiritually inferior to men or pay women less than what they would pay men for the same work. This is a "guilt by association" ad hominem argument.

In fact, the Gospels consistently record that Jesus' female followers had little of the spiritual blindness or slowness of the (indeed all male) disciples. What female follower of Jesus except Martha is ever rebuked in the Gospels? In spiritual insight and devotion women are indeed portrayed as superior to men with few exceptions. Nevertheless the male gender is required to take the leadership roles. I do not know why, except for the creation order and the decision of God.

Can't we just say that the issue is simply too divisive and complicated, and there are godly and wise people on both sides, so let's just do the thing that best supports our practical ministry

- This issue can certainly be divisive. Should we avoid all divisive issues?
- This particular theological issue does not seem to me to be very complicated, even if its practical application might be complicated in our culture.
- While it is certainly true that there are godly and wise people on both sides, that does not free Christian leaders of the responsibility of understanding and obeying the Word of God.

We are not pragmatists. We do not elevate expedience over Scripture, because we cannot understand any of our decisions' long term effects on Kingdom ministry. We need the wisdom of God, as delivered to us through the Word of God, in order to make the best decisions possible.

Will the approach to Scripture that we adopt in the women's issue pave the way for our children or our disciples to say the same thing about hell, euthanasia, abortion, homosexuality, and all the other difficult issues they will be facing?

Wasn't Junias a female apostle?

In the NIV Rom. 16:7 reads, "Greet Andronicus and Junias, my relatives who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was."

The term "apostle" fundamentally means "sent one". The Twelve Apostles were twelve sent ones with special authority from the Lord, and they were certainly all male. Since this text refers to "the apostles" it does seem to refer to the original Twelve Apostles.

This name (Ιουνιάς/Iounias) occurs only once in the NT, and the gender is somewhat debatable. While the Greek ending -ας is a normal feminine ending, this name could be a shortened form of the male name Junianus. The existence of an apostle named Junias would be weak proof of the existence of a female apostle. It would be like assuming that Chris Smith or a Terry Jones was a woman, and then building a case on that assumption.

Besides the question of whether this passage refers to a male or a female, Daniel Wallace and Michael H. Burer in their article in *New Testament Studies* 47 (2001):76-91, which was reprinted in the *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womenhood* 6/2 (Fall 2001) 4-11, present a very thorough study of the expression "outstanding" or "well-known" in all the ancient Greek literature. They find several dozen parallel passages using this expression "well known among" (επισημος εν/episemos en). They come to the conclusion that επισημος εν followed by dative personal nouns (like "the apostles") means "well known by". That is the syntax of this Romans passage. If the intent were to say "well-known among", then επισημος/episemos followed by a genitive personal noun would have been used, according to the overwhelming evidence. (Among all the relevant texts of this syntax, they only found one text to the contrary.) One interesting example is when Euripides writes that Aphrodite, who was unmistakably immortal, was "well-known among mortals," using this same Romans 16:7 expression. Just as no one should claim that Aphrodite was mortal, so no one should say that Junias and Andronicus were apostles. They were actually "well-known to the Apostles".

Wasn't there an office of deaconess in the New Testament church?

Here is 1 Timothy 3:8-13 -

"Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain.

They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.

They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

In the same way, {their} wives/women are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well.

Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus."

The New Testament has no word "deaconess". The masculine noun *διακονος*/diakonos is used of Phoebe in Romans 16:1. The entire NT support for the office of deaconess seems to come from 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Romans 16:1. In the original of 1 Tim. 3:11 there is no word "their". It is supplied in the English translation, and the word *γυνη*/gune can mean "woman" or "wife" depending on the context. As was discussed above, if there is no clarification in the context, it means "woman", but here the context is about deacons and their qualifications, and the immediate context is about their families. The term here seems to refer to the wives of qualified deacons. It's a bit strange to say it refers to the otherwise never mentioned office of deaconess: six verses are given for the qualifications of elders, four verses for the qualifications of deacons, and one verse for the qualifications of deaconesses.... That seems odd, as does the order of the sentences, if deaconesses are intended: three verses about deacons, a verse about deaconesses, and then another verse about deacons.

The summary of the interpretation that this verse refers to wives of deacons is as follows:

1. The term "deaconess" never occurs in the NT.
2. This is the only support for their existence is Romans 16:1 and 1 Timothy 3:11.
3. There is no NT explanation of the function of this office.
4. The term *γυνη*/gune should be translated "wife" in a context about family.
5. There is only one verse about these *γυνη*/gune while there are four about deacons and six about elders.
6. The order of sentences (three verses about deacons, a verse about deaconesses, and then another verse about deacons) would be hard to explain.

One argument in favor of that position is that it would be strange if the qualifications for elders, which are more strict, did not include specific statements

about their wives, but the less strict qualifications for deacons did include qualifications concerning their wives.

If there is an office of deaconess in the New Testament, there is certainly no evidence that deacons or deaconesses taught men or had authority over men, and that is the significant point in this discussion. Again, we have a phenomenon (the apparent existence of deaconesses) being used to argue for women in leadership over men.

As long as deaconesses do not teach or have authority over men, it does seem like a practical and beneficial church office, whether or not it is specifically endorsed by the New Testament!

Wasn't Phoebe a deaconesses with authority over men in the New Testament?

Romans 16:1 reads, "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant (διακονος/diakonos) of the church in Cenchrea."

The early church leaders chose the term διακονος/diakonos, a very common word for "servant" that is used 29 times in the NT, for the church office of "deacon" (Phil. 1:1). 26 times in the NT this Greek word just means "servant". John 2:5 speaks of the servants at the wedding in Cana, and Mat. 23:11 says "The greatest among you will be your servant." It only refers to people in the church office three times (or if you count Phoebe, four times).

Christ is a servant of the Jews in Romans 15:8, Paul and others are servants of the New Covenant in 2 Cor. 3:6, Paul is a servant of God in 2 Cor. 6:4, others are referred to as servants of Christ in 2 Cor. 11:23, Paul is a servant of the Gospel in Eph. 3:7, and Timothy is to be a good servant of Christ Jesus in 1 Tim. 4:6. All these are normal uses of this common word, and it seems like Phoebe as a servant of the church fits right into that common NT pattern.

It is possible that Phoebe held a church office, the office of deacon, but this text is weak proof of that. As was pointed out above, even if there were New Testament deaconesses, the New Testament does not show them teaching or having authority over men. The first deacons were probably the men appointed

in Acts 6. Their only recorded function was taking care of the distribution of bread to the widows.

Wouldn't it help get more done if we could draw from women as well as from men for leadership and teaching roles?

As this is a speculative claim, the response is also speculative: Paul said in 1 Timothy 2:13-14, "For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner." It may be that the problem he was referring to was Adam's passivity. The serpent went to Eve, and Adam passively let him. Men can be overly aggressive or overly passive. If our ministry appoints women to leadership positions over men, it is very possible that men that should be doing that work will think to themselves, "Oh, there is nothing wrong with any of the many qualified women doing those roles, so I can say no next time I'm asked, and concentrate on real ministry. Let the women do that kind of stuff." In so doing, they would be repeating the passivity of Adam in the garden. If that is the case, we would actually be shrinking our leadership pool, not extending it. Admittedly this is speculative, but it is also speculative to say that by bring on women into leadership positions over men we will have more people for those roles.

What about Huldah, Deborah, Athaliah, and Miriam in the Old Testament?

2 Kings 22:14 and 2 Chr. 34:22 tell us that there was a prophetess in Jerusalem named Huldah. Those two texts do not say that she ruled over men or even that she taught men.

Judges 4 and 5 describe how Israel was judged, or ruled, by a prophetess named Deborah. This was the era of the judges, and chapter 4 begins with the statement that "the Israelites once again did evil in the eyes of the LORD." There is little in this passage to encourage the reader to take it as a model of proper leadership. In fact, when Barak refused to lead the Israelites to victory against Sisera without her, he is shamed with the following: "'Very well,' Deborah said, 'I will go with you. But because of the way you are going about this, the honor will not be yours, for the LORD will hand Sisera over to a woman.' So Deborah

went with Barak to Kedesh...." This passage seems to speak more about the shame of Barak than the propriety of Deborah's rule.

As recorded in 2 Kings 11 and 2 Chronicles 22 Athaliah tried to kill the entire royal family, but she was unable to kill young Joash. She ruled Israel for six years, and called out "Treason! Treason!" when Joash was crowned. She however was put to death as a treasonous usurper.

Miriam does two things, in our record. She leads women in song in Exodus 15:20, which seems to be according to the divine purpose as mentioned in Micah 6:4, and in Numbers 12 she with Aaron leads a rebellion against Moses, for which she is judged with leprosy. If anything, Miriam's leadership would tend to support the position that women should not lead men.

Deborah was the best of these women, but even in her and Barak's case male passivity was the problem there - as it was in the Garden of Eden. In Judges 5:2 the song they sang celebrates, "When the princes in Israel take the lead, when the people willingly offer themselves — praise the LORD!"

So it is true that in all the history of the nation of Israel, there was once a woman that God appointed to rule over men. In the one story that we know about in the period of her judgeship, the shame of Barak is the point. It is another story about the failure of men during the period of the Judges, not a basis for contradicting 1 Timothy 2. It is a dark day when we need to take the fact that a woman judged Israel in the period of the Judges and use that to defend the adoption of modern values concerning the roles of women in leadership in ministry.

When people use Deborah's judgeship to override 1 Timothy 2:12 they are using OT phenomena to override NT commands. Indeed Isaiah prophesied that women will rule over men ("Youths oppress my people, women rule over them. O my people, your guides lead you astray; they turn you from the path" Is. 3:12). It would certainly be foolish to use that phenomenon to prove that it is alright for women to have authority over men. While far less blatant, using the historical phenomenon of Deborah's judgeship to support women in leadership in the New Testament shares the same fundamental weakness: we should not try to defeat explicit commands with phenomenon. This is all the more so

when the commands are New Testament and the phenomena are Old Testament!

Isn't it true that there are good scholars on either side of this debate, so we should just leave it alone?

I'm sorry to say that there doesn't really seem to be good scholarship on both sides of this issue. To my surprise, from what I have seen during this study the feminist side seem to rely upon subjective or experiential arguments about calling and gifts, assert a variety of acceptable alternatives to the traditional position and then select one of those alternatives as "preferred" without ever demonstrating why it is actually superior, hand down historically inaccurate materials, or simply reject the authority of the Bible. I realize this seems harsh, but it is simply not correct to say that the feminist position is well supported by good scholarship.

Let one example suffice for this. It is often said that the Greek word κεφαλη/kefale ("head"), can mean "source" rather than "authority", thus an element of doubt is cast upon Paul's teaching that the man has to be the leader of the marriage. However, in all the 2300 uses of κεφαλη in ancient Greek literature there is not one single reference that uses κεφαλη of people without the concept of authority. The only time the concept of authority is absent when κεφαλη is used is when the κεφαλη is inanimate, as in "the head of a column" or "the head of a river". Whatever the reasons for this inaccurate and very widespread teaching about the word κεφαλη, it is one small indication of the fact that the scholarship on the feminist side is not very strong.

Is this a debate that we as Christian leaders can just leave alone? Do we have to take a position on it? Can't we just be neutral?

In the case of the controversial issue of tongues, a person could have a private opinion for or against, and try to keep that opinion (and his or her practice) to himself. By its very nature this is a different sort of issue, because there is no way to have a private opinion about appointing women to leadership roles over men. Sooner or later a leader will either have to permit or not permit a woman to have authority over men. A person might be able to speak in tongues pri-

vately, and it might not affect anyone else, but if you apply your own opinion about this issue, it is suddenly an organizational issue.

Doesn't holding to the traditional position mean that one thinks that women are less valuable to God and to the ministry?

Our value before God is from the Gospel, not our office or performance. It should be so in our own hearts as well.

To suggest that if women are not allowed to teach or lead men, then we do not value them as equals before the Lord reveals a system of values or a means of assigning worth that is based on function or performance. This is a dangerous trend that modern society has adopted. If we adopt this values system then we will consider those that are not contributing sufficiently to be less worthy of respect, but a biblical view gives worth to all human beings as images of God, and as people for whom Christ died.

Although the Gospels consistently keep a clear distinction between the apostles and the women that followed Jesus and ministered to Him, it is clear from many passages that Jesus highly valued those women. In the entire Gospel of John, the only female follower of Jesus who is rebuked is Martha, and in that context she is in sharp contrast with Mary, sitting at Jesus' feet. This is very different from the many rebukes given to the apostles. And was not Mary given the privilege of first seeing Jesus after the resurrection?

But doesn't just the very volume of arguments put up against 1 Timothy 2:12 make one wonder whether the verse needs to be reinterpreted?

First of all, one solid argument should never overcome ten or a hundred flawed arguments. Secondly, the way this question is phrased, it makes it sound like 1 Timothy 2:12 is a single, isolated, and obscure verse. It is not. A very similar prohibition (with much stronger emphasis) is also given in 1 Corinthians 14:34, and the outworking of the same principle in the Christian home is given in 1 Corinthians 11:3-16, Ephesians 5, Colosians 3, and 1 Peter 3.

Does this apply to the church, but not to para-church ministries or missions?

In 1 Timothy 2 Paul did **not** say, "I do not permit a woman to *be an elder*; she must be silent." Neither did he say, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man *in the church*; she must be silent." Someone might say that the context is the local church ministry, however, it should be noted that Paul was functioning as a missionary leader writing to one of his missionaries that was on assignment in Ephesus, one of at least seven places to which Timothy went as a part of Paul's missionary team or teams. Therefore it is more accurate to say that 1 Timothy is a missionary letter rather than a pastoral letter. 1 Corinthians is directly and specifically written to a local church, and its prohibitions for women speaking are specifically and emphatically about church services.

In 1 Timothy 2 Paul is educating Timothy and all his readers about how to apply a principle he observes in the creation order. He applies it in Timothy's present ministry, because that was the context to which he had sent Timothy. However, if we are going to follow his model, we should understand the principle he is presenting, its origin in Genesis, and its outworking in our ministries. There is simply no Scriptural or theological justification for saying the creation order should apply to the question of women leading or teaching men in the church, but not to the question of women leading or teaching men on a first century apostolic team, or in a twenty first century evangelical mission organization.

In 1 Timothy 2 it is the function of women leading men and the function of women teaching men that is forbidden, not the role of eldership. The reason women should not be elders in the church is that they would be doing those two proscribed functions. When men perform those two functions in any ministry context, they derive the authority to do so from God via His Word and the established church leadership. God has appointed the leaders of legitimate Christian ministries, whether church or mission. Our leaders have the authority to lead, not just because of a letter of appointment they received from man, but because God has appointed them to leadership. Can we derive our authority to lead in ministry from God via His Word, but ignore the restrictions to that authority that He has made clear in His Word?

Church and family and missions structures are divinely appointed institutions with particular divinely appointed spheres for their authority. The pattern of male leadership in all three of these divinely established institutions is founded in the Creation order, explicitly taught in the Scriptures, and also modeled in the Scriptures. In particular when Christ established His apostolic team no women were included. There are only two possible explanations for that - either because society wasn't ready for that or because Adam was formed first. If the former then in effect Jesus said to Mary sister of Martha, "I know you are the best for this apostolic role but I am afraid of peoples reaction so I am going to pass on you as an apostle. I hope you don't mind." In other words, Jesus "caves". Is that the Jesus of John 4? No. The same would have to be said about Paul. It is unacceptable to say that there were no women on those apostolic teams because society wasn't ready for that. There were no women on those teams because they were leadership teams, and the Lord did not want women in authority over men, because "Adam was made first." New Testament apostolic teams and mission structures today are divinely called structures whose leaders have divine sanction within their spheres of authority and that divinely sanctioned authority does not include women leading men in home, church, or mission. This is consistently portrayed in the New Testament by principle, by command, and by model. This paper has shown that examples offered to the contrary are simply not based upon solid exegesis.

The church is the pillar and foundation of the truth, and as such it allows only qualified people in leadership over men and in teaching men. If the nature of a mission organization were spiritually nearer to the personal conversation between Priscilla and Apollos than the pillar and foundation of the truth, then it wouldn't matter who is appointed as mission leaders. However, mission organizations should not give up the divine sanction which they enjoy, and just declare themselves an association of like minded individuals. That would be a huge price to pay to allow women to be leaders over men.

As was stated above, Paul in 1 Timothy 2 is not merely handing down a rule, he is coaching us about how to "do theology"! He offers us a lesson that we should consider: if that is how Paul applied the Genesis history to the Timothy's missionary ministry, how should we apply the Genesis history in our ministry? This "coaching approach" that Paul is using also means that we should learn to apply that norm from Genesis not only in our own churches, but wherever else

it should be applied. We need to "do theology" Paul's way, and not just try to obey a list of New Testament rules.

A note about conflicting authority

In the traditionalist view, the husband has authority over the home (1 Peter 3), and men are in authority in the church (1 Timothy 2). But if a married woman were to lead a church (or be a field director in a mission), and her husband were a member of the same local church (or field team), then there would be a difficult confusion of authority in that marriage and church.

This might be resolved for many in the egalitarian camp by saying that if the woman was more spiritual, then she should be the head of the family as well as the leader of the church, but that resolution only demonstrates that there is more to this modern trend than simply ministry leadership: it threatens the leadership structure of the Christian family.

One might respond that in the concerns of church or mission, such a woman would have authority, and in concerns of the home and family, her husband would have authority. But that solution denies the holistic truth that ministry and family necessarily and properly overlap in many ways. Trying to divide between them is artificial and impractical. The stronger personality would prevail in any area of overlap, and both home and ministry would suffer. It is difficult enough to deal with the effects of Genesis 3:16 in home and ministry, even with clear and biblical authority structures - woe to the man that tries to be head of his household when his wife is his boss!

A Note from Isaiah:

Part of the prophet's description of the horror of the Babylonian attack and captivity is that "women [will] rule over them." This is outside the context of Ephesus, and outside the context of the church. According to this passage, it is a shame when the situation is so dire that women end up ruling over men.

Is. 3:11-12 "Woe to the wicked! Disaster is upon them! They will be paid back for what their hands have done. Youths oppress my people, women rule over them. O my people, your guides lead you astray; they turn you from the path."

A Note of Urgency

I would like to quote from 1 Corinthians 14. After saying "as in *all* the congregations of the saints... it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church," Paul goes on to emphasize the importance of this issue with an intensity only matched in his Epistle to the Galatians. He writes,

"Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. If he ignores this, he himself will be ignored."

Conclusions

- Gal. 3:28 is about universal equality regardless of race, gender, social status, for every human being in the issue of how to be saved. There are no alternative pathways to justification by faith through which we are to direct certain classes of people.

- 1 Tim. 2:9-15 is valid for today. It is one of several limitations on the scope of Galatians 3:28. This means that men are to teach women, and not visa versa, and that men are to be in authority over women, and not visa versa. This is certainly true in the arena of church ministry, and by proper application of the principle and the grounds given, it is true in Christian ministry in general. I think that the scope of Paul's statement is the same as the scope of his ministry: it is about Christian ministry in church and mission, and it is about theology and Bible, not secular subjects.

- In a culture where women are finding equality and interchangeability with men, the Gal. 3:28 passage has been taken out of its context and transformed into a statement of near absolute gender equality and interchangeability, while the 1 Tim. 2 passage has been restricted to its context and denied the universal timeless role the text actually calls for by the creation order ground upon which it is based.

- I have only found five ways to allow women to have authority over men in Christian ministry, or to give women a ministry platform to teach Bible or theology to men:

- to say that passages like 1 Tim. 2 are errant, reflecting Paul's chauvinism
- to say that passages like 1 Tim. 2 are outmoded, being meant exclusively for a particular setting
- to say that passages like 1 Tim. 2 are purely Paul's own opinion
- to avoid the issue by holding that the biblical passages are too difficult to interpret
- to avoid the issue by holding that the biblical passages are too divisive or painful to apply properly

- I don't believe that any of those five are true.

- Acts 18:26 (where Priscilla and Aquila taught Apollos) shows that a woman may teach a man in an informal setting that does not carry the authority of God ordained leadership. Priscilla and her teaching, while it was valid and helpful for Apollos, did not bear the official authoritative endorsement of any Christian church or apostolic leadership.

If the New Testament's teachings on this subject are so clear, why is this so difficult to accept?

Although the answer to this question cannot be asserted with as much certainty as the above observations and conclusions about our texts, there seem to be several reasons.

- On this issue, biblical teachings radically conflict with the cultural of much of the western world. No illustrations are needed to demonstrate this.

- Male or female we all need to humbly delight in submission, as the Lord Jesus so thoroughly gloried in submitting to the One that Sent Him.

John 17:1-10, especially verse 4 "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do."

Delighting in the imitation of Christ's humility, delighting in dying to our self as He delighted in the obedience of the Cross, is surely the most difficult calling of a follower of Jesus.

- We can all be tempted to find our identity in position and performance, despite warnings like:

"This is what the LORD says: 'Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,' declares the LORD." - Jer. 9:23-24

"However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." - Luke 10:20

Women may revel in the high status that Jesus gave to the women in His ministry, and all of us should guard our hearts so that ministry and office are not for us sources of contentment or identity. We all need to find our joy and our security worshiping the Lord and in delighting in the Gospel, rather than in our activity, contribution, or performance. Because of Paul's teachings about women in authority over men, this danger readily surfaces for women that would teach or lead men, but it is a real danger for all of His followers.

- Finally, there appears to be a specific burden that all women must carry as a result of the curse. If the conclusions of Susan T. Foh's article entitled "What is the Woman's Desire?" (The Westminster Theological Journal, Spring 1975) are correct, the curse of Genesis 3:16 brings pain in childbirth and a special urge for a woman to control her husband.

Contrary to the usual interpretations of commentators, the desire of the woman in Gen 3:16b does not make the wife (more) submissive to her husband so that he may rule over her. Her desire is to contend with him for leadership in their relationship. This desire is a result of and a just punishment for sin, but it is not God's decreative will for the woman. Consequently, the man must actively seek to rule his wife.

The reasons for preferring this interpretation are:

(1) It is consistent with the context, i.e., it is judgment for sin that the relation between man and woman is made difficult. God's words in Gen 3:16b destroy the harmony of marriage, for the rule of the husband, part of God's original intent for marriage, is not made more tolerable by the wife's desire for her husband, but less tolerable, because she rebels against his leadership and tries to usurp it.

(2) It permits a consistent understanding of תשוקה/*teshuqa* ("desire") in the Old Testament also consistent with its etymology.

(3) It recognizes the parallel between Gen 3:16b and 4:7b. The interpretation of 4:7b is clearer; we know from the context that sin's desire to Cain involves mastery or enslavement and that Cain did not win the battle to rule sin.

(4) It explains the fact that husbands do not rule their wives as a result of God's proclamation in Gen 3:16b. (Further support is implied by the New Testament commands for wives to be submissive to their husbands and the requirements for elders to rule their families.) וְהוּא יִמְשַׁל בָּךְ /*vehu' yimshal bak* ("and he will rule over you") is not an indicative statement, for if God states that something will come to pass, it will. [WTJ 37:3 (Spr 75) p. 383]

Despite the comment in the first sentence of her conclusion, she is joined in her views on the meaning of *teshuqa* ("desire") in Genesis 3:16b by the NET Bible translation, and the NIDOTTE Hebrew lexicon.

Thus submission to male leadership is in direct conflict with the second half of the curse the Lord put upon Eve. That the relevance of this text goes beyond the marriage relationship is clear from the fact that Paul grounds the 1 Timothy 2:12 prohibition in Genesis 3.

Given the difficulty of these teachings, what words of encouragement are there?

The long lists of spiritual gifts given in the New Testament reflect the wide variety of ministries that the Lord does call His people to. In only two narrow and specific areas, that is women in authority over men, and women in formal teaching roles over men, are there prohibitions. There is so much ministry that

needs to happen. The harvest is ripe. The many and varied needs of church and mission are compelling. Let's not be conformed to the world's calling for equality of role, let's be conformed to the humble submission of the Son.

Sharon James' article titled "Roles without Relegation: Recovering Biblical Women's Ministries", which can be found at:

<http://www.cbmw.org.uk/PDF/roles.pdf>

is a very insightful, helpful, and encouraging article.

Perhaps a healthy exercise would be to go through the lists of spiritual gifts in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 and note the wide freedom that a woman has in Christian ministry, and note the narrow and specific areas that are under the 1 Timothy 2 prohibitions. There are many fruit trees in the garden, only one is forbidden! Will women focus on the one forbidden, or delight in the many offered?

I highly recommend *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15* Edited by Andreas J. Köstenberger, Thomas R. Schreiner, and H. Scott Baldwin, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, 1995.

For further reading, The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood's site at <http://www.cbmw.org/> has many excellent articles and book reviews.