

MEN, WOMEN, AND THE EFKS

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Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Theology**

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ABSTRACT

Section 18 of the EFKS Statement of Doctrine, published in 1957, states that Jesus Christ calls ‘men and women’ to a ministry of the word and the sacraments. The objective of this paper is to uncover the intent behind this wording, as perhaps indicative of how the roles of men and women in ministry was understood. A study of the history of the EFKS shows that this phrase was worded with an egalitarian emphasis (ie. equality of men and women in value and roles), but this was found to be contrary with a biblical understanding of men and women’s roles, which is essentially complementarian (ie. male headship; men and women are equal in value but have different roles). The wording of the phrase points to an underlying tension spawned from the time of the EFKS’ inception, subtly taken up by (unofficial) egalitarian and complementarian factions within the EFKS, and more or less continued in the present. As the former position (represented by Samoan liberal theologians) pushes for the elimination of Samoa’s patriarchal system as the key to equality and freedom from male-instigated violence, the latter position (represented by the author) suggests that the tension can be resolved by recognizing that Samoan patriarchy is a distortion of the original pattern of male headship ordained by God at creation, that centres on a *loving authority-willing submission* relationship, that produces true Godly equality between men and women. However, this involves a long-term process of ‘overhauling’, restructuring and redefining concepts, educational approaches and institutional approaches, with the paramount goal of aligning all efforts with Scripture.

DEDICATION

We dedicate this work to the God who is Always.

Lord, bless this work, that it may be to your glory. Amen.

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FAAFETAI, FAAFETAI TELE LAVA. FAAMANUIA LE ATUA.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBE	Christians for Biblical Equality
CBMW	Council for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood
EFKS	Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa
EWC	Evangelical Women's Caucus
LMS	London Missionary Society
MTC	Malua Theological College

INTRODUCTION

Section 18 of the Statement of Doctrine of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (henceforth referred to as the EFKS)¹, titled ‘The Ministry’, details the following:

“We affirm that every Christian believer exercises a ministry to which God calls him, in so much as by his fellowship with God in Christ he becomes the means of conveying the grace of God to other men. Therefore, we affirm that every Christian has the privilege and duty of doing inside and outside the church the special work for which God has given him the gifts. We acknowledge also that Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church, has appointed a ministry of the word and the sacraments. He calls men and women to this ministry. The church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, recognises and chooses those whom he calls, and should ordain them to the work of this ministry.”

This position will be read as highly congenial to today’s Christian religious climate, characterised by growing support for equality amongst men and women in the Church. This is also part of the continuing worldwide advancement of gender equality across all spheres of social, political and economic life.

Nevertheless, this paper envisions potential for the EFKS at this time to address the controversial reality of the gender equality debate in the Church at present, and also therefore to explore how its position might be better informed by a systematic assessment of that reality – something I believe is little afforded by the above paragraph. I deem it unlikely that the authors of the Statement of Doctrine, published in 1957, could have possibly anticipated the onset of a monumental debate between egalitarians and complementarians – a discourse which is today passionately engaged in all over the world, particularly on sensitive issues such as the ordainment of women, male authority, and the link between church and marriage.

More importantly, it is now more than 60 years since the Statement of Doctrine was published. The EFKS is likely aware, now more than ever, of the rising ebbs and flows of an ever-shifting gender frontier, stretched at one end by a kaleidoscope of liberalism, pluralism

¹ Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa

and diversity, gripped at the other by the gauntlet of conservatism and traditionalism. It remains stalwart, observing silently but fastidiously. It recognises how the wider Pacific Church has bravely engaged this frontier in recent years; how the growth of indigenous ‘Christianities’ have led to the development of new theologies, with some island nations having demonstrated more progressiveness in their efforts than others. Denominations of individual island nations have begun to position themselves at opposite poles. For the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa, as it inevitably heads further out into these murky waters itself, I believe it to be crucial that it now endeavours a reaffirmation of its position, both doctrinally and practically.

Objectives

This thesis will assess Section 18 of the EFKS Statement of Doctrine, to obtain some idea of the intention behind the wording, particularly the phrase ‘(Jesus Christ) calls men and women to this ministry....’; whether the authors meant that men and women were to have equal roles in ministry, or distinct roles.

In connection with the above objective, the following measures will be taken:

- A revisiting of Scripture on roles of men and women in church.
- A study of the two theological positions, egalitarianism and complementarianism;
- An overview of the historical development of the EFKS, and factors that likely influenced how the Statement of Doctrine was formed;
- A study of modern Samoan theological and hermeneutical approaches that discuss roles of men and women in ministry.

By reaffirming our spiritual bearings in light of God’s comprehensive and authoritative Word, we will be better informed to discuss and consolidate how the relationship between men and women should be understood and portrayed in our church, for now, and for the future,

above all concurrent with the reality that the guidance of the Spirit does not ultimately subscribe to popular consensus, but to the sovereign will of God. This study is intended to encourage the EFKS to explore and develop further its doctrinal position, for greater Scriptural alignment where necessary, and to reflect the realities and challenges of the modern Church. But perhaps the highest ambition of this exercise is to invoke Scriptural principles towards pursuit and conservation of church unity, not just in light of gender equality, but any issue, global or domestic, with potential to divide and distort. In this way we will be better able to move forward and stay abreast, a church unified in an ever-fragmented world, buoyed with renewed certainty and confidence by the anchor of God's Word.

Thesis Statement

An evaluation will show how Section 18 of the EFKS Statement of Doctrine (specifically in how it relates to the roles of men and women in ministry) was drafted, with regards to wording and intent. The findings of this paper are anticipated to prompt reaffirmation by the EFKS of its doctrinal position on roles of men and women in the Church, and help it to navigate with greater confidence the present landscape on gender and sex roles, not only within the church, but nationally and globally.

Methodology

A Scriptural review was conducted, focusing on 8 passages pertaining to the roles of men and women in ministry (this review is located in Appendix A). A condensation of this review was presented in Chapter 1.

Information (Scripture, books/commentaries, articles, theses/dissertations, and online sources) was gathered with respect to (although not limited to) the following areas: a) The biblical concept of manhood and womanhood, roles of men and women in church; b) A

Samoan theological concept of manhood and womanhood, roles of men and women in church;

c) Various theologies, political and cultural ideologies, including complementarianism, egalitarianism, ecumenism, feminism, biblical feminism, and liberation theology.

A small group of participants were interviewed, who were EFKS members, to discuss the roles of men and women in church ministry, in the context of the EFKS. These participants were selected based on experiential value they were able to contribute to the research.

Thesis Structure

Chapter 1 presents the role of men and women in ministry, from a Scriptural lens. Key passages will be used as points of reference.

Chapter 2 traces how two major theological traditions on roles of men and women in ministry - egalitarianism and complementarianism - developed in opposition to each other. Synopses of their exegetical arguments on key sections of Scripture, including the abovementioned texts, will also be presented.

Chapter 3 looks primarily at the EFKS and the Statement of Doctrine, showing how the roles of men and women have been defined and understood, both historically and at present.

Chapter 4 presents modern Samoan theological developments.

Chapter 5 summarises the findings from Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4. From here I will develop a response to the Thesis Statement, identifying the extent to which it has or has not been met. Then I will present recommendations for moving forward.

CHAPTER ONE

ROLES OF MEN AND WOMEN IN SCRIPTURE

The EFKS Statement of Doctrine was produced by a sub-committee² working under the auspices of a Church Commission, tasked with enquiring into the ‘life and work of the Church.’ The Statement was designed to provide correct teaching on core doctrinal matters, to instruct those seeking church membership, and to assist pastors in the field. The Statement was approved by the General Assembly and published in 1957.³

To grasp how the EFKS prepared Section 18 (‘Ministry’), this chapter will first explore how the Bible portrays men and women in church ministry; whether there is a generic or specific understanding of men’s and women’s roles, and to what extent divine appointment (ie. guidance of the Holy Spirit) guides this understanding. This will inform progression into the following chapters.

Emphasis will be placed on the second half of the ‘Ministry’ paragraph.

[...] We acknowledge also that Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church, has appointed a ministry of the word and the sacraments. He calls men and women to this ministry. The church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, recognises and chooses those whom he calls, and should ordain them to the work of this ministry.

What is meant by a ‘biblical’ portrayal? Who can rightly determine what the ‘Scriptural’ view of something is? For an issue as charged and as convoluted as the roles of men and women in ministry, the pursuit of a universally accepted ‘Scriptural’ position, will be challenging if not impossible. A perspective can be both embraced and opposed, within a more or less immeasurable spectrum for interpretation. Each can utter truth with one breath, and spark

² Sub-committee members: Rev. S.G.F Phillips; Rev. J. Bradshaw; Rev. L.A Brame; Elder Tapeni Ioelu; Pastor K.T. Faletese.

³ S.G.F Phillips, et al. *The Statement of Doctrine of the Samoan Church (LMS)* (Malua: Malua Printing Press, 1957), 2.

controversy with the very next. Regardless of competency, the potential for bias and oversight, for researchers and scholars separating texts from contexts, gerrymandering for the sake of conviction, etc., will be evident more than not. How achievable, then, is a 'biblical' portrayal? I can only trust that each interpretation presented in this paper will be as close as possible to God's original intention, by virtue of majority consensus, from across a wide, diverse range of genuine sources. In addition to established scholars, I will also draw from the works of pastors and ministers who, apart from being published theologians in their own right, have extensive experience in issues concerning men and women in ministry and in the home, by virtue of life dedicated to pastoring, mentoring and counselling. The point to be made is that no one scholar, seminary, publishing press, university or association, man or woman, should be considered as having monopoly over the interpretation of God's word. It can only be hoped that guidance from the Holy Spirit has been sought. As part of this affirmation, each source will be measured against the other, and all held up against the light of God's word. Secondly, in light of Chapter 2, I have purposefully excluded writers and theologians directly affiliated with egalitarianism and complementarianism, from the review in this chapter. Finally, at times when all these measures are inadequate (as will be the case), personal, humble discernment by the guidance of the Spirit must be the inevitable resort.

Passages from the New Testament have been selected based on relevance, ie. they provide insight into the nature of the ministry Christ assigns to his people, differentiation of roles by sex, and the extent to which assignments are divinely inspired.

- 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 Head coverings
- 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 Weighing of prophecies
- 1 Timothy 2:8-15 Prohibitions - public teaching and authority
- 1 Timothy 3.11 Women deacons
- Titus 2:3-5 Christian virtues

Passages relating to the roles of husbands and wives in the family / household setting, will also be discussed. The household was considered the centre of Greco-Roman society, a microcosm of both the church and the state. Because Paul understood that the qualities necessary for service in the church would first be made evident in the home, the home was a key theatre of his campaign.⁴ Furthermore, Paul used *oikos* (house) and *ekklesia* (church) interchangeably (eg. Eph 2.19-20; 1 Tim 3.4-5; 15) indicating his belief in a connection between a person's leadership ability in the home and in the church, and his opposition to viewing the church in terms of static institutionalism⁵. It will be shown that the church and the home were doctrinally organised along similar lines, and that what affected one affected the other.

- Ephesians 5:21-33 The marriage relationship
- Colossians 3.18,19 The marriage relationship
- 1 Peter 3:1-7 Mixed marriage

The review will be guided by two overarching questions: 1. Does Christ call men and women to equal tasks, or differentiated tasks? 2. Does the Scripture indicate the kind of guidance that the Holy Spirit provides, in its calling and ordaining of people for the ministry? In service of these two questions, each of the above 8 passages will be subjected to the following sequence, that frames the content of Section 18:

- What is the context of the passage?
- What does the passage say about roles of men and women?
- Are these roles to be regarded as universally applicable, or contextual?
- Is there indication that the content of the passage is guided by the Holy Spirit?

⁴ Dr Thomas L. Constable, *Dr Constable's notes on Titus* (Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary, 2016), 20.

⁵ William D. Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 788.

A condensed version of the review, focusing on key findings and outcomes, is presented here. The raw data of the review itself is located in Appendix A. The review found that in all 8 passages, men and women are to assume different roles and responsibilities:

1. *What does the passage say about the roles of men and women?*

	MEN / HUSBANDS	WOMEN / WIVES
In church	Lead and have authority in the church, and be exemplary in leadership (1 Cor 11.4; 1 Tim 2.8; 1 Tim 3.2,3,6,7)	Submit to leaders, and be exemplary in submission (1 Cor 14.34,35; 1 Tim 2.11,12)
	Be exemplary in their assigned responsibilities in worship and ministry role (1 Cor 11.4,7; 1 Tim 2.8; 3.8-10,12,13; Tit 2.2,6)	Be exemplary in their assigned responsibilities, in worship and ministry role (1 Cor 11.5; 14.35; 1 Tim 2.9,10; 3.11; 5.9,10; Tit 2.3-5)
In the home	Lead and have authority, particularly in spiritual matters, and be exemplary (1 Cor 14.3,5; 1 Tim 3.4,5,12); 1 Peter 3.7)	Submit to husbands, as is fitting in the Lord (Eph 5.21,22; Col 3.18; 1 Peter 3.1)
	Love their wives as Christ loves the Church (Eph 5.25,28,33; Col 3.19; 1 Peter 3.7)	Be exemplary in assigned responsibilities (1 Tim 2.15; 5.14; 1 Peter 3.2-6)
		‘Fear’ / revere her husband (Eph 5.33)

In the church, authoritative and leadership roles are exclusive to men. In those roles, men are to perform exemplarily, by apostolic standards. In marriage and in the household, men are also to lead and assume authority, particularly in spiritual matters. As fathers and husbands, they are to be exemplary. They are also expressly instructed to *love their wives, as Christ loves the Church*.

In church, women are to submit to leaders, and be exemplary (by apostolic standards) in performing their responsibilities in both worship and ministry. In marriage and in the household, women are to submit to their husbands, *as is fitting in the Lord*; they are also to ‘fear’ / revere their husbands. In their assigned responsibilities they are to be exemplary.

To be ‘exemplary’ means to adhere to the principles of the man-woman relationship as God as specified in the text, primarily the obligation towards loving authority on the part of the man/husband, and willing submission on the part of the woman/wife, of which the outcome is reciprocal love. This behaviour is further defined in the table below; the Greek translations articulate the types of characteristics pertaining to exemplary behaviour, as well as those characteristics that do not. The fact that the same words and word groupings (*hesychia, semnou, diabolous, sophron, agape, hypotasso, phobo, hagas, nephaliou, pistas*) are found across virtually all the passages and contexts, show the unity and consistency of thought and expectation that Paul, Peter and the NT writers had, with regards to roles of men and women, as with all matters central to the church.

2. Are these roles universally applicable, or contextual?

	Contextual role	Universal principle	‘Universal principle’ indicators		
			Ecclesiastical practice	An appeal to divine law	Nature / social propriety
IN THE CHURCH					
1 Cor 11.3-16	Men’s heads uncovered when praying (authoritatively or non-authoritatively) and prophesying	Authority-submission (role distinction by sex)	v.16	v.3, 7,8,9,11,12	v.4, 14
	Women’s heads covered when praying (non-authoritatively) and prophesying	Authority-submission (role distinction by sex)	v.16	v.3,7,8,9,10,11,12	v.5,6,13,15
1 Cor 14.33-35	Women to refrain from weighing prophecies Women to refer inquiries to their husbands at home	Authority-submission (role distinction by sex)	v.33, 34, 36, 40	v.34, 36, 37	v.35
1 Tim 2.8-15	Men to pray ie. to lead prayer authoritatively	Authority-submission (role distinction by sex)	v.8		
	Men to lift holy hands in prayer	Integrity of the church (order in worship)			
	Women to avoid extravagant clothes and hairstyles, but to do good works	Integrity of the church (modesty,	v.10		

		respectability in worship)			
	Women to learn in silence (quiet demeanour, <i>hesychia</i>)	Authority-submission (role distinction)		v.13,14	
	Women not to teach or have authority over men (ie. not to teach overseers, or to teach authoritatively, in a formal church setting)	Authority-submission (role distinction by sex)		v.13,14	
1 Tim 3.11-12	Male deacons: Be serious (<i>semmous</i>), not double tongued (<i>dilogous</i>), not indulging (<i>prosechontas</i>) in much wine, not greedy for money (<i>aischrokerdais</i>); hold fast to the mystery of the faith (<i>echontas mysterion pisteos</i>) with a clear conscience; be married only once, and let them manage their children and their households well'	Integrity of the Church (integrity of office)	v.13		
	Female deacons: 'Serious'(<i>semnas</i>) 'not slanderers' (<i>diabolous</i>) temperate' (<i>nephaliuous</i>) faithful in all things' (<i>pistas</i>)	Integrity of the Church (integrity of office)	v.13		
Titus 2.3-5	Older men: a) sobriety / clear-mindedness (<i>nephaliuous</i>); b) seriousness (<i>semmous</i>); prudence (<i>sophronas</i>), self-control (<i>hygiainontas</i>); d) to be sound in faith (<i>pistei</i>), love (<i>agape</i>) and steadfastness (<i>hypomone</i>) Younger men: be self controlled	Integrity of the Gospel	v.5b	v.1	
	Older women: reverent (<i>ieroprepes</i>) to not be slanderers (<i>diabolous</i>) to not be enslaved to much wine (<i>dedoulomenas</i>); and to teach what is good (<i>kalodidaskalos</i>) Younger women: love their husbands (<i>philandrous</i>); love for children (<i>philoteknos</i>) be sensible...' (<i>sophronas</i>) 'pure' (<i>hagnos</i>) 'workers at home'	Integrity of the Gospel	v.5b	v.1	

	(<i>oikourgos</i>). Be subject to her own husband (<i>hypotassomenas</i>)				
IN THE HOUSEHOLD					
Ephesians 5.21-33	Both men and women: be subject to one another (<i>hypotassomenoi</i>) out of reverence (<i>phobo</i>) for Christ	Marriage is a model of the Christ-church union	v.21		
	Husbands: Love (<i>agapate</i>) your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her, to make her holy by cleansing her with washing of the water by the word, to present the church to himself in splendour without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind – yes, so that she may be holy (<i>hagia</i>) and without blemish'; love (<i>agapan</i>) their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves (<i>agapan</i>) his wife loves himself	Marriage is a model of Christ-church union		v.25-27, 29,30,31,33	vv.28,29
	Wives: Fear her husband (<i>phobetai</i>)	Marriage is a model of the Christ-church union	v.22,23,24	v.23	
Colossians 3.18-19	Husbands love your wives (<i>agapate</i>) and never treat them harshly (do not be embittered towards them)	Authority-submission		Eph 5.25-27, 29,30,31,33	Eph 5.28,29
	Wives: Be subject (<i>hypotassesthe</i>) to your husbands.	Authority-submission	v.18		
1 Peter 3.1-7	Husbands: Show consideration for your wives in your life together' (live with your wives according to the knowledge)	Authority-submission		v.7	v.7
	Wives: accept the authority of your husbands (<i>hypotassemenai</i>), so that even if some of them do not obey the word, they may be won over without a word by their wives' conduct' 'when they see the purity (<i>hagnon</i>) and reverence (<i>phobo</i>) of your lives. Do not adorn yourselves outwardly by	Authority-submission	v.2, v.4, v.5	v.6	v.3

braiding your hair, and by wearing gold ornaments or fine clothing'; rather, let your adornment be the inner self with the lasting beauty of a gentle (<i>praeus</i>) and quiet (<i>hesychiou</i>) spirit which is very precious in God's sight'				
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We see that the roles within a passage are largely induced by the context, or the circumstances inherent in the passage. However, all roles within a passage subscribe to certain Christian principles that transcend context. In short, the roles are contextual, but the principles on which those roles are based are universal. All activities of men and women, in church or in the home, subscribe to one of the following principles:

- Authority and submission;
- Upholding of the integrity of the church;
- Upholding of the integrity of the Gospel;
- Marriage as a model of the Christ-church union.

The universality of these principles are justified with 3 indicators, all or two or one of which are present in each passage. The principles qualify as universal because:

- 1) They are grounded in ecclesiastical practice (ie. specifically, the standard practice established by Paul in the Pauline churches, and to which all churches were to conform to);
- 2) They appeal to divine law, particularly the Torah;
- 3) They appeal to nature, and to social custom / propriety.

3. *Is there indication that the content of the passage is guided by the Holy Spirit?*

From the review it is apparent that the Holy Spirit, as the author and inspirer of Scripture, ordains people for church ministry as follows: *men and women working in partnership, but with positions of leadership and authority reserved for men.*

Specific elements have been outlined in the review. The guidance of the Holy Spirit in determining and facilitating the roles of men and women is: a) *Preservational*: The Holy Spirit is concerned with the safeguarding of the integrity of the Gospel, and of all involved in ministry. Christians in ministry are therefore, by the Spirit's heeding, obliged to be spiritually fortified at all times, against forces that would threaten and oppose the Gospel (1 Cor 11.6; 14.35; 1 Timothy 3; Tit 2.5); b) *Character building*: The Spirit facilitates an ever improving quality of life, ethically and morally, for those in ministry. Scholars recognise that the ability of men and women in ministry to submit to the commands of Scripture (1 Cor 11; 1 Cor 14; 12; 1 Tim 2; Eph 5; Col 3; 1 Peter 3) and to continuously show themselves of upright moral character (1 Tim 3; Tit 2), signifies authentic, spiritual empowerment in Christ. As such, what Paul expected of candidates and inductees of the ministry, was not personality, proficiency or status, but spiritual maturity / maturity of character; c) *Shared*: The spirituality necessary to guide Christian character, is passed down generationally, through mentorship. The age and experience of older members will have led them to a high level of spiritual maturity, which they impart to younger men and women (Titus 2.3,4); d) *Authoritative*: The foundational test of the Holy Spirit's presence in a Christian community is above all, submission and obedience to the will of God, as given in Scripture. For the Pauline churches in particular, this is illustrated by obedience to the apostolic commands. The spirit of God presides over ecclesiastical practice, over divine law, and over laws of physical nature and social conventions; it determines the types of principles within those realms, that all Christians in ministry are to abide by. Furthermore, 'authoritative' is in the sense of the Spirit's pervasiveness. To '*be filled with the Spirit*' (Eph 5.18) is to allow the Holy Spirit to be the controlling influence, motivating and directing the life of the individual /community. As such, all truly Christian behaviour results from being filled with the Spirit, or walking in the Spirit (Gal 5.16); lastly, the guidance of the Spirit is characterised by: e) *Loving Authority – Willing*

Submission, expressed in mutuality: We saw from our study of Ephesians 5.21-33 (pp.159-172) that a core demonstration of being filled with the Spirit is the act of submission (Eph 5.18). In 1 Cor 11.3; 14.34; and 1 Tim 2.11, women are instructed to submit in church (in the former text it is implied). In Eph 5.22; Col 3.18; Tit 2.5 and 1 Peter 3.1, women are instructed to submit to their husbands in the home. Submission is not a surrender of the will, but a woman's / wife's divine calling to honour and affirm the man/husband's leadership (the concept of male authority is explicitly outlined in Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-19; 1 Pet 3:1-7; Tit 2:5; 1 Tim 3:4, 12, and Gen 1-3). It is an inclination to follow, a disposition to yield, willingly and voluntarily, inspired by the Spirit, because her submission is '*as to the Lord*' (Col 3.18), the same way Christ submitted (1 Pet 3.1). Therefore, Christ is the absolute authority and basis for a woman's submission. Furthermore, it is Christ's authority alone that qualifies the man's authority. There are various levels and types of leadership; different kinds of teaching, administration, organisation, ministry, influence and initiative, for which women take responsibility, in the church and in the home. But what is meant by male leadership, is that men bear 'primary responsibility', or responsibility for the overall pattern of life. The central premise for this concept is the fact that God called Adam to account first after the Fall (Gen 3.9). Not that the woman bore no responsibility, but it was the man who bore primary responsibility for their actions, including their sin. In our practical living, however, this becomes modified by the principle of Eph 5.21 ('*be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ*'). The review shows that male authority does not equate to male superiority, unilateral directives, or decision making. In church and home, the man is to provide responsible, loving, sacrificial leadership (Eph 5.21-33). As a husband he must possess the personal insight that begets respect, care and intimacy in all facets of marriage (1 Peter 3.7). He is to establish a nurturing lifestyle of interaction, planning, decision-making and activity, that honours and includes both husband and wife, and the family as a whole. It is servant

leadership ie. the man's leadership is his submission. This is the ideal environment in which a woman voluntarily submits; the relationship then becomes one of mutual love and reciprocity. As the man / husband performs his divinely assigned role, in tune with the Holy Spirit and in reverence for Christ, and as the woman / wife also performs her divinely assigned role, in tune with the Holy Spirit and in reverence for Christ, the authority-submission dynamic is correctly manifested.

4. Common factors:

There were other crucial synergies found in the passages reviewed: 4.1 Link between the church and the home: The belief that the home reflected the state, and what threatened one threatened the other, is rooted in Greek philosophy, and would have influenced Paul. Paul's choice to address ethics in the home would have been based on his assessment of the church situation, especially with relation to emerging movements, which often opposed traditional values in both settings. This was true particularly in Ephesus and Crete; 4.2 Strategic abidance with local custom: The writers (Paul and Peter) showed concern for public respectability, and for maintaining dialogue with the wider society. A code of conduct was instilled to prevent odd or anti-social behaviour, that attracted negative attention. The most succinct expression of this was perhaps Christians' adaptation to legally supported social systems, rather than seeking to subvert them. We see this demonstrated in the overtly submissive nature of the standards given to the deacons in Crete (Tit 2.8-12). or in Paul's concern for the Corinthians speaking in tongues (1 Cor 14:23-5)⁶. However, this adaptation was navigated in such a way that the Christian faith was not compromised. For example, Peter's instruction to women regarding dress (1 Peter 3.3) catered to society because by making dress more uniform, it lessened class distinctions. On the other hand, there was a Christian function. Freeing up the

⁶ Muddiman, Barton, *The Oxford Bible Commentary: The Pauline Epistles*, 119-120.

money that women would have spent on extravagant dress, broadened the basis for generosity Jesus commanded (eg. Matt 6.19-34). The context in 1 Timothy is similar.

This leads us to the question: *Did the EFKS, in the drawing up Section 18 of the Statement of Doctrine, recognise men and women in ministry as performing distinct roles within a framework based on authority-submission?* To answer these questions, it is important to first assess the Samoan historical, social and cultural context, with regards to men and women in church ministry. We must also explore the prominent global, regional and national forces which may have influenced the EFKS context. This will take us into the following chapters. Chapter 2 will discuss two major theological forces behind the modern understanding of men and women's roles in ministry – complementarianism and egalitarianism. Chapter 3 will then look at how roles were understood and practised in Samoa, and specifically the EFKS.

CHAPTER TWO

COMPLEMENTARIANISM AND EGALITARIANISM

This chapter provides a historical overview of the two primary theological concepts - egalitarianism and complementarianism. It will trace key individuals and bodies involved in these traditions, and how each became the primary opponent of the other, in a largely continuing debate over which view of the roles of men and women in ministry, is true(er) to Scripture.

2.1 Egalitarianism

Egalitarianism is a theological view officiated by traditional evangelical feminists⁷ in the late 1980s. The view holds that God created both male and females equal in every way - in spiritual blessing, in standing before God, in value, but also in roles in home and church. The pioneers of egalitarianism were originally part of a larger ‘mother’ organisation dedicated to Christian feminism, the Evangelical Women’s Caucus (EWC), formed in 1974. Differences over homosexuality / lesbianism (and therefore the wider issue of moral authority) came to a head at an EWC conference in Fresno, 1986, resulting in the fracturing of the Caucus into two camps, the progressive and the traditional.⁸ The latter group would separate permanently from the Caucus. In 1987, led by a group of scholars and theologians, it published an egalitarian statement titled ‘Men, Women and Biblical Equality’, supporting women’s full participation in all levels of ministry, as well as mutuality in marriage. The Statement encapsulated the group’s concerns over perceived stifling of women’s gifts in ministry. In 1988 the egalitarians

⁷ Throughout this section, the term ‘egalitarian’ will be used interchangeably with ‘traditional feminist’, or ‘biblical feminist.’

⁸ Following the split, the remaining EWC body became almost exclusively progressive, in their principles and agenda. The traditional feminists, however (CBE), see themselves as having remained within the grounds of standard evangelicalism (Pamela Cochran, *Evangelical Feminism: A History* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 102-103.

set up a national organisation, Christians for Biblical Equality (CBE)⁹. Central to egalitarianism is the biblical view that men and women are both one in Christ, as underscored by Galatians 3.28: *‘There is neither...male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.’* It is by Christ’s redemption that gender distinctions (which egalitarians believe were instilled as *a result of the Fall*) are now removed. Proponents also point to the frequency with which God uses women in Scripture (both Old Testament and New Testament) as part of his redemptive plan¹⁰. Egalitarians profess, like complementarians, a mutual love for and commitment to Christ; commitment to justice as a biblical ideal; devotion to Scripture as being God-inspired; and a desire to see the world embrace the gospel of Christ. However, in church ministry it is believed that men and women have interchangeable roles at all levels, including the role of minister / pastor. With regards to marriage, egalitarians posit that the New Testament teaches mutual submission, and only in marriage, and that the entire New Testament focuses on radical social transformation. The elimination of gender distinctions, then, is part of this transformation.

2.2 Complementarianism

Complementarianism is a conservative theological view held by Christians that men and women have different but complementary roles in religious and family life. Masculinity and femininity are ordained by God. Women are created differently, but equal in God’s image. They are precluded from certain roles and ministries, but are of equal status and worth¹¹ and

⁹ Cochran, *Evangelical Feminism: A History*, 102-103.

¹⁰ ‘What is Complementarianism?’ *The Truth About Church*, 2020, <https://www.compellingtruth.org/complementarianism.html>; Alyssa Roat, *What Are Complementarianism and Egalitarianism? What’s the Difference?* July 5, 2009, https://www.christianity.com/wiki/christian-terms/what-are-complementarianism-and-egalitarianism-what-s-the-difference.html#google_vignette

¹¹ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 17; Raymond Ortlund Jr, ‘Male-Female Equality and Male Headship’, in John Piper, Wayne Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1991), 87-95; Roat, *What’s the Difference?* <http://www.christianity.com>; Sarah Allen, ‘Women in Ministry’, *Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches*, 14 December 2016, <https://fiec.org.uk/resources/what-is-complementarianism>; ‘What is Complementarianism?’ *The Truth About Church*, 2020,

equal in spiritual blessing. When complementarianism is embraced in church and home, God's ministry is furthered, as men and women become stronger and spiritually healthier, and better enabled to reach their God-given potential¹². Complementarianism has its roots in the Protestant mainstream of the United States. In 1987 a group of evangelical scholars and writers, led by John Piper, founded the Council for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood¹³ (CBMW) to champion complementarianism.¹⁴ They protested against the biblical feminist movement for its defending of the view that the Bible opposed unique leadership roles for men in the family and the church; a view the Council believed confused and harmed the Christian community. In 1988 the Council launched the Danvers Statement, setting out its core beliefs. Their efforts helped mould complementarianism into a staple theological concept by the mid-1980s. In 1991 Piper, together with Wayne Grudem, published a collection of articles on gender roles titled 'Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, which won *Christianity Today's* Book of the Year award in 1992. By 1997, complementarianism had permeated the evangelical landscape, accepted by some churches as essential, 'first tier' doctrine. The Southern Baptist Convention (America's largest Protestant denomination) incorporated complementarian principles into their confessional statement¹⁵. The heart of complementarianism is: a) Genesis 1.26-27 (God created humanity, male and female, in his own image), and; b) Genesis 2.18, which contains the further detail that God created Eve

<https://www.compellingtruth.org/complementarianism.html>

¹² 'What is Complementarianism?' *The Truth About Church*, <https://www.compellingtruth.org>

¹³ The goal of the Council is to influence evangelicals to adopt the principles of complementarianism in homes, churches, schools and other religious agencies (Cochran, *Evangelical Feminism: A History*, 160).

¹⁴ It was this group, which also included Wayne Grudem and Susan Foh, that coined the term 'complementarianism' (The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, *Our History*, <https://cbmw.org/about/history/>). The terms 'traditionalist' or 'hierarchicalist' are usually avoided. The former implies an unwillingness to let Scripture challenge traditional patterns of behavior; the latter overemphasizes structured authority while giving no suggestion of equality or mutual interdependence inherent in complementarianism. The term complementarian suggests both equality and beneficial differences (Ortlund Jr., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 11).

¹⁵ Denominations that tend to lean towards complementarianism include Southern Baptist, Roman Catholic, some Lutheran, some Mennonite, some Presbyterian, and Reformed. Individual sub-denominations and churches may differ; positions of denominations also sometimes change (Roat, *What's the Difference?* <http://www.christianity.com>)

specifically to complement Adam ('I will make a helper suitable for him.')

¹⁶ It is this axis of hierarchy and equality, the authority-submission dynamic, that is upheld and developed in the New Testament through various passages on both hierarchy (eg. 1 Tim 2.12; Eph 5.22; Col 3.18) and equality (eg. Gal 3.28; 1 Peter 3.7). On a functional level, complementarianism is characterized by: a) the belief that only men should hold church leadership positions; women may hold positions that do not place them in authority over men; b) a patriarchal view of the family, with the father as the head; the view that a man should love his wife as Christ loved the church, and a woman should submit to her husband as the church submits to Christ¹⁷. With regards to marriage and the home, complementarians consider Ephesians 5.21-33 a key passage. As the husband leads in the home ie. providing for, nurturing and serving his family; and as the wife willingly follows her husband's leadership, helping in the management of the household and the nurturing of the family, and as the two complement each other in this way, then marriage becomes a picture of the relationship between Christ and the church. In the church, men and women have equal access to the spiritual blessings of salvation. However, men are to bear responsibility for providing spiritual leadership and training. Women are to exercise spiritual gifts and worship as Scripture directs, recognising that certain governing and teaching roles in the church are restricted to men (1 Cor 14.33-38; 11.2-16; 1 Tim 2.11-15; 1 Tim 3.1-7). As such, the views of complementarians on roles of men and women in ministry, are very much aligned with the Scriptural view outlined in Chapter 1.

2.3 Interpretations of Scriptural text

The body of literature produced in the names of both complementarianism and egalitarianism, is extensive. I will therefore provide synopses of the exegetical arguments

¹⁶ 'What is Complementarianism?' *The Truth About Church*, <https://www.compellingtruth.org>; Ashley Evans, 'Egalitarianism vs Complementarianism', Bible Reasons, Jul 27, 2023, <https://biblereasons.com/egalitarianism-vs-complementarianism/>

¹⁷ Roat, What's the Difference? <http://www.christianity.com>

made, on what I consider to be the most significant sections of Scripture, by virtue of their being the most contested (4 of which were discussed in Chapter 1):

- Genesis 1,2,3
- Galatians 3.28
- 1 Corinthians 11.3-16
- 1 Corinthians 14.33-35
- 1 Timothy 2.8-15
- Ephesians 5.21-33

2.3.1 Genesis 1,2,3

The first 3 chapters of the book of Genesis are considered by complementarians as the foundation on which their collective position regarding role differentiation, as well as the concept of authority-submission, is based. It is the source from which the various expressions of these concepts in the New Testament writings (including the passages reviewed) receive their justification (1 Cor 11.7-9,11,12; 1 Cor 14.35; Eph 5.31; 1 Tim 2.13-15). As such, it is to Genesis that the egalitarians appear to direct most of their attention, making Genesis the epicentre of the debate over men's and women's roles.

2.3.1.1 Egalitarians: The primary contention is that it is nowhere specifically stated in the texts of Gen 1 and 2, that man was created to assume headship / authority over the woman. Gen 1 indicates that God intended both man and woman to rule as equals. The headship of man only becomes apparent after the Fall. It was not God's divine intent; it is a product of sin¹⁸. The specific features of Gen 2.18-23 cannot be taken therefore as indicators

¹⁸ Rebecca Groothuis, *Good News for Women: A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997) 21.

of male headship; they are merely consequences, implications of man having been created first. They do not suggest a God-ordained hierarchy. a) *for* the man? – The word ‘helper’ (*ezer*) is frequently used of God in the Old Testament. God is ‘helper’ to his people, but that certainly does not make Him subordinate to them. ‘*Helper*’ should indicate superior status, if anything. At any rate it should not be used to justify subordination of women. *Kenegdo* (‘suitable’) is recognised as a modifier, indicating that the woman is fitting, stands equal, or stands superior to the man¹⁹; b) *from* the man? – Derivation of Eve from Adam does not determine authority and subordination. Unlike Adam, Eve was made out of already existing human flesh; she is humanity twice refined. Again, she is at least equal to Adam, if not superior to him²⁰. c) *after* the man? – Adam’s prior existence does not determine authority and subordination, otherwise God would have had to ordain the animals to rule over Adam²¹; d) *named by* the man? – Gen 2.23 does not follow the distinctive formula for the act of naming in Genesis, where the verb *qarah* (‘to call’) is followed by a noun, *shem* (‘to name’). For example, man *names the animals*, 2.19-20; man *names Eve*, 3.20; God gives the 2 humans the collective *name Adam*, 5.2; other instances appear in 4.17,24,26; 5.3,29;11.9. But Gen 2.23, however, does not follow the formula, since *shem* doesn’t appear²².

2.3.1.2 *Complementarians*: Central to the complementarian debate is the ‘authority-submission’ relationship of man and woman. This relationship is paradoxical - it is both equal and different; both mutual and hierarchical. Both dimensions are present within each of the

¹⁹ Aida Spencer, *Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989), 25.

²⁰ Gilbert Bilzekian, *Beyond Sex Roles: What the Bible Says About a Woman’s Place in Church and Family* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 185.

²¹ Brett also observes that if derivation makes man superior to the woman, then the land is superior to the man, because man was taken from soil (Mark Brett, *Genesis: Procreation and the Politics of Identity*, London: Routledge, 2000) 30-31).

²² Bilzekian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, 210; Groothuis, *Good News for Women*, 128-129.

first 3 chapters of Genesis, indicating that this type of relationship was intended by God as part of his divine order of creation:

i) Genesis 1: An ‘equality’ dimension is reflected in Genesis 1.27: ‘*So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*’ In Gen 1.28, both Adam and Eve are told to rule over creation. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of the status of the singular man as ‘*not good*’ in 2.18, with the ‘*very good*’ status of man and woman together in 1.31, indicates that the existence, purpose and worth of the one was not considered by God to be whole without the other. This does not imply, however, that Adam and Eve were to rule in the same way. For example, to ‘*be fruitful and multiply*’ does not indicate equality of function. Eve alone would have the role of bearing children.

ii) Genesis 2: All of the details from Gen 2 (eg. the forming of man of the ‘*dust from the ground*’ and breathing into man the ‘*breath of life*’ (v.7), his responsibility to work and keep the garden (v.15), to respect the prohibition regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and to name the animals; the creating of Eve from Adam’s side), complement the story of Gen 1, and suggest a measure of authority and leadership that was assigned to Adam from the beginning of creation.²³: a) *for* the man - The reference to God as ‘*helper*’ does not imply authority, rank, or divinity when ‘*helper*’ is applied to a person - only that a ‘*helper*’ is a person who helps, in the manner as a given context dictates. When studying Gen 2.18, a common oversight is to focus on the word ‘*helper*’ (which by itself is baseless) and not on the relationship implicit in the phrase ‘*for him*’ - ‘I will make *for him* a helper fit for him.’²⁴ This

²³ Grudem and Carter gives 11 further arguments (from Gen 1 and 2) for male headship before the Fall, which are reaffirmed by New Testament writers (Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 42; Micah Carter, *An Evangelical Analysis and Critique of Feminist Christology* (Louisville: Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008), 250.

²⁴ The NRSV Bible reads, ‘I will make him a helper as his partner’ (Gen 2.18). However, a more accurate reading would be: ‘I will make *for him* (Hebrew *le-*) a helper fit for him.’

was Paul's emphasis in 1 Cor 11.9: 'Neither was man created for woman, but woman *for* man.' This provides a much fuller perspective from which to understand *kenegdo* ('suitable', 'fit'). We see that, in this same sentence, God does not intend the woman 'helper' to be inferior to man, but a helper fit for him (corresponding to him, equal, adequate to him). Eve was created a 'helper' who differed from Adam, but in ways that would complement who Adam was. In this sense, she was also Adam's equal²⁵; b) *from* the man - The derivation of woman from man has significant implications for Paul. In 1 Cor 11.8 he says '*For man was not made from woman, but woman from man*' to justify his instructions for wives to wear head coverings (which, for the church at Corinth, was a sign of submission to husbands). The complementarian belief is here reiterated that Adam and Eve were equal and different, as all men and women are both equal and different. Derivation does imply Adam and Eve were equal in nature and worth, as in their standing before God as his image. But just as they were physically different, they were also different in the roles they performed in their relationship; c) *after* the man - Authoritative relationships between humans, are only with humans, and not with animals. We see from Gen 1.28²⁶ that man and woman were given dominion over the animal kingdom, even though the animals were made before them. What is significant here is that it must not be taken as an absolute rule, that authority belongs to things created first. It is a limited principle. This is also the case in the later OT narratives, when the principle of primogeniture (leadership in a family passed on to the firstborn son) is applied. It only applies to the firstborn son, not the firstborn daughter. It applies within each family, not to children born earlier in neighbouring families. And it does not apply to animals born in the household before the children. As primogeniture is applied as a limited principle within human families, so it is applied that way to the story of Adam and Eve. This is the way Paul framed it when he

²⁵ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 37.

²⁶ Gen 1.28: '...and God said to (Adam and Eve), "...fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

said, *'For Adam was formed first, then Eve.'*²⁷ Paul was not endorsing primogeniture in all its details; he was only using it as a basis for his logic (as a social practice of the day that his readers would easily grasp): As the firstborn male is assumed leader of the family in his generation, so Adam was leader, as the firstborn in his generation²⁸; d) *named by the man* - Gen 1 and 2 present a pattern of naming in which *qara* ('to call') is used prominently, and in which Gen 2.23 has no trouble fitting: *'God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night' (1.5); 'And God called the expanse Heaven' (1.8); 'God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas' (1.10); 'So out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens 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' (2.19); 'The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field' (2.20).* The verb *qara* is used in each of these verses – as God demonstrated his sovereignty over the different elements by naming them, so Adam demonstrated his authority over the animal kingdom by naming every creature. When Adam said *'she shall be called Woman,'* this would easily have been detected by the original audience as a continuation of the pattern, where one who has authority has the ability to assign a name (Gen 4:25, 26; 5:3, 29; 16:15; 19:37, 38; 21:3). Again *qara* is used in each of these texts. So when Adam names his wife 'Woman,' it signifies a degree of authority given him by God, which Eve did not have with respect to her husband²⁹.

(iii) Genesis 3: the abovementioned notion of man appointed as spiritual leader (2.17), is here reinforced (vv.9-11). The command prohibiting the fruit of the tree from being eaten, was twice given exclusively to Adam (vv.11,17). So although both Adam and Eve sinned,

²⁷ Stott, *The Bible Speaks Today: The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus*, 75.

²⁸ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 68.

²⁹ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 33.

Adam had ‘primary responsibility’. He alone was held accountable, not only on behalf of Eve, but the entire human race. Eve is not directly addressed by God for violating the command not to eat the fruit of the tree; Adam is confronted for listening to the voice of his wife, signifying an unauthorised reversal of leadership roles, of which Adam is ultimately responsible.

2.3.2 Galatians 3.28

2.3.2.1 Egalitarians: Galatians 3.28 is, by and large, the flagship text of the egalitarian cause³⁰: ‘*There is no longer Jew nor Greek, there is no longer slave nor free, there is no longer male nor female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.*’ One of the most encompassing treatments of this text, from a traditional feminist position, is offered by Rebecca Groothuis in her 1994 publication, ‘Good News for Women.’ For egalitarians, Galatians 3.28 acknowledges the fundamental spiritual equality of all people. As we are all ‘one’, gender, race or social class are irrelevant; there is full equality in the Kingdom of God. This includes equality of gifts, equality of authority and responsibility in the church and in the home, of opportunity for spiritual ministry, and of access to knowledge of God’s will³¹. For complementarians, spiritual equality means equal access to spiritual blessings and standing before God, but there remains, however, distinct roles and functions between men and women. This distinction reflects a universal principle of female subordination to male spiritual authority, that is evidenced elsewhere in the New Testament. For Groothuis, such a position is ambiguous, misleading and overall erroneous. Role distinction merely camouflages female subordination, as well as the logic that must naturally follow – that men are more like God, and more spiritually capable of accessing God directly. No matter how sound an argument,

³⁰ Galatians 3:28 is the *locus classicus* of the egalitarian position (Carter, *An Evangelical Analysis and Critique of Feminist Christology*, 160.)

³¹ Groothuis, *Good News for Women*, 31.

superiority and inferiority statuses will continue to be inherent for males and females, respectively. The fact that complementarians will use the Trinity as a model for the women's subordination (ie. Jesus was subordinate to the Father) is again considered unreasonable, particularly as it ignores the fact that Jesus' subordination to the Father was functional, not ontological, ie. Jesus relinquished some divine privileges only during his earthly life, but he was not subordinate for all time. The heart of the contention, ultimately, is that role distinctions violate the fundamental, spiritual equality of men and women in Christ. Such a gross oversight has drastic consequences for the Christian community. These consequences include the following: a) Gender hierarchies and role distinctions lead to social structures that are essentially authoritarian and oppressive, or that resemble those segregated by class, or caste; b) Divine ordainment of male authority implies the imputing of gender to God - a heretical practice that has roots in, and that fosters, paganism. In response to a masculinised god, women will be forced to resort to a feminine mother goddess. Masculinity of god, therefore, is 'a theological dilemma that is resolved only when spirituality is de-spiritualised and god desexualised, ie. god must be reflected not through sexuality but through spiritual nature and moral consciousness'; c) The complementarian concept of sexual identity being parallel to personal identity, is the same logic used by the homosexual community; d) The installing of man as God's representative and leader in church and home, draws parallels with the Catholic priesthood, and elevates male leaders and husbands to the status of 'priest' – which is basically a third category of humanity.³²

2.3.2.2 *Complementarians:* The following (corresponding) responses from complementarians insist that the concerns listed above are misguided: a) The Bible assigns roles of men and women not because of who their parents are (as in a caste system) but their

³² Groothuis, *Good News for Women*, 116.

gender. One system is evil and dehumanising, the result of sin; the other is good and intended by God for our blessing³³; b) Oliver Crisp sees human nature not as abstract, but concrete; it includes a soul and body, and by definition, a gender. By extension there is no such thing as ‘genderless’; God incarnate necessarily assumed a gender. Further affirmation that God’s maleness is a theological necessity, is that most of the major creeds of Christianity indicate that Jesus was eternally begotten; he existed as the ‘Son’ of the ‘Father’ before Creation. Bruce Ware says, ‘For reasons ranging from the nature of the Trinity itself, to his role as the second Adam, the seed of Abraham, the Son of David, the Son of Man, and the Son of God, Jesus simply had to be a man.’ God’s maleness is not detrimental to women, nor meant to drive women away. A male Messiah actually secures the promises of salvation and offers good news for all, including women. Ware says: ‘Women need not fear that since Christ did not come as a woman he cannot understand them, because in coming as a man, he came as a human being.....Christ the man shared our (common) human nature.... have full confidence that he understands our plight (e.g., Heb 2:18; 4:15-16). Christ the man, yes. But, Christ in the human nature of every man and woman, also, yes.’³⁴ Moreover, the alleged ‘paganism’ of God is perhaps derived from the feminist derogation of the theology of the Cross, in which God is ‘pleased to bruise his Son’ (Isaiah 53.10), as if drawing some sadistic thrill from Jesus’ suffering; c) Gender / sex orientation is both a physical and theological fact; humans are genetically predisposed to be either men or women. There is no scientific evidence, however, nor is there theological warrant, of the same for homosexuals. Scripture establishes sex orientation as part of God’s divine order. Scripture forbids homosexuality (see Rom 1:26–27; 1 Cor 6:9; 1 Tim 1:10); d) Scripture points to a ‘priesthood of all believers’ in which all Christians are involved in Christian ministry. The differentiation of roles of men and women

³³ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 445.

³⁴ Carter, *An Evangelical Analysis and Critique of Feminist Christology*, 96.

is purely functional. It is based not on status, or on a sense of superiority or inferiority, but on God's sovereign will.

To say that we are 'one' means that we are all parts of one body in Christ, sharing equal value and dignity – not that gender and other distinctions have been abolished (a Jew in Christ is still a Jew, as is a woman in Christ). As parts of one body we have different functions, but we have unity in goal (Christ). The fact that the New Testament continues to issue different instructions with regards to men and women's conduct and responsibilities, is further confirmation that role distinctions are not abolished by Gal 3.28³⁵. For complementarians, men and women are equal in value, honour, personhood, importance, in bearing the image of God, and in importance God's sight. But there are differences in authority. Equality doesn't mean we all have to be the same in every way, or have the same role. This teaching is outlined in 1 Cor 12.21-27. There is a subordination, not in being, but in function. Functions are merely 'different', there is no sense of 'inferiority' or 'superiority.'³⁶

The egalitarian opposition to inequality of roles on the basis of sex, overlooks the fact that the term 'equal' has different meanings. Even Groothuis herself specifies 'equality' 4 ways: ability, maturity, status, social value³⁷. Groothuis' argument stems from a (mis)interpretation of subordination that means lesser value. It follows that for women to be defined as being of lesser value is tantamount to an injustice, as this is an inaccurate assessment of a woman's capability and skill by which, in many situations, she is clearly able to trump the man. But in church and in the home, God assigns roles not by ability, but simply *by one being a man, and one being a woman*. Grudem observes this same divine, mysterious 'arbitrariness' in God's appointment of the Levites to be priests, or of the Jews to be his

³⁵ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 186.

³⁶ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 450-451. Goldberg perceives that a general judgment of superiority or inferiority only has subjective value. The statement that men are superior in general or that the United States is superior in general, must be subjected to a subjectively select a set of criteria, and is therefore not scientifically objective (Goldberg, *The Inevitability of Patriarchy*, 19.)

³⁷ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 450.

people. We even perceive God's eternal authority over the Son and the Spirit, to be due not to greater ability, but simply on his being the Father. The sense is that we must ultimately accept that it is beyond us to judge whether or not God's appointments (as Scripture gives testimony to) are just, or fair or appropriate, as these are wholly borne by God in his sovereignty³⁸.

Contrary to the egalitarian position, Scripture shows that when Christ returned to heaven, he was still subordinate to the Father, as he had been on earth: a) Many passages reveal that Jesus sat down at the 'right hand' of the Father³⁹, an act which for the ancient world denoted one who, in authority, was second only to the King; b) Passages also reveal that in heaven Christ intercedes for his people, ie. brings requests to the Father on behalf of his people (Rom 8.34; Heb 7.25). This is an action appropriate for a relationship in which the Father has authority over the Son. Jesus was equal to God in being, value, honour and personhood, but was subject to the Father in authority and role; c) 1 Cor 15 says that at the end of time when Christ has put all his enemies under his feet (v.25) and death, the last enemy, has been destroyed (v.26), Christ will deliver the kingdom to God the Father, marking the beginning of an eternal state in which the Son will be subjected to the one who put all things in subjection under him, so that God may be all in all (v.28). As the Son and the Father existed before the foundation of the world, and as the Son was subject to the Father before creation, and during his time on earth, and when he ascended to heaven to the right hand of God, as intercessor, so the Son will be subordinate to the Father *forever*. Not in being or personhood, but in role and authority⁴⁰.

³⁸ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 443.

³⁹ Heb 1.3,13; 8.1; 10.12,13; 12.2; Matt 20.21,23; 22.44; 26.64; Mark 14.62; Luke 22.69; Acts 2.33; 5.31; 7.55,56; Romans 8.34; Eph 1.20; Col 3.1; Psalms 45.9; 110.1; 1 Peter 3.22

⁴⁰ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 440-441.

2.3.3 1 Corinthians 11.3-16

2.3.3.1 *Egalitarians*: The major point of contention in this passage is over the term ‘head’ (*kephale*) (v.3). Egalitarians translate *kephale* as meaning ‘source’, not ‘authority over.’ Since man is merely the ‘source’ from which woman originates, and not the ‘authority’ of the woman, any notion of subordination is disqualified. This affirms women’s liberty to prophesy, and to lead in prophecy (prophecy being considered equal to spirit-inspired teaching).⁴¹

2.3.3.2 *Complementarians*: In more than 50 contexts in which it is used, *kephale* refers to people who have authority over others of whom they are the ‘head.’⁴² It never means ‘source’, or source without authority. Grudem observes that to date there is still no citation of any text in ancient Greek literature that supports *kephale* as meaning ‘source without authority.’⁴³ As of 2004, all standard lexicons for ancient Greek define *kephale* as meaning ‘person in authority over’, or something similar, but none give the definition of ‘source.’⁴⁴ The complementarian view is that prophecy and teaching are not the same tasks; the New Testament always views them as separate gifts (Rom 12:6–7; 1 Cor 12:28–29; Eph 4:11). Teaching is explaining /applying Scripture or apostolic teachings, whereas prophecy is the reporting something that is spontaneously inspired by God in mind (1 Cor 14.25; 30-31). It is likely that all New Testament prophecy was prompted in this manner (Acts 11.28; 21.4,10-11; John 11.51). No prophecy in a NT context is described as interpreting or applying Scripture. On the other hand, no teaching (*didaskalia*, *didache*), or act done by a ‘teacher’

⁴¹ This is based on a study by David Hill (CBE International, *Complementarian Theology in Crisis*, 3 September 2018, <https://www.cbeinternational.org/resource/complementarian-theology-crisis/>)

⁴² Some examples are given: 2 Sam 22.44; Psalms 18.43; 1 Kings 8.11; Judges 11.11; Isaiah 7.9; Eph 1.22; 5.23; ⁴³ Neither do the lexicons or ancient citations refer to ‘pre-eminent one’ as an exclusive meaning of *kephale* (Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 210-211.)

⁴⁴ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 207. Some primary examples: a) ‘Bauer-Danker-Arndt-Ginrich Greek-English Lexicon’ (BDAG): ‘in the case of living beings, to denote superior rank’; b) Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains edited by J. Louw and E. Nida: ‘one who is of supreme or preeminent status, in view of authority to order or command’ – ‘one who is head of, one who is superior to, one who is supreme over’; c) Lampe’s Patristic Greek Lexicon; d) Liddell-Scott Greek-English Lexicon (Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 551-552.)

(*didaskalos*), or act of teaching (*didasko*) is said to be based on a ‘revelation.’ Teaching is explaining / applying Scripture, as in the following texts: Acts 15.35; 18.11; Heb 5.12; 2 Tim 3.16; 1 Tim 4.11; 6.2). ‘Teaching’ in the NT epistles strongly corresponds to modern ‘Bible teaching.’ Furthermore, prophecy is subject to the governing authority of the elders or pastors of the church⁴⁵. So if prophecy isn’t the same / doesn’t carry the same authority as teaching, Paul allowing women to prophesy but not to teach, makes sense. As does his instruction that women could prophesy but not speak out / judge prophecies in church, as judging of prophecies would be assuming of governing authority over a congregation.⁴⁶

2.3.4 1 Corinthians 14.33-35

2.3.4.1 *Egalitarians*: The complementarian endorsement of male headship and prohibiting of women from speaking in church in any way, ignores the immediately preceding verse in which praying and prophesying of women are specifically permitted. It is more likely that Paul is forbidding women from asking disruptive questions in the house churches, thus the reprimand for women to ‘ask their husbands at home.’⁴⁷ Payne’s evidence for the omission of 1 Cor 14.33-35 from the earliest written manuscripts, suggests that 1 Cor 14.33-35 was a redaction⁴⁸. This claim is supported by Fee, where some ancient manuscripts show these verses at the end of chapter 14. For this reason they are considered not part of the original text, but an early marginal gloss.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 230.

⁴⁶ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 67. Tertullian (c. 160/170–c. 215/220) wrote that women could prophesy but not teach: ‘In precisely the same manner, when enjoining on women silence in the church, that they speak not for the mere sake of learning (although that even they have the right of prophesying, he has already shown when he covers the woman that prophesies with a veil), he goes to the law for his sanction that woman should be under obedience.’ He also wrote, ‘It is not permitted to a woman to speak in the church; but neither [is it permitted her to teach, nor to baptize.]’ Thus the recognition of women’s right to prophesy but not to teach, was understood from very early in the church’s history (Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 231).

⁴⁷ Carl Trueman, ‘Complementarian Theology in Crisis’, *Eyes to See and Ears to Hear*; 2018, <https://www.cbeinternational.org>

⁴⁸ Trueman, *Complementarian Theology in Crisis*, *Eyes to See and Ears to Hear*.

⁴⁹ Groothuis, *Good News for Women*, 205.

2.3.4.2 *Complementarians*: Grudem considers it unlikely that the early Christians, many of whom met in house churches, would have differentiated home fellowships and assembled church meetings. It is also doubtful that the Corinthians ever would have imagined that 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 referred to meetings in homes, when verses 17–34 speak of observing the Lord’s Supper in a larger church gathering. Finally, this view would lead to the repressive situation where women would have no warrant even to pray aloud in an assembled congregation⁵⁰. Of the thousands of ancient NT manuscripts currently available, there is not one in which vv.33-35 are *absent*. There are a number of western manuscripts in which these verses are positioned after v.40, but these manuscripts have been found to be unreliable. The United Bible Societies’ fourth edition of the Greek New Testament gives vv.33-35 a ‘B’ rating, indicating that it is ‘almost certain.’ Fee’s observation that these verses are ‘not binding for Christians’ is extreme, given that not one manuscript omits these verses. Noticing Fee’s particular inability to reconcile these verses with 1 Cor 11.3-16, Grudem opines that Fee, wary of these verses’ emphasis on male governance, uses scholarly procedures in order to evade the requirement to submit to Scriptural authority⁵¹.

2.3.5 1 Timothy 2.8-15

2.3.5.1 *Egalitarians*: The traditional position on 1 Timothy 2.8-15 is questioned by the egalitarians, as follows: a) To state that this text affirms the universality of subordination of women to the spiritual authority of men, goes against the principle of spiritual equality of all believers, and ignores the Bible’s references to women that have served in authoritative ministries. Though vv.11,12 specifically restrict women’s authority to teach, the text is too exegetically ambivalent to insist, as complementarians do, that this is a universal restriction.

⁵⁰ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 234.

⁵¹ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 238.

Likewise, with vv.13,14 – Paul is not saying that the deception of women stems not from any hierarchical social order established before the Fall. When critically interpreted, this passage refers more to situational circumstances affecting the Ephesian church at the time of writing, namely heresy and false teaching. Thus the deception of women is not normative, neither is the prohibition on them to not teach or have authority; b) The word *authentēin* (‘authority’) must not be understood as a neutral authority, but a domineering, abusive authority⁵², ie. women may teach men, but not in an abusive manner.

2.3.5.2 *Complementarians*: a) Paul does not mention false teaching as a reason for his command. He does not say, ‘I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet, for some are teaching false doctrine at Ephesus.’ Paul provides a specific reason in the Creation order: *‘For Adam was formed first, then Eve.’* Caution must be exercised in accepting a position based on a reason Paul does not give, especially when it minimizes or ignores the reason Paul does give.⁵³ The egalitarian claim appears to substitute a cultural perspective for the statement of Scripture. Paul does not point to women being susceptible to deception in the first century; he is talking about Adam and Eve. Furthermore, he says women should not ‘teach’ or ‘exercise authority over a man’ because ‘Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor’ (vv.12–14). That statement is true of Eve in relation to Adam, and it is one that complementarians believe has universal significance for women and men in ministry⁵⁴; b) The word *authentēin* (‘authority’) does not mean domineering, abusive authority, but authority in the positive sense. Complementarians subscribe to the majority view of scholars on this issue (see the section on 1 Tim 2.8-15 of the Chapter 1 Scriptural review (pp.146-155)).

⁵² Trueman, *Complementarian Theology in Crisis*, *Eyes to See and Ears to Hear*; Groothuis, *Good News for Women*, 227.

⁵³ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 288.

⁵⁴ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 297.

2.3.6 Ephesians 5.21-33

2.3.6.1 *Egalitarians*: To insist that headship means leadership, is to deny the wife the freedom to mature, spiritually, emotionally and intellectually, if she is treated as a child who needs to have her decisions made for her by someone else. ‘Headship’ in this passage refers to a husband and wife participating equally in decision making. Where there is mutual love and respect, the equalising of marriage tends to occur. Hierarchy on the other hand, stunts a husband’s sanctification and character growth. A husband must learn by submitting, not by being required to have all the right answers and all the final decisions⁵⁵.

2.3.6.2 *Complementarians*: Mutual concern, or ‘mutual submission,’ in the sense of being considerate and caring for one another, is found in John 13.34 (‘*love one another*’) and Philippians 2.3-4 (‘*...in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also the interests of others.*’) Note that the words ‘be subject’ are never applied in this type of context, so Eph 5.21 cannot therefore be seen as having a similar meaning. Egalitarians invalidate or nullify male in marriage, by claiming that Eph 5.21 is similar to the above texts. Complementarians make the following points with regards to this passage: a) In some contexts in Scripture, the words ‘one another’ (*allelon*) mean ‘everyone to everyone,’ (John 13.34), in others they mean ‘some to others’ (1 Cor 11.33; Gal 6.2; Rev 6.4; Matt 24.10; Luke 2.15; 12.1; 24.32).⁵⁶ The King James Bible’s pattern of translation for these passages (eg. 1 Cor 11.33, ‘*...tarry (wait) for one another*’), is also reflected in its translation of Eph 5.21, ‘*...submitting yourselves one to another*’, which is the same sense as ‘some be subject to others’, because of the inclusion of the word *hypotasso*.

⁵⁵ Groothuis, *Good News for Women*, 79.

⁵⁶ ‘One another’ indicates that *everybody* in a group does something to *everybody else*, reciprocally (eg. love one another), but it can also indicate that only *some people* in the group do something to passive *others* in the group (eg. kill one another, ie. some are killing, others are being killed). So just as in the English language ‘one another’ can apply for both senses, so *allelon* equally applies for both senses, in the Greek language (Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 198).

Hypotasso always indicates submission that is one-directional, never reciprocal (see below). So v.21 should be paraphrased as meaning, ‘...be subject to those in the church / family in positions of authority over you’; b) The meaning of v.21 is explained by the following verses; wives are to be subject to their husbands (vv.22,23), children to their parents (6.1-3), slaves to their masters. The direction of these relationships is never reversed. Husbands are never, in this passage or in any text of Scripture, told to be subject to their wives. For parents to be subject to children would nullify parental authority. ‘Mutual submission’ in the context of Eph 5.21-33 is not a vague concept where each is considerate of everyone else. People are not to generally be subject to each other. Depicted here is a specific kind of submission to a specific kind of authority, eg. the wife is subject to the authority of ‘her own husband.’ However, there are guidelines for those in authority, by which they are to regulate the use of authority; husbands are to love their wives; parents are not to provoke their children to anger (6.4); masters are to give up threatening their servants and to remember they too serve Christ (Eph 6:9). What is thought to be mutual submission, is in fact no mutual submission - only submission to authority, and regulated use of authority; c) Furthermore, wives are to submit as the church submits to Christ (v.24). This is not mutual submission, because Christ cannot be, and never will be, subject to us⁵⁷; d) Whenever the word *hypotasso* is applied to a relationship in Scripture, it always means a one-directional submission to an authority.⁵⁸ An alternative application (such as ‘to defer to,’ or ‘to be considerate of,’) inside or outside the New Testament, or in any Greek lexicon, or in ancient Greek literature, Christian or non-Christian, is yet to be found. The abovementioned passages, John 13.34 and Philippians 2.3,4, do not contain *hypotasso*. Because *hypotasso* was such a widespread, clear and non-ambivalent term for the readership of Paul’s day, they could instantaneously recognise Eph

⁵⁷ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 191.

⁵⁸ Examples of *hypotasso*, ‘submission to authority’: Luke 2:51; 10:17; Rom 13:1, 5; Tit 2.5,9; 3:1; 1 Pet 2:13,18; 3.5,22; 5.25; 1 Cor 15.27,28; Eph 1.22; 5.22, 24; Col 3.18; Heb 12.9; James 4.7.

5.21 not as meaning the mutual concern of one for the other, but submission of one to the other ⁵⁹; e) Col 3.18; Tit 2.5; 1 Peter 3.1 apply the complementarian sense as explained, not the egalitarian sense of ‘mutual submission.’

2.4 Summary

The primary observation is the level of compatibility in the position of Grudem, and the scholars of the review in Chapter 1. Following are the major areas of mutual agreement - all of which the egalitarians stand opposed to:

- Paul appeals to the Genesis creation narratives in 1 Cor 11, 1 Cor 14, 1 Tim 2 and Eph 5, in order to endorse the specific principles he gave in these epistles, as universally applicable;
- There is consensus on the meanings of key terms on which the theology regarding roles of men and women in church is pinned, such as ‘head’ (*kephale*), ‘have authority’ (*authentein*), and ‘subject’/ ‘submission’ (*hypotasso*).
- The authority-submission dynamic is affirmed as the biblical ideal both within churches (in which there is male headship) and within the family (where the wife willingly submits to the authority of the husband, and the husband regulates authority accordingly, with Christ-like love and consideration).

The next chapter will look at roles of men and women in the church in Samoa, particularly within the EFKS. It will explore whether are any traces of the complementarian-egalitarian argument in Samoan theology related to men and women’s roles, and if so, the extent of its influence (whether direct or indirect). It is envisioned that this will enable us to

⁵⁹ Grudem makes the important observation: ‘We are not free, in interpreting the Bible, to give a word any meaning we might think “fits.” Words have established ranges of meanings that were familiar to native speakers of Greek in the ancient world and that allowed them to understand one another (that is how all language functions—speakers and hearers have in their minds “shared meanings” of thousands of words). Those established meanings are what are listed in dictionaries (or lexicons) of ancient Greek.’ (Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 196.)

determine how Section 18 of the EFKS Statement of Doctrine was devised, ie. how the EFKS understood men and women to operate in church ministry – whether as having equal roles in an egalitarian framework, or as having differentiated roles, with men as leaders in a complementarian, ‘authority-submission’- oriented framework.

CHAPTER THREE

SAMOA, THE EFKS, AND THE STATEMENT OF DOCTRINE

3.1 The Fa'asamoa and Christianity

Patriarchal authority was evident in pre Christian Samoa⁶⁰ and was, for Lovett, a system that Samoans were more or less naturally inclined to⁶¹. For Meleisea, Samoa was hierarchical where authority was determined by precedence of age and status (within the *aiga*, family), or of chiefly rank (within the *fono*, village council). There was however a corresponding equality, reflected in the autonomy of *nuu* (villages) and the equality of all *aiga* (families). With regards to inheritance, a person's matrilineage was just as important as status on his/her father's side⁶². But if being male had no direct bearing on authority, Meleisea does acknowledge that most matai titles and leadership roles in Samoa are held by middle aged or elderly men⁶³, that women exercised less day-to-day authority (especially when they became married)⁶⁴, and that women often ceded the claim to family titles to their brothers, in respect of the *feagaiga* tradition⁶⁵. Women may have been considered as having equal – or greater - honour than men (especially in their role as *taupou* (maiden) or *feagaiga* (sister covenant)⁶⁶, but honour did not equate to authority. Thus there was equality in honour and dignity, but a

⁶⁰ George Turner, *Samoa, A Hundred Years Ago and Long Before* (London: Macmillan and Co, 1884), 173.

⁶¹ Richard Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795-1895* (Oxford: Henry Frowde: 1899), 401.

⁶² Malama Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa: Traditional Authority and Colonial Administration in the Modern History of Western Samoa* (Suva: University of the South Pacific, 1987), 8.

⁶³ Malama Meleisea, et. al., *Political Representation and Women's Empowerment in Samoa: Volume 1, Findings and Recommendations* (Apia: National University of Samoa, 2015), 24.

⁶⁴ Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, 19.

⁶⁵ Meleisea, et. al., *Political Representation and Women's Empowerment in Samoa*, 39. Latai defines *feagaiga* the sacred covenant of mutual respect between a brother and a sister, within their natal family, which gives special honour to the sister and reciprocal tribute to the brother (Latu Latai, 'Changing Covenants in Samoa? From Brothers and Sisters to Husbands and Wives?' *Oceania Publications*, 1, Vol.85 (Sydney: University of Sydney, 2015), 94).

⁶⁶ Latu Latai, 'Changing Covenants in Samoa?', 95.

difference in roles⁶⁷, with men tending to assume the authoritative, decision making arm of governance. Today, definitions of authority have altered dramatically; since the 1960s women have assumed matai roles, and continue to do so in increasing numbers. It is Meleisea's view, ultimately, that whether women should assume authority / decision making power in the village setting or not, remains a debated issue⁶⁸. Pemerika, on the other hand, sees demarcation of village authority along lines of sex as a clear cultural principle, with the *fono o matai* (council of chiefs / titled men) being the exclusive realm of men, and women belonging to *faletua ma tausi* (wives of titled men). There were adjacent executive bodies that also exercised governance. The lower executive level *aumaga* (untitled men) corresponded with the *auluma* or *nuu o tamaitai* (wives of untitled women). These male-female groups had different functions, but were considered equal in value, honour and importance as they corresponded to one another, and worked together for the good of the society⁶⁹. The relationship was emulated within the family unit, by the husband and wife.

When Christianity was introduced, Samoa by and large retained much of its pre-Christian structure - the reason being that the Christian order was considered so similar so as to not be a potential threat; thus assimilation was easily achieved.⁷⁰ Even so, the reorganisation of village dynamics in response to Christianity (as well as to other external influences such as technology and trade)⁷¹, produced a unique makeup that was not insignificant. The *matai* system and the *ava* ceremony continued to be observed, but there was a new prominence given to pastors, and to church corporate structure, that corresponded with the respect for *matai* and

⁶⁷ Meleisea describes it as an inequality in roles, but not basic necessities or privileges (Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, 19.)

⁶⁸ Meleisea, et. al., *Political Representation and Women's Empowerment in Samoa*, 28.

⁶⁹ Pemerika Tauii, *Anofale o le Gagana ma le Aganuu: Tusi Muamua* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2009), 37.

⁷⁰ A system was birthed and manifested in such a way that the gospel could not be comprehended without its cultural component, nor culture without its theological basis and significance (Danny Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS) in Aotearoa New Zealand* (Otago: University of Otago, 1998), 518. Ioka echoes the sentiments of several prominent writers, such as Le Tagaloa, Meleisea and Kamu (Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the CCCS*, 4-5, 30).

⁷¹ Anne Milbank, 'Lepea: That Model Village in Samoa: Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand', *Open*, vol. 2 (30), 2013, 833-835.

the significance of the village council. Cultural elements such as the belief in oratory as the primary conduit of divine *mana*, led to the elevation of the status of the pastor in his role as spokesperson for God, with matai (*alii* and *tulafale*) responding in the capacity of lay preacher and deacons⁷². In many villages the *faletua ma tausi / nuu o tamaitai* was gradually reformed as the women's fellowship. The introduction of the pastor as *fa'afeagaiga* (village covenant) meant perhaps unavoidable implications for the traditional *feagaiga* status of the sister. Visible changes took place in clothing, and what was to be considered moral behavior eg. (abolishment of polygamy⁷³), but the core hierarchy that involved titles and inheritance⁷⁴, and which was characterised by male headship and distinction of roles among men and women, remained intact.

At the collective level, overall governance and administration of the EFKS lies in the hands of an Elders Committee (which the English missionaries considered an extension of the village council) and underlying sub-committees.⁷⁵ At district level, males are appointed to an oversight committee which consists of the Elder, the District Secretary and the Head Deacon. At the village level, the philosophy and operation of pastoral ministry in the EFKS revolves around the pastor and his wife⁷⁶. Lay preachers are predominantly male and assist the pastor in all his pastoral duties. The deaconship consists of both men and women. Women tend to dominate Sunday school and early childhood education. In most parishes the most powerful group is the Women's Fellowship, led by the pastor's wife. As indicated, the Fellowship resembles the traditional group of *faletua ma tausi* and often leads in fundraising and maintenance, and in providing spiritual guidance especially on issues pertaining to women.

⁷² Aukilani Tuiai, *The Congregational Christian Church of Samoa, 1962–2002: A Study of the Issues and Policies that have Shaped the Independent Church* (Bathurst: Charles Sturt University, 2012), 16.

⁷³ Dr Augustin Kramer, *The Samoa Islands: Volume 1* (Auckland: Pasifika Press, 1994), 41,42.

⁷⁴ Milbank, 'Lepea: That Model Village in Samoa', *Hope*, 835.

⁷⁵ Tuiai observes that this hierarchy of committees was designed to curb the Samoan tendency towards factionalism (Tuiai, *The Congregational Christian Church of Samoa, 1962–2002*, 26.

⁷⁶ Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the CCCS*, 486.

3.2 The EFKS Statement of Doctrine – The Influence of Ecumenism

Tuiai observes that the only ‘Congregational’ aspect of the church was the freedom of the village to appoint their own pastor. But the administration model adopted by the EFKS from its inception, was essentially Presbyterian⁷⁷. This was confirmed in 1899 by Richard Lovett, who wrote ‘The History of the London Missionary Society 1795-1895’:

“The form of church government observed in Samoa is Presbyterian rather than Congregational, with a semblance of Episcopacy in the relation of the English missionary to the native churches. The missionaries, in harmony with the broad spirit of the Society which sent them forth, have allowed to grow, unfettered by denominational tradition, a form of church organization which seemed to them best fitted to serve the conditions of society they found existing amongst these weak races. The government of the churches has naturally fallen into the hands of pastors—first, because the patriarchal instincts of the people make them more than willing to be legislated for by others; and secondly, because the higher education has been confined to the pastors. With the introduction of a more liberal secular education, this evil will be righted.”⁷⁸

The London Missionary society (LMS) is seen as allowing communities it engaged with, to adopt their own forms of Christian governance, in accordance with their customs and usages. However, the interdenominational, ecumenical bearings of the LMS imply that, for the missionaries, there was an ever shifting expectation of what Christian unity looks like, how it is brought about, what ecumenical methods ought to be engaged, what both short term and long term objectives of a Christian church should be. There is an underlying belief in the perpetual ‘evolving’ of contexts and environments, to which Christian theology must respond and adapt accordingly. With this in mind, there were 2 ‘evils’ within the EFKS as far as the missionaries were concerned: a) The system of patriarchy / male headship; b) the confining of higher education to (male) pastors. These aspects were considered necessary as far as they provided the initial soil for the planting of the Christian seed, but with time and with the

⁷⁷ Tuiai, *The Congregational Christian Church of Samoa, 1962–2002*, 26.

⁷⁸ Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795-1895*, 401.

introduction of more ‘liberal, secular education’, it was expected that these would be eradicated, and Christianity would be reformed into a more ‘preferable’ state.

We revert back to Section 8 of the EFKS Statement of Doctrine. Similarities in structure, theological emphasis and terminology suggest that the Statement borrowed its template from that of the Basis of Union of the United Church of Canada⁷⁹, which was approved in 1925 (Whole sections of the Statement of Doctrine, including the ‘Ministry’ section, can be found in verbatim in the Basis of Union)⁸⁰. The template is considered not original to the Basis of Union, but can itself be traced back to the Confessional Statement of the United Presbyterian Church of North America (1925), apparently the first template to incorporate a ‘ministry’ section, on which Section 18 of the EFKS Statement is based. The North American Statement is in turn modelled on the Articles of Faith of the Presbyterian Synod of England (1890) which is believed to show the collective template in its original form.⁸¹ Schaff sees this unique template as a product of impulses within part of Protestant Christendom at the dawn of the 20th century, to revisit and modify the creeds of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, based on the following aspects: a) to erase the polemical tendencies of creedal statements which were considered divisive, but to centre in on the irenic strengths of a statement, in the interest of fellowship and cooperation; b) to reflect modern studies of the New Testament and of the biblical system of doctrine; c) to separate from the stance of the Roman Church and Eastern Orthodox Churches, characterised by rigidity and strict adherence.

The adoption by the Sub-Committee of this template for the EFKS Statement (particularly with its drawing from early Presbyterian statements), suggests substantial

⁷⁹ The United Church of Canada is the name of the Church formed by the union of the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregational Churches in Canada, officiated in 1925.

⁸⁰ Phillip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes: Volume 3* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1877), 913.

⁸¹ Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes: Volume 3*, 913.

involvement of the Church in the ecumenical movement^{82 83} which had grown steadily since the beginning of the 20th century, and of which the Church had played an instrumental part in advancing.⁸⁴

EFKS Statement of Doctrine (Section 18), 1957:

‘We acknowledge also that Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church, has appointed a ministry of the word and the sacraments. **He calls men and women** to this ministry; that the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, recognizes and chooses those whom He calls, and should thereupon duly ordain them to the work of the ministry.’

Following are the prototype versions of this phrase in the Confessional Statement of the United Presbyterian Church of North America (1925), and the United Church of Canada Basis of Union (1925), respectively.

North America:

Art. XXXIV. Of the Ministry. We believe that Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church has appointed therein the official ministry of reconciliation; that **He calls men** to this ministry through the working of the Holy Spirit in their hearts and by the orderings of providence; and that those thus called are to be set apart by ordination, whereby they are solemnly invested with the authority, powers, and duties of their sacred office⁸⁵.

Canada:

Art. XVII. Of the Ministry. We believe that Jesus Christ, as the Supreme Head of the Church, has appointed therein a ministry of the word and sacraments, **and calls men** to this ministry; that the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, recognizes and chooses those whom He calls, and should thereupon duly ordain them to the work of the ministry⁸⁶.

⁸² The ecumenical movement was a worldwide effort to reverse the fragmentation of the Protestant churches, and to build unity around central concepts, ie. love and fatherhood of God, Christian mission, and the duties of human brotherhood.

⁸³ Rev. Leslie Brame (who was on the Committee for the Statement of Doctrine) left Samoa and moved to New Zealand in 1959; he was involved in the merging of Congregational and Presbyterian churches in NZ (officiated in 1969) and subsequently became a Presbyterian minister. He died in 2009. The Presbyterian General Assembly Memorial Minutes 2010 acknowledged that the ‘ecumenical spirit was strong within him.’ (The Presbyterian Church of New Zealand Aotearoa, Memorial Minutes, *General Assembly Report 2010*, 2010, https://www.presbyterian.org.nz/sites/default/files/about_us/general_assembly/ga10/reports_and_papers/35_Memorial_Minutes.pdf.) Rev K.T Faletese, also on the Committee, became minister for the Pacific Island Congregational Churches (PICC) parish in Christchurch in 1964. The PICC joined the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand in 1969.

⁸⁴ The Presbyterian church officially ordained its first woman minister in 1956 (Margaret Towner, Presbyterian Church in the United States of America). The role of ‘minister’ shares the same territory with ‘teaching elder’ (Sarah Dickson was ordained the first teaching elder of PCUSA in 1930).

⁸⁵ Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom Volume 3*, 925.

⁸⁶ Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom Volume 3*, 937-938.

Ephesians 5.21-33 (refer to Chapter 1 Scriptural review, p.187) shows that the New Testament usage of ‘word’ (*rhema*) is as a reference to either the word of God or the Gospel. It is not difficult to presume that ‘ministry of the word,’ as it appears in the passage, is the administering of Gospel truth via teaching (ie. the authoritative public transmission of tradition about Christ and the Scriptures). The use of the word ‘ordain’ indicates that what the Canadian and North American Churches had in mind when employing the phrase ‘ministry of the word’ was formal, authoritative teaching, an office which, in their view – as in Paul’s – was the exclusive responsibility of men. We saw this from our study of the section on 1 Tim 2.8-15.⁸⁷ By this premise, where the essence of the ‘ministry’ paragraphs in the Canadian and North American creeds is then considered compatible with Paul’s position on church authority and differentiated roles, by the same premise the EFKS Statement of Doctrine is considered incompatible, where it implies that women also are to be ordained to the authoritative administering / teaching of the Gospel.

There are alternative ways of presenting creedal statements regarding church ministry, that include men and women as partners in ministry, but more importantly remain true to Scriptural standards. For example, an amended version of the Canadian Basis of Union, presented in the 2023 Manual of the General Council of the United Church of Canada, reads as follows:

Article XVII. Of the Ministry:

We believe that Jesus Christ, as the Supreme Head of the Church, has appointed therein an ordained ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care and a diaconal ministry of Education, Service, and Pastoral Care, and calls men and women to these ministries; and that the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, recognizes and chooses those whom He calls, and should thereupon duly ordain or commission them to the work of the ministry⁸⁸.

⁸⁷ This would also be the case with the administering of the sacraments.

⁸⁸ The United Church of Canada, *The Manual*, 2023 (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 2023), 20.

Two significant changes are noted: a) the addition of pastoral care to the portfolio of ministers and pastors; b) the addition of an entire second clause for the diaconate, which centres on education, service and pastoral care; c) the inclusion of both men and women as those called for ministry. The paragraph reads legitimately by Scriptural standards, particularly if it is read epexegetically ie. one section relying on another section for clarification of its meaning. The two main clauses – ‘ordained ministry of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care’ and ‘diaconal ministry of Education, Service and Pastoral Care’ are modified by ‘men’ and ‘women’ respectively, indicating that women may only be eligible for the diaconate. Furthermore, the fact that the Ministry of the Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care is acknowledged as an ‘ordained’ ministry whereas the diaconate is not, seems to point to a deliberate distinction between the two classes, to which the two terms ‘ordain’ and ‘commission’ in the last sentence, are also epexegetical. It is not discounted that both ministers and deacons are inducted into ministry by way of ordination, as is the practice in most Protestant churches (ie. the commissioning of deacons is not to say that they are not ordained, as if ‘commissioning’ entails a different rite of induction). The ordination of deacons is scriptural (Acts 6.6). It is not certain that the EFKS had access to this revised version of the Basis of Union at the time it was produced, or that they would have used it.

Coming back to the Statement of Doctrine, it is more likely, given its ecumenical leanings, that the Committee’s addition of women into the ‘ministry’ section was a reflection of its egalitarian stance on men and women, ie. complete mutuality and equality, with no prohibitions to women’s access to the same roles as men, including ordination as ministers.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ The recognition of equality of men and women in ministry, had become a burgeoning movement within the global Protestant church by the mid 20th century. In 1956, a year before the approval of the EFKS Statement of Doctrine, 3 global denominational churches accepted women as ordained ministers for the first time: the United Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church and the United Church of Christ (a merger between the Presbyterian and Congregational churches).

If, according to Lovett, patriarchy (male headship) in the community and in the church was an 'evil' to be gradually phased out and replaced by 'liberal, secular education', a way to achieve this liberalism was partly via a shift in the doctrinal understanding of roles of men and women from a hierarchical / complementarian, to a more egalitarian understanding. This was most likely the motive behind the modifying of the Section 18 passage of the EFKS Statement of Doctrine, from its prototype versions. These measures suggest that there existed a broader, underlying tension between: 1) the LMS missionaries with a desire for worldwide church unity that was being slowly but steadily imposed, and: 2) a uniquely Samoan sense of identity, borne of a marriage of Christianity and culture, that Samoans had become adamant to uphold. Though some traditions were ceded, by 1830 Samoa retained much of its original social structure, which had male headship at its centre.

At no time was this tension clearer than in the controversial establishment of the EFKS branch in NZ, by Samoan migrant communities in 1963. EFKS-NZ emerged despite impassioned attempts by the Congregational Union of New Zealand (CUNZ) and its Pacific branch, the Pacific Island Congregational Churches (PICC, of which the Samoan migrants who formed EFKS-NZ had originally been part of), to prevent it. When the matter of approving the EFKS-NZ was brought before the EFKS Directors Committee in 1964, all but one of the four European missionaries on the Committee voted against it⁹⁰. The preoccupation of the LMS missionaries with ecumenism was perhaps fuelled by worldwide developments at the time - namely the reuniting of the Presbyterian and Congregational churches in England, with the same kind of merger taking shape in New Zealand⁹¹ - developments they were perhaps eager to contribute to as part of their legacy. As voiced by Rev. Dr. Bradshaw (who

⁹⁰ Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the CCCS*, 279. The missionary who voted for the CCCS was Rev. David Bowen.

⁹¹ The CUNZ / PICC merged with and became part of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand (PCAN) in 1969. The Congregational and Presbyterian churches in England eventually merged to form the United Reformed Church in 1972.

was on the EFKS Statement of Doctrine Committee), the LMS envisioned that any Pacific islanders migrating to New Zealand at this time would naturally join the Presbyterian church there (with its recent Congregationalist additions)⁹². This belief, echoing Lovett's position above, perhaps reflected a larger assumption commonly held by Europeans regarding 'primitive' cultures; Samoa and the *faasamoa* would eventually 'evolve', and adopt western models and philosophical and intellectual traditions, regarded as more advanced and rationale⁹³. Furthermore, the missionaries were unable to recognise that Samoans are (and always have been) dictated by their own constructions of reality, and tend to recast foreign influences, including Christianity, to suit their own worldview⁹⁴. Furthermore, a fundamental paradigm shift in world-wide Christian approach had taken place, in which traditional missionary authority was being replaced by the leadership of indigenous, independent churches⁹⁵. Commenting in 1994, Rev. Dr. Bradshaw acknowledges that the LMS undermined the cultural rootedness of Samoan Christianity, as evidenced in the establishment of EFKS-NZ.⁹⁶ Rev. Bowen (who replaced Bradshaw in 1964 upon the latter's departure from Samoa) said that the missionaries ignored the realities of ethnic groups in migration, the need for ethnicity and identity, for solidarity and self-esteem⁹⁷; values which are intrinsic to communities that have experienced colonial rule. It is suggested that Malua Theological College played a pivotal role in the missionaries' bid to make a transition to liberalism, as 'prophesied' by Lovett: a) Bradshaw, Principal of the College from 1956 to 1963, introduced

⁹² Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the CCCS*, 281.

⁹³ Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, 4, 228.

⁹⁴ Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, 229.

⁹⁵ Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the CCCS*, 303.

⁹⁶ Rev. Dr. Bradshaw, in a 1994 interview with Rev. Dr Ioka: 'We underestimated the strength of Samoan culture ...locked like that....and you couldn't just unlock them and say, well, you become part of the Presbyterian Church..... It goes beyond just being the Church, it includes the whole way of life.... We all hoped we would have no more denominations. But I think we were wrongWe were not living the same world as Samoan people. And they were right in my opinion.... in making their own Church in New Zealand; otherwise they would not have been able to preserve their way of life, and stood against the temptations and difficulties in a foreign country.' Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the CCCS*, 305.

⁹⁷ Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the CCCS*, 305.

new subjects such as Pastoral Counselling, and facilitated the transferral of Samoan students to London University to acquire Certificates of ‘Proficiency in Religious Knowledge.’⁹⁸ Rev. David Bowen, Principal from 1964-1967, introduced Systematic Theology to the MTC curriculum, and expanded the College library, with the help of the Theological Education Fund, a branch of the World Council of Churches.⁹⁹ In 1967, leadership of the College would forever pass from the European missionaries into local hands; b) Dr Marie Ropeti-Apisaloma recalls how, in 1974, she was overlooked by the elders of the EFKS for entry into Malua Theological College, though she had sat and passed the entry exam. The reason was that she was a female. Malua Theological College was an all-male college, and the Church ‘had not yet discussed the issue of women going forward to Malua Theological College.’¹⁰⁰ It is implied that the elders were not aware a female had taken the exam that year. Regardless of the nature of the miscommunication between the elders and College staff on this matter, the broader, more significant indication is that in addition to responsibility for the running of Malua College, the missionaries may have also successfully handed down a legacy of commitment to progressiveness, that the College continues to uphold today, in the face of a conservative EFKS church.

As far as the latest official version of the Constitution of the EFKS (2011) is concerned, the EFKS appears to have, since the 1974 incident, upheld a mum stance on the roles of men and women. The provision in the Constitution concerning ‘Ordained Ministry’ has been toned down and made gender neutral, so that no direct exclusion of women is

⁹⁸ Malua Theological College, 2023 Handbook (Apia: Malua Theological College).

⁹⁹ The World Council of Churches (WCC) is a worldwide Christian inter-church organization founded in 1948 to work for the cause of ecumenism. It describes itself as "a worldwide fellowship of 349 global, regional and sub-regional, national and local churches seeking unity, a common witness and Christian service."

¹⁰⁰ Marie Ropeti-Apisaloma, *Nafanua Theology: A Samoan Christian Argument for the Ordination of Women in the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa* (Suva: Pacific Theological College, 2021), 3-4.

noted¹⁰¹. However, the priority of male leadership is implicitly stated on other pages¹⁰², so that male leadership is to be regarded, as Ropeti-Apisaloma rightly notes, as an ‘unwritten assumption.’¹⁰³ Is this an ‘ambiguous reservedness’ that the EFKS feels it is inspired, by the whisperings of the Spirit, to uphold as its official stance for the time being? Is it an attempt to stave off the current of external forces and agendas¹⁰⁴, and allow for itself the freedom to address issues at its own pace? Maybe. Regardless, it may or may not be likely that, over time, the circle of parties on both sides of the spectrum with regards to this matter, will grow wider.

3.3 Interviews

A small group of EFKS members / Malua Theological College alumni were asked for their opinion on the following questions (most of these responses were given in the Samoan language and have been transcribed):

Do you think that men and women within the EFKS ministry should have equal roles and functions?

“I will always respect my husband as the head of the family, the captain of our familial ship, so to speak. I will always maintain my position primarily as the wife, as the ‘first mate’ of the ship after my husband, the captain of the vessel. While the saying ‘two heads are better than one’ works well in most familial situations, I believe the role of the head of the family is a God-given appointment to the husband, for reasons as universally accepted. Having said that, I think it is good for men and women to have equal roles. I believe the ministry calls for men and women to give their all, and to give wholeheartedly. The *faletua* can help the pastor with the ministry of the gospel, by preaching and leading Sunday worship services. On the other hand, I am puzzled as to why Jesus didn’t choose women

¹⁰¹ The ‘Ordained Ministry’ Section of the EFKS Constitution (2006) reads as follows: ‘The church in every generation includes those who are appointed and specially called within the church. They are those who are ordained to be servants of the Word and Sacrament to serve the church through Jesus Christ the great Minister. His true work is to bring sinners to repentance; lead the people of God in worship, prayer, the preaching of the Gospel, and the celebration of the Sacraments (all these things should be done in and with faith); assist people so that they may receive truly all the blessings of salvation and sanctification in Christ, and to prepare them to serve others’ (Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa, *Notes Regarding the Revision of the Constitution of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa 2006* (Apia: Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa, 2006), 10.

¹⁰² Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa, *Notes Regarding the Revision of the Constitution of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa 2006*, 7, 9, 19.

¹⁰³ Ropeti-Apisaloma, *Nafanua Theology*, 14.

¹⁰⁴ At a session of the EFKS General Assembly 2023, a participant raised, perhaps for the first time, the possibility of building conversation within the church around the issue of same sex marriage.

as his disciples.¹⁰⁵ Concerning men and women, the man is first and foremost the protector and provider of his wife and family. The woman as the weaker sex is given the job of bearing children, and goes through a lot more in life than a man does. Carrying around a growing person in her for nine months is no mean feat, as the saying goes. So each person is unique; God has blessed each of us with different physical and spiritual gifts, that we are called to use rightfully and according to his will. I think in this way God unifies all creation. We achieve unity through our uniqueness.”

Susuga Dr. Lonise Sera Tanielu
Faletua Penisione Malolo, EFKS Blockhouse Bay

“From my own experience, a pastor often finds the much needed space to concentrate on preparing the Word for his congregation, because he will have full confidence in his wife to manage and direct in other areas of the ministry, eg. Sunday school, church decorations, etc. and this most often is the case. If the *faletua* is already leading in the more practical aspects of the ministry, why should she not also lead in the more spiritual / liturgical aspects, which include the preaching of the Word? So yes, I believe there should be equality in the ministry. However, we must remember that Samoa is not like other countries. For example, it has been made clear to us that God’s love, grace and salvation encompasses all creation, but because in Samoa our Christian values are still very much intertwined with our cultural values, this particular issue remains a sensitive one, which people find that they will still have to tread cautiously around. But I am hopeful of a time prepared by God, when we will find harmony – when Christianity will be fully Samoanized, and the *faasamoa* (Samoan culture) fully Christianized.”

Rev. Dr. Taipisia Leilua
General Secretary, EFKS

“The Bible says that wives are to respect their husbands, and husbands are to love their wives. The wisdom of God is clear. One person in the relationship should lead, and God has ordained that that person should be the male / husband, as he was the first to be made in the image of God. What happens when there are two leaders in the relationship, or a community, or organization? My answer is that there will be division. Some will take this side, others will take that side. A community cannot be divided. From my own experience working within the *Aai o Niue* parish, my husband and I do not have the same roles and functions, and I assume it is the same with other church parishes. The men / husbands, as the ordained pastors, are the leaders. But the roles of the women / wives in the ministry are also clear-cut. A primary focus of the pastor is to deal with the members of the church, or guests. A primary role of the *faletua* is to coordinate the provision of hospitable service, on which depend good public relations. This is not only cultural protocol; it is a solemn responsibility instructed by Christ: *‘I was thirsty*

¹⁰⁵ This question is addressed on pp.78-80.

and you gave me something to drink' (Matt 25.35). This cannot be observed if the wife assumes the same role as the pastor."

Susuga Hana Efu
Elder Faletua, EFKS Aai o Niue Parish

"There is a push towards gender equality. Most EFKS ministers agree that, as far as the Great Commission is concerned, the ministry is for both men and women. Looking back at the history of the EFKS church, I believe that Christianity and colonialism came hand in hand (whether or not this was intended by the missionaries); and with that came patriarchy. So patriarchy is a colonial construct. The issue is how to go about deconstructing patriarchal ideas? It can't be done overnight. But I think the appropriate place to start is in theological education; it should not be a top-down approach, it should begin at the grassroots level (because people have set ideas about the roles of ministers and their wives). So that when the topic of women in ministry is pragmatically introduced (especially the more sensitive aspects such as ordination of women, and the role of a husband opposite his minister wife), people will find it easier to accept. Tutuila, I believe, has already begun the process, but these aren't easy things to overcome. It takes time. At the end of the day it's about keeping in line with what government and the NGOs are doing. We have to be careful that the church is not exclusive and separate; we have to go together."

Susuga Rev. Dr. Latu Latai
Minister, EFKS Apia Parish

"Men can lead worship services, but women can also lead other services, such as the *Lotu a Tina* (Women's services) and the *Au Taumafai* (Christian Endeavour) services. Men and women also cooperate in directing the Sunday School and Youth programs, and general education programs (*Aoga Fa'afaifeau*) for example. So I think that equal roles for men and women in EFKS ministry is possible in this sense, and that it should be promoted."

Susuga Luafata Simanu Gasolo
Faletua, Malua Theological College

How do you see the EFKS ministry in 20 years' time, with regards to the roles of men and women, as well as Samoa's standing within the global community on this issue?

"Equality within the EFKS will prevent women from feeling that it's only men who are eligible for primary roles in the ministry, whereas they themselves are confined to advisory or supporting roles. Equality will ensure stability in the EFKS; it will help to reduce gender discrimination in general, and support the push for equality on a national scale. Thus the push for equality can become a potential 'pull factor' that can lead to increased EFKS membership. Finally, it will strengthen Samoa's credibility within the international community."

“I think the key is to have good leadership in the EFKS church. There is evident pressure – we have a significant role and representation in the global Christian community, and on the other hand we have a very conservative leadership. I think it is good that Dr Mercy Maliko has called out the churches, but this may create the opposite of the desired effect, ie. it may make church elders even less responsive. So we need good leaders, most importantly, to facilitate stronger engagement with global bodies like WCC and CWM. The more exposure we have, the more likely it is that the elders will accede, the more likely it is for gender equality to be a reality in the foreseeable future. From a research project we did with UN Women, *‘Pathways to Leadership for Women in Samoa’*, we saw a clear shift in the thinking of local communities on the issue of political participation of women. More and more villages are becoming receptive to the reality of women matai. So it seems that if the culture is changing, then the church has to change as well. I remember 20 or so years ago the late Oka Fauolo, in response to this issue, said, *‘E le’i fananau tagata e faia suiga ia.’* (‘The people who are to bring about those changes, have not been born yet’). I think we are in that generation, we are the ones to plant the seeds. So in 20 years I’m optimistic that there will be changes, there are bound to be.”

Susuga Rev. Dr. Latu Latai

“EFKS clings to its Christian values, which were established in 1830. The father is the head of the household; the wife respects and listens to her husband; children honor and listen to their parents; the younger respects the elder, those under authority respect those who are in authority. These are foundations laid by our forefathers, based on our cultural framework and through the Spirit’s guidance. Psalm 136 says that the Lord is the God of gods, and his love endures forever. For almost 200 years now, these foundations have brought us peace and stability. It is our responsibility to ensure that they remain intact, for future generations. They must not, and will not, be changed.”

Susuga Hana Efu

“As indicated earlier, Samoa has a unique culture that cannot be ‘subdued.’ This is clear if you consider the amount of years that we have had Christianity, yet we still cling unwaveringly to the traditional belief in separation of roles of men and women. I can almost guarantee that if you discuss the issue of equality with *faletua* of the EFKS, the majority will oppose it. Not because they are primarily opposed to change or external influences, but because they believe that the way church ministries operate today, where there is a clear distinction of roles of ministers and their wives, is the way that God ordained, and intended his ministry to be carried out. So we may have the Gospel for another 400 years, and the strong cultural front may continue to prevent us from making an impact. At the end of the day, I

personally feel that the role of men and women is not an issue for the EFKS at the moment. I worry that this paper might be creating problems that do not exist, and that the EFKS does not consider a problem at the moment. I feel that time would be better utilized in discussing how the culture and church can work together to address the problem of domestic violence.”

Susuga Rev. Dr Taipisia Leilua

“The church is much too male oriented; there are too many laws, rules and customs. Not only does this mean that we are ‘too close to the letter’, but we are affected more by how other people think, so that we often miss the real message of God’s will. There is also too much emphasis on the physical aspects of the ministry, on acquiring wealth, and on reputation / self-grandiosity. All this affects and influences the circumstances (social, physical, mental / psychological, environmental, spiritual), under which men and women operate within the ministry.”

Susuga Dr. Lonise Sera Tanielu

3.4 Summary

Of the 5 respondents, 4 of them felt that women and men should have equal roles in ministry, as opposed to 1 who felt that roles should be differentiated. It is noted that both Scripture and culture were seen as primary influences in both positions ie. some thought culture supports equality, others thought it hinders equality; some thought Scripture supports equality, others thought it supports differentiation. A shared observation of the pro-equality side was that since *faletua* are already leading and coordinating in many aspects of the ministry, they should lead in all aspects. A striking observation was made where, instead of the view that: i) men and women are equal in value and equal in roles (egalitarian view), or that ii) men and women are equal in value but different in function (complementarian view), there is a perspective emerging among the EFKS *faletua* that is apparently novel: iii) men and women are *different in value*, but equal in function. There is acceptance of the traditional differentiation of functions (eg. men as leaders, women as helpers) but this acceptance seems to be purely ceremonial – an obligatory (or even sentimental) acknowledgement, a ‘tipping of the hat’ to traditions or remnants of a previous time. In reality, however, church ministries are overseen

by men and women having equal capacity in all roles, and this too is accepted, in recognition of where the world is heading, and the kinds of progressive value systems that are becoming prevalent. All this suggests a subliminal, and yet conscious, transition within the church, a subtle ‘changing of the guard.’

An assortment of views was given on the question regarding the future of the EFKS. For those who supported equality, culture was identified as both a facilitator and a hindrance to equality, moving into the future. There was agreement among the pro-equality side however that patriarchy specifically is a barrier. Equality is considered essential not only to remove discrimination, to foster stability and increase membership for EFKS, but also for its national and global credibility. The key to achieving equality is to ensure ‘good’ internal leadership, as well as theological education targeting the grassroots levels.

It is important to note that the General Secretary, as representative of the EFKS leadership, did not consider the roles of men and women in ministry to be a priority for the EFKS at present, and that discussions such as these risked placing unnecessary focus on such issues and making them out to be challenges, when they are not. I gathered from the interview with the General Secretary that he was most likely influenced by the Prime Minister’s position on the issue of same-sex marriage, in which she stated that this matter was not currently an agenda priority for her government.¹⁰⁶ For a discussion regarding the connection between roles of men and women in ministry, and same-sex marriage, see the ‘Conclusion’ section.

¹⁰⁶ The statement was made in response to a petition by a delegation of the National Council of Churches (that included Rev. Dr. Leilua), for the government to oppose same-sex marriage awareness.

CHAPTER 4

SAMOAN HERMENEUTICAL VIEWS

The previous chapter provides a premise for why the *lotu / faasamoa* (ie. the amalgamation of Church and culture that would become the Samoan lifestyle), would inevitably be regarded by some scholars as presenting barriers to women's participation in leadership, including within the church. A cyclical effect is viewed as being in force. For example, women internalise the perceived inequality of their situation in these systems, which means they are less inclined or less motivated to pursue, to participate in, or to assume leadership. This in turn reinforces the belief in the reality of decision making (across all levels) as being a male prerogative¹⁰⁷. Major changes – growing influence of the global ecumenical movement, spearheaded by bodies such as the World Council of Churches, as well as the emergence of trends both global and national (eg. the increasing role of the United Nations in regional women's issues, a rise in local domestic violence rates) - further highlight the problem of women's subordination, exacerbated by a complex range of challenges for women, that intersect across the spiritual and the secular, the social and the political domains¹⁰⁸. It is suggested that a formal reaction led by academic and political circles against what was perceived to be the corrosive effects of a complementarian outlook (particularly with the escalation of family violence), manifested from the beginning of the 21st century onwards, calling for an adjusting of this system, and the dismantling of the patriarchal, hierarchical framework at its source. A feature of this backlash has been the push for equality, and specifically the ordainment of women in the EFKS. I will discuss the views of a select few:

¹⁰⁷ Malia Lameta, *I Am the Apple of my Brother's Eye: An investigation into the evolving roles of Samoan women* (Otago, University of Otago, 2015), 161; Meleisea, et. al., *Political Representation and Women's Empowerment in Samoa*, 39.)

¹⁰⁸ Lameta, *I Am the Apple of my Brother's Eye*, 168-176; Mema Motusaga, *Women in Decision making in Samoa* (Victoria: Victoria University, 2016), 49,132).

4.1 Dr Marie Ropeti-Apisaloma, *Nafanua* theology: To address the problem of barriers to women's ordination, Ropeti-Apisaloma devises a *Nafanua* theology, derived from a range of interpretive approaches, but primarily the postcolonial strand of biblical feminist theology.¹⁰⁹ A colonialist / missionary agenda is seen as responsible for colouring Samoan Christianity and culture in a patriarchal hue. A '*Nafanua*' approach liberates the bible text from the oppressive shadows of patriarchy, imperialism and colonialism that negate and demonise women, and aims to situate it in its proper context; a context that is 'life affirming', and true to history and culture. The application of this context is the *tausi le va tapuia*¹¹⁰ relational paradigm, whose goal is mutual respect and reciprocity. This is expressed via 'relational moral practices' synonymous with the '*fetausiai*' values of Dr Mercy Maliko.

4.1.1 *Unearthing*: Patriarchy is seen as the primary obstacle to women's ordination. Historically, the cultural and religious observance of patriarchy in Samoa, has led to a 'devaluing' of roles of women by which they traditionally attained power and dignity (the *feagaiga* status being the most prominent). It has also fostered a culture of silence that lies particularly behind the perceived reluctance of CCCS church authorities to respond publicly to women's ordination, as well as other pertinent social issues. These factors amount to oppression, injustice, exploitation, opposition and violence - basically a denigration of a woman's humanity. It amounts to a reversal of the pattern of the early Christian church in the first century, which was largely egalitarian and inclusive of women¹¹¹. For Ropeti-Apisaloma, the Christian faith that Samoa adopted in the nineteenth century was complementarian and patriarchal, justified on the (mis)interpretation of texts such as Eph 5.23 and Gen 2.18-22.

¹⁰⁹ The *Nafanua* theology is situated within a broad theological framework pertaining to oral traditions, which includes the Samoan tradition of *fagogo*, Song's narrative theology and Oduyoye's folktalk (Ropeti-Apisaloma, *Nafanua Theology*, 3).

¹¹⁰ Roughly translated as, respecting the sacred relational spaces between people.

¹¹¹ Ropeti-Apisaloma, *Nafanua Theology*, 54-56.

Egalitarianism on the other hand, which Ropeti-Apisaloma subscribes to, asserts a basic equality of all humanity in Christ, and draws on texts such as Gen 1.26-28 and Galatians 3.28. Though there are reservations even against egalitarianism, as essentially a secular philosophy both Eurocentric and anthropocentric in its emphasis, its aspects can be modified. For Ropeti-Apisaloma, an egalitarian approach that is ‘authentically Samoan’, is one that is interactive; it is not about supplanting or emulating men, or highlighting the differences between women and men (as was the focus of the first wave of feminism in the 1970s), but about ensuring that all persons, male and females, are enabled to be themselves, unreservedly and without restriction. This can be expressed via a *Nafanua* theology, which builds on the egalitarian premise of the image of the Body of Christ, by envisioning a more contextual church of *atoaga* (wholeness) – a community gathered around Jesus, that seeks the fullness of life for all, and is grounded in right, holistic relationships with each other, with society, the world, and creation. Finally, to make a case for women’s ordination based on biblical texts alone is unwise, as it ignores other ecclesiastical, social, cultural and political movements both local and abroad¹¹².

4.1.2 Re-earthing: *Nafanua*, as an individual and as the centre of an axis of authoritative female figures both preceding (*Taema and Tilafaiga*) and succeeding (*Sooaemalelagi, Salamasina*), is a flagstaff of the collective experience of Samoan women, and more specifically a model of spiritual and practical leadership. The *Nafanua* hermeneutic furthermore compels readers to rediscover, or ‘re-earth’ the significance of the *feagaiga* role in its original cultural setting, as well as its value (alongside other female roles similarly marginalised as a result of colonial and Christian influence) as an agency for equality and unity in today’s society, and especially in church ministry. Re-earthing also takes into account

¹¹² Ropeti-Apisaloma, *Nafanua Theology*, 64, 72, 113.

the origins of Christian theology, its development over time, and its reality as an ever-shifting frontier, constantly experiencing renewal and reform - as much in social nature as in doctrine. The case in point is a Eurocentric, patriarchal worldview to which the early Christians subscribed to; a classical theology that endorsed male headship and distinct roles for men and women in church ministry. It is therefore not incidental, but it is in direct response to the perpetuation of this worldview, that the *Nafanua* hermeneutic separates itself, defining itself instead through interpretative approaches that will do more justice to how Samoa itself has developed historically, culturally and politically. The *Nafanua* hermeneutic, then, is a non-Eurocentric, postcolonial, feminist perspective, that draws from modern approaches that include relational, liberationist, contextual Pacific, feminist and biblical feminist. Finally, the multifaceted nature of the *Nafanua* hermeneutic allows it to establish solidarity with other similar approaches from around the post-colonial, non-European world, as well as from the Pacific.

4.1.3 Trans-earthing: The *Nafanua* hermeneutic is put into practice via observance of the *va tapuia*, the cosmological framework by which Samoans relate to one another and their surrounding creation, as creatures equal in value and responsibility (as called to by *Tagaloa*)¹¹³, and that therein governs their behaviour and identity. Underlying *va tapuia* is a harmonisation of the indigenous understanding of God, and the Christian understanding of God, the key commonality being that God is relational and immanent (as opposed to distant and transcendent), and that this relationality was supremely manifested in both Jesus and *Nafanua*, and the self-affirming, empowering virtues they both demonstrated, such as *amiotonu* (justice) and *filemu* (peace).¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Pre-colonial Samoans considered Tagaloalagi (god of the heavens) to be the highest god within the pantheon. The name literally means unrestricted freedom.

¹¹⁴ Ropeti-Apisaloma, *Nafanua Theology*, 205.

4.2 Dr Joan Aleluia Filemoni Tofaeono, *Tamaitai Samoa(na)*: '*Tamaitai Samoa(na)*' is considered essentially a liberation theology¹¹⁵; it looks back to indigenous religion as the key to restoring the full privilege and dignity of the *tamaitai / feagaiga*, which has been suppressed not only by the restrictions of patriarchy, but by the later introduction of additional 'foreign' concepts, such as the wife / *nofotane*. '*Tamaitai Samoa(na)*,' is similar to the *Nafanua* theology in that it also connects Samoan concepts of the divine, with the biblical vision of God. Tofaeono sees subordination experienced by women as a result of patriarchy - that is, 'predominantly masculine gendered constructs' of church and culture. Using transformational clues hidden with Scripture and indigenous sacred texts, Tofaeono proposes a circle model (drawn loosely from the setting of the village *fono*) by which Samoans can relate to each other and their physical/ natural/ spiritual surroundings. The circle serves as a safe place for existence that is relational, engendered, inclusive, reconciliatory and transformative.¹¹⁶ Like Ropeti-Apisaloma, Tofaeono pits a complementarian Gen 2.16-28 against an egalitarian Gen 1.18-22. The current hierarchical dualism of the Samoan Christian church, and its placing of men in the centre and women at the margins, is due to its adoption of the former. Thus, the institutional practices of conservative Samoan churches like the EFKS (ie. specific marriage practices, gender differentiation of roles, sexual ethics), are modelled irrelevantly on the hierarchical patriarchy of ancient Israel. These are conditions that must be modified in recognition not only of contextual differences, but also of the reality that in an ever changing contemporary world, contexts are never fixed¹¹⁷. A fundamental feature of Tofaeono's relational model, '*Le Alofisa o le Atua*' (the Sacred Circle of God), is the 're-imaging' of the

¹¹⁵ Joan Filemoni-Tofaeono, *A Theological Anthropology of Tamaitai: Re-imaging Tama'ita'i Sāmoa(na) in the Image of God: Reconstituting Their Space and Place in Alofi Sā o le Atua –Sacred Circle of God*, (Auckland: Auckland University, 2018), 193.

¹¹⁶ Filemoni-Tofaeono, *A Theological Anthropology of Tamaitai*: 205, 245.

¹¹⁷ Filemoni-Tofaeono, *A Theological Anthropology of Tamaitai*, 17.

tamaitai Samoa. As Samoan women are reconnected / resituated within their rightful place in relation to people, the environment, the cosmos and God, she rightfully portrays God's image, as God intended. For Tofaeono, this kind of egalitarian society was ideally expressed in the religio-cultural democracy of pre-Christian Samoa. God and creation are inseparable and interwoven in a circle. Ecclesiologically, this translates into a 'rainbow church' of relational diversity and inclusivity, where patriarchy is eliminated, allowing men and women to serve as equal companions; where all differences are embraced, and gifts are recognised and utilised to their full potential. As such this modifies the idea of the Trinity; the hierarchy of godheads is eliminated, replaced by a more egalitarian, circular structure. It was this type of egalitarian revolution that Jesus introduced into the typical patriarchy of ancient Judaism. In the same way, Samoa can bring about change through the re-imaging (*tagata-aga*) process; this will require experiential reflection, critical social assessment, questioning, re-appropriating of biblical and church tradition, and identification of clues within the literature¹¹⁸.

4.3 Dr Mercy Maliko, *Public theology*: Maliko addresses domestic violence as one consequence of a patriarchal church system. By dispensing, or by not preventing the circulation of biblical misinterpretations, ministers and church leaders become responsible for perpetrating violence and gender inequality. A pragmatic, values-centred theological concept developed by Maliko to address this problem, has been extensively referenced by academics and by organisations in Samoa and the Pacific. The theology highlights the concept of *fetausia'i*, or mutual respect and cooperation, as a means of instilling harmony within the family. The theology includes the following processes: a) The re-appropriation of core Samoan-Christian values of *fa'aaloalo* (respect), *alofa* (love), *tautua* (service), *amiotonu* (justice) and *soalaupule* (dialogue); b) The revisiting and the 're-packaging' by ministers of

¹¹⁸ Filemoni-Tofaeono, *A Theological Anthropology of Tamaitai*, 240-241.

biblical passages which, by being misinterpreted, causes detriment to women; these verses include 1 Corinthians 11.3-9 and 14.34 - 35, Ephesians 5.22-24, and 1 Timothy 2:11-14¹¹⁹; c) Training of ministers on the nature, causes and impact of violence¹²⁰; d) The calling upon church ministers to take initiative in equipping the laity to offer ministries for care and rehabilitation; to ‘shape norms’ for family life that prevent coercion or violence; e) The elimination of women’s barriers to full participation of women in church activities; f) Greater institutional support is required with regards to domestic violence. Church ministers must play a more proactive role, particularly in the area of education.

4.4 Review

From the above positions, we may confirm a collective, egalitarianist-leaning theological stance on roles of men and women, based on a number of common factors (headlined below in bold italics). We will review these factors against the Scriptural view on roles of men and women, as discussed in Chapter 1 (headlined in italics).

4.4.1 A view of patriarchy as intrinsically detrimental to harmonious social relations, and particularly to the freedom of females to live and work as equals / contemporaries in all areas of life. The ‘thread’ of patriarchy in scripture, church history and traditions, was incorporated into the Samoan worldview, causing Samoans to embrace a male, authoritative God, in the place of the relational God of life, inclusivity, equality, creativity and social respect. A male God has enabled the exclusive privileging of males, as well as the justification of abusive behaviour towards women. The Samoan worldview will be restored when women are empowered and restored to their rightful place as equals with equal opportunities,

¹¹⁹ Ramona Boodoosingh, et. al., ‘Research Briefing: Violence Against Women in Samoa’, *Women’s Studies Journal*, Vol. 32 (1/2), 2018, 16.

¹²⁰ Samoa Office of the Ombudsman / National Human Rights Institution, *National Public Inquiry into Family Violence in Samoa* (Apia: National Human Rights Institution, 2018), 44.

alongside men¹²¹, in a society of mutual kinship (a kin-dom) without patriarchy or hierarchy¹²².

Patriarchy is a foreign, imported concept: Feminists rarely give a definition of ‘patriarchy’; instead they denote a broad range of ideologies and behaviors, eg. androcentrism (or male-centeredness), sexism, and hierarchicalism. Whatever the definition, ‘patriarchy’ is unanimously denounced¹²³. This is a heavily biased view of patriarchy as something intrinsically pejorative. From a sociological perspective, patriarchy permeates all social, political, economic and religious strata; it traverses all time and space of human existence. Patriarchy is any system of organization (political, economic, religious, or social) that associates authority and leadership primarily with males and in which males fill the vast majority of authority and leadership positions. Patriarchy is distinguished from: 1) *male dominance* - an emotional ‘concurrence’ (felt by both man and woman) of the difference between a man and a woman in biological factors relevant to aggression. Male headship, and the socialization of boys and girls toward this male authority, is societal conformation to this biological difference and a result of society's attempting to utilize this difference, smoothly and effectively; 2) *male authority* – society’s associating of general authority in dyadic relationships with the male. Patriarchy, male dominance and male authority are universal; 3) *power* - the ability to influence the actions of others and to attain one's end. (Women in dyadic situations often have the power advantage, but this advantage does not flow from their invoking authority, and it is attained by overcoming the feelings of male dominance through feminine means, intelligence, etc)¹²⁴. The previous Section 3.1 on ‘Christianity and the *Fa’asamoa*’ shows that the form of governance in pre-colonial Samoan society was

¹²¹ Ropeti-Apisaloma, *Nafanua Theology*, 268.

¹²² Filemoni-Tofaeono, *A Theological Anthropology of Tamaitai*, 231-232, 239.

¹²³ Carter, *An Evangelical Analysis and Critique of Feminist Christology*, 44.

¹²⁴ Goldberg, *The Inevitability of Patriarchy*, 36.

patriarchal; there was a differentiation of functions of men and women, but equality in dignity and importance. The arrival of the LMS missionaries saw the intertwining of Christianity and culture into one entity. Many significant cultural and political changes were registered, affecting understanding and expectations regarding roles, but the male headship and role differentiation at the core of Samoan society, has remained to this day.

God is regarded as exclusively male, when he is not¹²⁵: The primary flaw at the heart of patriarchy, it is claimed, is belief in a male God, because this gives license to males to unjustly claim entitlement and privilege. A male God is not a universally accepted reality; Christian, Jewish and Islamic traditions, for example, portray God as feminine. The Creator God of Genesis 1 a non-gendered deity who transcends human gender¹²⁶. The Chapter 1 Scriptural Review shows that the Bible intentionally portrays God as a male, and that he established male headship over the human race. The study of 1 Timothy 2.8-15 (p. 159) shows that just as sin entered the world through one man (Romans 5.12-21), and all were subjected to life through one man, so all will receive life through one man. In other words, the human race has either one of 2 men as its covenant head, Adam or Christ; eschatologically, all will be related to God through one or the other.¹²⁷ O'Kelley discusses how Jesus was eternally begotten, how he existed as the Son of God before Creation.¹²⁸ Therefore, when he became incarnate according to the will of the Father, his Sonship identity was as a man (a Son), and his Sonship continues to be an eternal reality of his identity (1 Tim 2.5, Heb 6.20).

¹²⁵ This is a central feminist focus (eg. Wilson-Kastner, Schneiders). The view is that the androcentric stress on Jesus' maleness trivialises the doctrine of the incarnation. As such to say that God / Jesus is male is heretical and blasphemous (Carter, *An Evangelical Analysis and Critique of Feminist Christology*, 54.)

¹²⁶ Filemoni-Tofaeono, *A Theological Anthropology of Tamaitai*, 222.

¹²⁷ Aaron O'Kelley, 'Theology of Gender', 2020, <http://www.cccjacksonville.org>.

¹²⁸ This is reflected in the creeds of Nicea, Chalcedon, the Athanasian Creed, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and other important Christian statements.

Furthermore, as the Second Adam, Jesus had to come into the world as a man, in order to be the covenantal head of a new humanity.¹²⁹

Was it God's intention that the headship of Jesus should translate into headship of men within homes and churches? Our studies of Ephesians 5.21-33 (pp. 161-174), as well as 1 Corinthians 11.3-16 and 1 Timothy 2.11-15, show that God designed for men and women to mirror the relationship between God and humans in family and church, with man in the role of God, and women in the role of humanity. This does not mean, however, that men are superior to women, in the way that God is superior to humanity.¹³⁰ Because the man's love for the woman is to be sacrificial and selfless, it becomes, in a sense, his submission. But the fundamental feature of the correspondence of God/Jesus with man/husband, and of the church with women/wife, is that it is non-reversible. God always reveals himself in male terms – as father, king or husband, never as mother, queen or wife. Some bible texts apply feminine terminology to both God and Jesus, the most frequently quoted being Deut 32:18; Isaiah 42:14; 49:15; Matt 23:27; and Luke 15:8. These are of the nature of simile, rather than definition. Though God in some respects is like a mother, that doesn't mean he *is* a mother (Isaiah 49:15 actually contrasts him to a mother). Furthermore, the feminine references are not only infinitesimally disproportionate to masculine references, but the same small percentage of feminine metaphors is also applied directly to Moses (Num 11:12), the twelve apostles (John 16:21-22), and Paul (Gal 4:19; 1 Thessalonians 2:7), but we do not thereby think of Paul or Moses as bisexual, for example. We can talk of men 'giving birth' to a work project, by collaborating with 'bosom' friends, 'nursing' it in its infant stages, finally 'aborting' the mission, because it does not work out as originally 'conceived' - all without

¹²⁹ Aaron O'Kelley, *Theology of Gender*. In his book 'Knowing God', J.I Packer also discusses the unmistakable evidence from John's Gospel and his first epistle pointing to the Fatherhood of God and the Sonship of Jesus (J.I Packer, *Knowing God* (Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 84-87, 291-292.

¹³⁰ In Eph 5.25ff, Paul points to the husband's duty and obligation to love his wife - as Christ loved the church, dedicating himself to her betterment; and to love his wife as his own 'body', just as Christ loves the church as members of his body (Aaron O'Kelley, *Theology of Gender*.)

calling sexual orientation into question. Thus the theological significance of this language (from an egalitarian or feminist perspective) is neutralised.¹³¹ The ultimate significance of this is that how we model the God-humanity relationship, is based fundamentally on our gender. Because men are called to be in the role of God, and women in the role of humanity, the man must always be the head of the family, and he must always be the leader in the church.¹³² For this reason, the ordination of women is deemed contrary to God's design for the church and in the home. Furthermore, to claim that God is a non-gendered entity, or even androgynous (thereby opening the door to association of God with non-gendered or androgynous deities of human antiquity), does not have biblical precedent. C.S Lewis has this perspective:

Suppose the Reformers stopped saying a good woman may be like God, and began saying God is like a good woman. Suppose they say we might just as well pray to our Mother who art in Heaven as to our Father; that the Incarnation might just as well have taken a female as a male form, and the second person of the Trinity be as well called the Daughter as the Son. Suppose....the church were the bridegroom and Christ the bride....if all these proposals were ever carried into effect, we should have embarked on a different religion. Why not?.....what can it matter whether we say He or She, Father or Mother, Son or Daughter? But Christians think God himself has taught us how to speak of him. To say it doesn't matter is to say either that all the masculine imagery isn't inspired, (it) is merely human in origin.... the innovators are really implying that sex is something superficial, irrelevant to the spiritual life. To say that men and women are equally eligible for a certain profession is to say that, for the purposes of that profession, their sex is irrelevant. We are, within that context, treating both as neuters. As the state grows more like a hive, or ant hill, it needs an increasing number of workers who can be treated as neuters. This may be inevitable for our secular life; but in our Christian life, we must return to reality.”¹³³

¹³¹David Pawson, *Leadership is Male: What does the Bible Say?* (Berkshire: Anchor Recordings Ltd, 2015), 7.

¹³² The church must be led by qualified men, to serve as pastors/elders/bishops, and to preach and teach the whole congregation (John Macarthur, et. al., *Statement on Social Justice and the Gospel*, April 2018, <http://www.StatementOnSocialJustice.com>)

¹³³ C.S Lewis, *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics* (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970), 255-257.

A common egalitarian inference is that it was by Jesus' *humanity* that he was able to save the world, ie . he was able to represent all humanity, men and women, not because he was a man, but because he was a human. If Jesus' maleness was necessary for salvation, it was only because the people of the time would only listen to males; only males could challenge the institutions and power structures of the day. The example that Jesus sets for male and female pastors today is by way of mutuality. Together men and women can save humanity from corrupt social structures. We have established that Jesus' maleness is the prominent factor in a pattern of male headship that was established from the time of creation. As Adam represented the human race (which was not because of the social structures of his time) so did Christ, having been ordained by God to represent, like Adam before him, both men and women. At the very least, all complementarians believe that Jesus was a man, not a neuter ¹³⁴.

The Bible was written by men; it is biased: Egalitarians often follow secular feminism in undermining scriptural authority, challenging orthodox trinitarianism, and denying anything uniquely masculine (especially related to biblical 'God'-language and Jesus' gender). A direct manifestation of this is the call for feminine imagery of God to be reinterpreted, properly understood, and incorporated into evangelical Christian theology.¹³⁵ Christians believe that all text of Scripture is from God. It is noted, however, that the ancient Hebrew language was an expression of patriarchal culture; it was as male-centred as the culture it originated from. It does not follow that just because Bible teachings are divinely inspired, the language in which the teachings were written is itself divinely inspired. Having said that, we read that God, for example, collectively named the human race 'Adam' (Gen 1.26-27; .5.2), the name also given to his individual headship creation. That is found *in the*

¹³⁴ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 167.

¹³⁵ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 110-111; Carter, *An Evangelical Analysis and Critique of Feminist Christology*, 207.

Hebrew language, in the text of the Bible. The claim that these words have a patriarchal meaning that God didn't intend, or that they indicate nothing about God's view of gender, wants for legitimacy, and weakens the authority of Scripture.¹³⁶

Jesus opposed and overthrew patriarchy: A common setback of the patriarchal mentality is that its adherents do not follow the ministry of example of Jesus who, by his attitude and behaviour towards and relationship with women, opposed and overturned the patriarchal society of his day and age. Jesus did establish a revolutionary pattern that rebuked the patriarchal society of his time, and by which he forever challenged all cultures and societies that mistreat and denigrate women.¹³⁷ However Jesus did not overturn all male leadership. His calling of men to governing and teaching roles, was consistent. The twelve apostles he appointed were all men (Matthew 10.1-4). From a range of highly plausible explanations for this exclusivity, Pawson considers the most likely, and the most natural explanation, to be that it was Jesus' will that the patriarchal nature of government of God's people should continue from the Old Testament and covenant, to the New Testament and covenant.¹³⁸ In the Old Testament there were four historical leadership periods, each patriarchal: *a) Patriarchs* - God designated himself God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, not of Sarah, Rebekah and Rachel. Inheritance passed through sons. The twelve sons of Jacob became the twelve sons of Israel; there was no tribe of Dinah¹³⁹; *b) Prophets* - During the period from Moses to Samuel, prophets assumed national leadership. The law at Sinai enabled

¹³⁶ John Piper, Wayne Grudem, *50 Crucial Questions: An Overview of Central Concerns about Manhood and Womanhood* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1992), 53.

¹³⁷ Jesus honoured women, treating them as He treated men. He dialogued openly with them (John 4:1-27), taught them (Luke 10:38-42) and conversed with them over theological truths (Luke 10:38-42; John 4:7-26; 11:21-27). Women travelled with Jesus and were among his followers (Luke 8:1-3); they ministered to Jesus and supported him financially (Mark 15:40-41; Luke 8:3); and were, like men, used by Jesus as examples for his teachings and parables (Mark 12:41-44; Luke 15:8-10; 18:1-8).

¹³⁸ Pawson, *Leadership is Male*, 11.

¹³⁹ The apostle Peter lifts up the gentleness and submissive willingness of the wives of this patriarchal period, as a model for Christian wives (1 Peter 3.4-6).

a major upwards shift in the status of women, compared to the laws of surrounding pagan nations at the time. Any shortfall in the law from the ‘ideal’ of creation was considered to be due to the Fall and its implications, so that total restoration could only be achieved via the saving grace of the future new covenant. Thus the Mosaic law had traces of double standards, with more male than female rights (eg. polygamy, divorce, slavery). Though prophecy was a ministry for both men and women, Moses delegated his authority to 70 male elders. When Moses counted Israel, he only counted men over 20 years who were militarily capable and were married for more than one year. Women never had the responsibility of fighting (unlike the modern Israeli army). The instances of women who prophesied and led, does not discredit God’s order in which leading and teaching is the primary responsibility of men¹⁴⁰. The ‘prophetic’ ministries of Miriam (worship and singing), Huldah (private consultation), Isaiah’s wife (giving birth to a child with a prophetic name) and Anna (praying and fasting) indicate a broad spectrum in the Old Testament by which the concept of ‘prophet’ was defined and understood; *c) Kings* – unlike other nations, Israel had no queen rulers (Athaliah was illegitimate); there was an awareness of a divine principle that sons had to be born to ensure a succession of kings (1 Kings 2.4); *d) Priests* – in the post exilic period, national leadership fell to the high priests (male by divine law). The prophetic word (which was a major spiritual ministry for women) was replaced by the written word of the Law. Increasing legalism meant that women were not taught the law, and worship was segregated, as well as other man-made restrictions¹⁴¹. However, the people anticipated a day in which the Holy Spirit would be poured out, and all men and women would again prophesy.¹⁴² The 12 apostles eventually became the governing authority over the early church. The replacement for Judas had to be

¹⁴⁰ I agree with Grudem that recorded stories of the women prophets are seen ultimately to either endorse the usual leadership of men, or rebuke their incompetency, and failure to lead eg. Deborah and Jael, in their actions, indicted the weakness and cowardice of Barak and the men of Israel.

¹⁴¹ This became the foundation from which Pharisaic tradition was developed, as well as modern Judaism in general.

¹⁴² Pawson, *Leadership is Male*, 12.

‘one of the men who have accompanied us.’ (Acts 1.21). Following the day of Pentecost, men and women prayed together and prophesied; they experienced discipline inside and persecution outside the church; together they enlightened those who needed to be brought along further in the faith. But there was no radical shift in roles; there is no record of a woman preaching or teaching, for example, and the foundation of the church was male. Just as Jesus’ attitude and actions were consistent with his Father’s original creation, so too were the leaders of the early church in their teachings (note the similarities in Isaiah 1.17 and James 1.27; both Peter and Paul appealed to Genesis narratives in their exhortations regarding role differentiation). Most importantly, they stayed true in their teachings to the paradox of authority-submission / hierarchy-mutuality – men and women are equal and unequal; the same, yet different. These observations show that, although Jesus was opposed to strictures of patriarchy in first century Judea, he did not alter the roles of men and women¹⁴³, and he saw that the God-given pattern of male leadership, particularly in church ministry, remained intact.

4.4.2 Patriarchy pacifies women, and leads to abuse and domestic violence. The problem is aggravated by a church that is perceived as distant and unresponsive:

Patriarchy leads to domestic violence: It cannot be refuted that patriarchy is the main instigator and contributor to the violence, discrimination, insensitivity and victimisation experienced by women. In Samoa, this has undeniably been the case. The Bible does not endorse domestic violence; it is an evil that Christians and all people should oppose. Having said that, if in our study we have seen that there is a specific way in which God intended us to

¹⁴³Jesus deliberately refrained from disclosing information on some issues (which may have included roles of men and women) at that particular point in time (John 16:12).

understand and apply the concept of patriarchy / male headship – as a paradoxical, ‘loving authority - willing submission’ relationship between men and women, modified by mutuality; if we have seen that God never opposed male headship but utilised it for his purposes, then it would not be considered extreme (nor should it be) that within the problem may actually lie the solution. I put forward that if the above Biblical portrait of patriarchy / male headship is rightly understood and practised in the context of loving authority- willing submission; if we recognise that our moral values are synonymous with, and fully appropriated through, biblical values, then there will be no need for alternative biblical hermeneutics, or a push to ‘re-image’ ourselves with new moral frameworks, using sources that reach beyond biblical confines. We appropriate ourselves to God’s word, honouring it as the only ideal framework by which our cultural values may be rightly understood. For instance, in Chapter One we saw that every instruction to wives to submit to their husbands, was qualified by the instruction for husbands to love their wives:

- Ephesians 5: ‘Wives, submit to your husbands....’ (v.22); Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...’ (v.25).
- Colossians 3: ‘Wives, submit to your husbands....’ (v.18); Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them (v.25).
- 1 Peter: ‘Wives, be subject to your own husbands...’ (v.1); Husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honour to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life...’ (v.7)

I believe the good intentions and vision of theologies such as *fetausiai* (mutuality), *tausi le va tapuia*, and others, are properly situated and realised within the biblical framework of the loving authority- willing submission, as God established from creation:

- ‘Wives, submit / be subject to your husbands’ (*alofa, tausi le va tapuia, fa’aaloalo, tautua, amiotonu, soalaupule*), as you are to the Lord’ (*tausi le va tapuia*)

- ‘Husbands, love your wives (*alofa, tausi le va tapuia*), as Christ gave himself (*tautua*); do not be harsh with them (*amiotonu*); live with your wives in an understanding way (*soalaupule*), showing honor’ (*fa’aaloalo*)

Otherwise, these values can mean anything to anyone; whereby the misconstruing, misuse and dishonouring of these values that Maliko fears, will be a certainty. A mother may feel *alofa* for her daughter who the father is abusing, but that will not override the mother’s *alofa* for her husband and his reputation, or the wider family and its integrity. Thus, ‘*faaaloalo*’ must prevail; the ‘*fetausia*’ code must be upheld: ‘*O Laloifi lava lenei.*’ (‘What happens here, stays here.’). But Scriptural *alofa* is to love as God loves, ie. living according to his word. Marriage partners, for example, are to *alofa* by neutralising the abusive environment, by temporary separation if necessary (1 Cor 7.10-11), not only for their sakes but for their children, relatives and everyone else involved; with the confidence in God that with time, self-evaluation and repentance, peace and reconciliation will happen. Witnesses to abuse, for example, do not *alofa* by ‘concealing the wounded bird’ (*‘Ufiufi a manu gase’*), but by showing discernment, by having the godly courage to point out right from wrong (Colossians 1.9; 1 Thessalonians 5.21), and to undergo the necessary procedures as required by governing authorities. Bible texts will also be misconstrued if they are extracted and merged with other influences into a ‘public theology’ ie. a social gospel, with a concept of justice not defined solely by God’s prescribed will (as per his Word) but also by secular cultures, ideologies and opinions. For example, the image of the church as one ‘body in Christ’ in 1 Cor 12.12-27 is often misinterpreted to mean that the church welcomes everyone as equally respected members of the Body of Christ, all have varied gifts, (ie. united through our ‘uniqueness’) and that there should be no separation of ministry into hierarchical structures, into ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ ranks.¹⁴⁴ Paul believes that some gifts are more prominent than others, but this does not

¹⁴⁴Ropeti-Apisaloma, *Nafanua Theology*, 123.

translate to ‘higher’ or ‘lower,’ as if some gifts are superior and others inferior. All gifts have different functions but are of equal value and honour¹⁴⁵. A common analogy is that of a football team. The players may be more well-known and receive more public honour than the coaching staff, but they are not superior, or more important. The coaching staff coach, lead and manage the players, but they are not superior, or more important. The staff and the players work together as one body; their different gifts are geared towards a common objective. A public theology is infeasible as long as the world is in disagreement on the meanings of ‘theology’, ‘truth’, ‘justice’, ‘love’, etc. God intends that there be singular meanings to these concepts, by the singular authority of his Word. Taking the example of ‘justice’, the Bible associates God’s justice with: *a) charity* —goodwill toward all; compassion for the underprivileged; assistance for the fatherless and the widow; love for foreigners; care for the poor, especially providing needy people with the necessities of life (Deut 10:18; Psalm 140:12; Ezek 22:29). However, biblical justice is not a one-sided affair, ie. it is not about distributing privilege by being partial to the poor or disenfranchised. This is a mentality that the Bible actually condemns as being unjust (Ex 23:3; Lev 19:15); *b) equity* - equal treatment for everyone under the law; *c) righteousness* - consistency with the demands of God’s law. This includes punishment for evildoers (Jer 5:26–29); obedience to authorities (Rom 13:1–7); impartial penalties that fit the crime (Lev 24:17–22); and a strong work ethic, in which those who don’t work should not receive assistance (1 Thessalonians 4:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:10). Many of these aspects of true justice are conspicuously missing from modern ‘social justice’ discourse. Since the beginning, God has revealed how we are to truly understand him through the prophecies, utterances, writings and thoughts of his followers, culminating in the centrality of Jesus Christ (who proclaimed himself to be the only ‘truth’), and in the continuing work of the Holy Spirit. Ultimately from a Christian viewpoint, there is only one exclusive

¹⁴⁵Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 450.

interpretation of these values that will qualify, and bring true peace to our communities, and that is through the lens of the Gospel, ie. full adherence to the instruction of Scripture.

Three summative points are now made: a) It follows, that it is not patriarchy / male headship that leads to abuse and domestic violence, but the misinterpretation, manipulation, abuse and exploitation of patriarchy / male headship. An outlook popularised by Schussler-Fiorenza, is to filter biblical text, ie. to earmark texts that oppress women (eg. 2 Samuel 13.1-22, the rape of Tamar)¹⁴⁶ and then blame those forms of oppression (eg. rape, polygamy), on patriarchy. By the same token, texts that are regarded as liberating for women (eg. Ruth and Esther) are positively acknowledged¹⁴⁷, though they take place within the same patriarchal contexts. Egalitarians will take the positive stories of Ruth and Esther etc. as an indication that God is overcoming patriarchy, with the goal of establishing equal roles for men and women (based on the assumption that patriarchy is wrong). However, negative stories of discrimination, like the story of Tamar, are interpreted as God revealing the evil of patriarchy, for the same goal of establishing equal roles for men and women (again, naturally assuming that patriarchy is wrong). By contrast, a biblical interpretation of women-affirming texts (that we should adhere to) is that God recognises the valuable ministry of women, in the context of male headship. We base this on the fact that God never rebukes patriarchy, but instead affirms it. Negative texts (eg. stories of rape) are interpreted biblically as God showing the evil abuse and manipulation of patriarchy. We know this because although the Bible never condemns patriarchy itself, it does condemn rape (Deut 22.25-27) as it does adultery (Exodus 20.17) etc. A helpful scenario is that of David abusing his authority by committing adultery (2 Samuel 11). He was punished severely by God, but God never revoked David's status as king, or presented his sin as evidence of the evil of male headship. David and his sons were retained

¹⁴⁶ Mercy Maliko et. al., *Church Responses to Gender Based Violence Against Women in Samoa* (Auckland: New Zealand Institute for Pacific Research, 2018), 36.

¹⁴⁷ Ropeti-Apialoma, *Nafanua Theology*, 37.

by God for Israel's throne¹⁴⁸. The deeper problem is our systemic misinterpretation, negligence and unfaithfulness to Scriptural patterns. Put differently, if abusers of patriarchy facilitate violence and abuse in society, that does not make patriarchy wrong, in and of itself. Sociologist Steven Goldberg observes that hormonal biology necessitates patriarchy is being not only universal, but inevitable. Virtually every society associates general authority in dyadic relationships with males. The 'aggression' element that is crucial to the attainment of authority roles is predominantly a male trait, as nurturance and emotional socialization are invariably characteristic of females. The existence of dominance and submission factors in male and female physiologies, is also then strongly suggested by this biological factor. Goldberg's work is important in establishing some ground for potential confluence between human nature and the biblical concept of authority-submission. Furthermore, despite the infinite variability of economic, political, religious and social systems of up to 4000 societies visited by Goldberg across the world, all these societies acknowledge male dominance¹⁴⁹.

It is too often overlooked that we live in sin, as a result of the Fall. At the root of all patriarchal abuse and domestic violence is a struggle of wills; the man's urge to use his greater strength to subdue the woman, as with the woman's constant urge to subordinate the man. Because of sin, the man's responsibility for leadership and direction, was degraded so that he becomes domineering and abusive. This entails each sex viewing the other as no longer a subject, but an object for the servicing of its own purposes. Only through divine grace will God's original creation order be restored, and men and women be able to live together as Adam and Eve did¹⁵⁰; b) Any teaching that stresses authority without equally emphasising reciprocation, ie. that stresses a wife's submission without equally stressing the husband's duty to love and care for his wife, is a misinterpretation (see p.77); c) Any serious approach to Samoa's domestic

¹⁴⁸ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 148.

¹⁴⁹ Goldberg, *The Inevitability of Patriarchy*, 43.

¹⁵⁰ Pawson, *Leadership is Male*, 40.

violence rates depends on a willingness and courage to head towards a lifestyle and theology that is true to Scripture; that (in the context of men and women) has at its centre a loving authority-willing submission axis.

The Bible is used to justify violence, endurance in suffering, and service (tautua) of women: The use of the Bible (and its patriarchal leanings) to justify domestic violence has been highlighted¹⁵¹, but this matter requires further analysis and discussion. Of the four major studies that have been produced to date on prevalence of violence against women in Samoa, only 2 studies pursued in detail the main causes and contributing factors: a) The 2000 Samoa Family Health and Safety Study gave a list of 19 contributing factors. ‘Church teachings’ was the 18th least significant factor, with 3 /195 responses registered. None of the 3 responses was by a victim or a perpetrator; 2 belonged to local service providers, and the remaining one by participants of a workshop¹⁵². 73% of respondents believed violence to be normal – a result that the Study found was consistent with a proclivity of families and neighbours to be the most likely to ‘intervene’ in the event of abuse¹⁵³; b) In the 2017 Family Safety Study, factors contributing to violence were thought to belong mostly within the ‘cultural’ category, including the belief that ‘the husband is the head of the family’. In a separate ‘Christian values’ category, the contributing factors were: ‘not attending church’ and ‘limited knowledge.’ The negative influence of ‘church teachings’ was not regarded as a factor.¹⁵⁴ The exhortation by churches for women to endure abuse (where this occurs) is a misrepresentation of scripture and places the lives of women and children in serious jeopardy. The misappropriation of Jesus’

¹⁵¹ Faala Sam Amosa, *Courting a Public Theology of Faavae for the Church and Contemporary Samoa* (Bathurst: Charles Sturt University, 2020), 81; Maliko et. al., *Church Responses to Gender Based Violence Against Women in Samoa*, 36.

¹⁵² Secretariat of the Pacific Community, *Samoa Family Health and Safety Study* (Noumea: Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2006), 76.

¹⁵³ SPC, *Samoa Family Health and Safety Study*, 82.

¹⁵⁴ Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development, *2017 Samoa Family Safety Study* (Apia: MWCSO, 2017), 95.

suffering (specifically via the ‘theology of the cross’) as the basis for women to remain in abusive relationships¹⁵⁵ is addressed by Tracy. The suffering of women cannot be modelled on the suffering of Jesus, because Jesus’ suffering was unique. It was *redemptive* suffering (ie. having transformative spiritual value), on account of the following: a) Jesus was innocent, pure from sin,¹⁵⁶ b) His redemptive suffering was unavoidable, it was the only way to save humanity. Had it been possible for Jesus to opt out and avoid suffering (just as he had stayed clear of hostility and abuse several times during his ministry (Matt 12.14-15; John 8.59; 10.31,39; 11.53-54), he would have (Luke 22.42). Scripture doesn’t sanctify avoidable suffering, nor did Jesus teach us to simply accept abuse (evil). He avoided it, and he instructed us to pray that God would deliver us from it (Matt 6.13)¹⁵⁷. Part of the discussion from the study of 1 Peter 1.3-7 (pp. 178), is how Paul may have seen separation as a necessary option, especially in extreme cases (1 Cor 7.10,11)¹⁵⁸.

Churches are inactive, irresponsible: The data from the national violence prevalence reports points to the grave responsibility church ministers have in the protection of the wife and the family; to take husbands’ violence seriously, and to encourage women to take appropriate, godly action in abuse/ life-threatening situations.

¹⁵⁵ Ropeti-Apisaloma, *Nafanua Theology*, 95; Mercy Maliko, ‘A Public Theology Response to Domestic Violence in Samoa,’ *International Journal of Public Theology* (10), 2016, 63.

¹⁵⁶ Our capacity for personal redemptive suffering is compromised by our own sinfulness that often helps to precipitate the abuse (Steven Tracy, ‘Domestic Violence in the Church and Redemptive Suffering in 1 Peter’, *Calvin Theological Journal*, Vol. 41 (2), Grand Rapids, Calvin Theological Seminary, 2006), 15.)

¹⁵⁷ Steven Tracy, ‘Domestic Violence in the Church and Redemptive Suffering in 1 Peter’, *Calvin Theological Journal*, 16.

¹⁵⁸ Indeed, separation from abusive situations is a matter of principle in scripture (1 Sam 19:12; 27:1; Acts 9:22–25; 14:5–6; 17:8–10, 14), as are other measures, such as notifying church (1 Cor 5.1-13; 1 Tim 5.19-20) and civic (Acts 23.12-22; Rom 13.1-4) authorities (Steven Tracy, ‘Domestic Violence in the Church and Redemptive Suffering in 1 Peter’, *Calvin Theological Journal*, 13.)

4.4.3 An alternative, anti-hierarchical position is required, that moves away from classical theology and leans towards equality and relationality, drawing from both modern interpretative approaches and old indigenous values.

At the heart of this position is the abolishment of hierarchy (manifested most significantly in the Samoan culture by patriarchy). This also necessitates the removal of elements inherent within patriarchy. As was done with the previous factors, I will aim to balance the discussion by reviewing these elements from a Scriptural / complementarian perspective.

The notion of an other-worldly, transcendent, imposing god, as opposed to a relational god: A common criticism of Christianity is that it introduced the western concept of dualism (ie. the compartmentalisation of life), which overturned the indigenous belief in the relationality of all creation.¹⁵⁹ As such, god was separated from the world and became ‘other’, a distant, transcendent authoritarian; male /masculinity was separated from female / femininity; the spiritual was removed from the physical, and so forth. To be sure, dualism has been considered heretical, particularly in considering its origins. Even in Christian circles, dualism tends to play to the arrogance of humankind, in that it overlooks the cosmic-ness of life (ie. *all* is sacred, *all* was lost, *all* is being redeemed), and therefore the cosmic implications of the life, death and resurrection of Christ, who was both God and man. It denies the all-permeating nature of Christian culture, as expressed in importance of being the salt of the earth / light of the world (Matt 5.13,14); or in the directive to do *all* things for the glory of God (1 Cor 10.31)¹⁶⁰. On the other hand, because of the Fall of man, it became part of the believer’s duty to resist the temptation to merge the creator and the creation. In the letter to the Romans, Paul rebukes the sinful tendency of humans to reduce God to the level of the

¹⁵⁹ Ropeti-Apisaloma, *Nafanua Theology*, 167; Filemoni-Tofaeono, *A Theological Anthropology of Tamaitai*, 185.

¹⁶⁰ Jeremy Shepherd, *Christian Enemy #1: Dualism Exposed and Destroyed* (Dallas: Dallas Baptist University, 2004), 23.

world, and to serve ‘created things rather than the Creator.’ (Romans 1.25)¹⁶¹. It appears therefore that the development of a dualist concept may have to do with man’s response to sin, and has, at its heart, the holiness and sovereignty of God. God is separate only in the sense that he does not abide sin, that he must judge the world and be its moral authority.

However, McGrath explains that what is often defined as Christian ‘dualism’ is actually the idea that God and his creation are both distinct and interrelated. This is in fact not dualism, but rather an affirmation of God’s simultaneous transcendence and imminence; his authority and relationality. The world, because it belongs to God, is to be honoured, respected and affirmed. At the same time, the world is a fallen creation, it is criticised, with the ultimate aim that it is redeemed. Humans are part of this creation, and have special functions in accordance with God’s design¹⁶². One of these functions is stewardship of creation; another is male headship. Both of these are to be contrasted with secular notions of ‘ownership’ ‘domination’ or ‘authority.’ Only when stewardship and headship are viewed in their biblical sense can they be a true reflection of God’s design. Our Chapter 1 Scriptural review shows that in God’s relationship with humans there is a demarcation of roles. God’s sovereign authority places him over and above his creation; furthermore, God expects his people to model this relationship amongst each other, ie. authority-submission (Eph 5.21). The relationship is moderated, however, where both the authority of God and submission of his people are implemented in love, making the relationship mutual and reciprocal. Thus God’s transcendence co-exists with his relationality¹⁶³; his authority is moderated by his love (see the section on Eph 5.21-33). That God can be both transcendent and immanent, is denied by the Samoan theologians¹⁶⁴. Scripture shows that not only is God both hierarchical and

¹⁶¹ Alistair McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (West Sussex: John Wiley and Sons, 2011), 389-390).

¹⁶² McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 390.

¹⁶³ Ropeti-Apisaloma also mentions coexistence of transcendence and imminence, but this seems to be in the sense of a person’s experience of the divine Spirit (Ropeti-Apisaloma, *Nafanua Theology*, 176.)

¹⁶⁴ Ropeti-Apisaloma, *Nafanua Theology*, 176.

relational, but this is the design he intended humanity to model their relationship to him and to each other on, a design ingrained from creation. The alternative view of an ideal society is one that is exclusively mutual and relational, without patriarchy or hierarchy.¹⁶⁵ Here the trajectory heads towards the shunning of human authority, and subsequently the denial of divine authority. If God is relegated to the human gathering, and becomes a mere 'kin' to us, then we have begun to redefine God in our image. The human is one with God, ie. the human becomes God, and refers to him or herself (although perhaps unconsciously) as 'I am who I am.'¹⁶⁶ Phillips discusses how, behind an inability to conceive of a God who can be both 'terrifyingly vast' and 'minutely attentive' at the same time, is an unconscious sense of inadequacy. We draw a mental picture of God based on our knowledge and experience of man. When we model God on what we know of man, the idea of God magnified to a being that is infinitely High, is detestable. We react by constructing a god with preferable moral qualities (ie. like our own), by which we would also, either unconsciously or deliberately, be recreating with¹⁶⁷ in this god the same blind spots. Feminists, for example, would prefer their god as a Parent rather than a Father. They would interpret Jesus' salvation exclusively through maternal experiences of life and birth, ignoring any associations with violence and agonising suffering. Salvation is disassociated with forgiveness from sin, but becomes more about restoring right relationships. In this way we make ourselves co-creators with god, of a 'just' world. In the Samoan context, the root of this situation is the exploitation and manipulation of patriarchy, and its internalisation. Phillips goes on to say that unless our conception of god is more than the sum of our own qualities, unless God is something 'other' than his creation (other than ourselves), then our 'God' is only our 'self.'¹⁶⁸ God must be 'Other', because of

¹⁶⁵ Filemoni-Tofaeono, *A Theological Anthropology of Tamaitai*, 231-232,239.

¹⁶⁶ Filemoni-Tofaeono, *A Theological Anthropology of Tamaitai*, 250.

¹⁶⁸ J.B Phillips, *Your God is Too Small: A Guide for Believers and Skeptics Alike* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1951), 41.

his holiness (the Hebrew *qadosh* and the Greek *hagios*, common descriptives of God, both connote distinctiveness and separateness). In his infinite perfection he is wholly ‘other’ than his creatures, as the following texts demonstrate: ‘*Who is like You, majestic in holiness?*’ (Exodus 15.11); ‘*There is no one holy like the Lord, indeed, there is no one besides You*’ (1 Sam 2.2). But by his grace he condescends and relates to us, making us beneficiaries of his mercy. For feminists, ‘other’ is negative, and there appear to be 2 understandings: a) women are ‘other’ on the basis of their being mistreated and excluded by a patriarchal society; this interpretation is projected onto god, ie. feminists can identify with a god who is ‘other’, in the sense that he is left out, discriminated against; b) on the other side of the spectrum, god epitomises the male; he is ‘other’ in the sense that he is distant, inaccessible, imposing his authoritative will from afar. In both cases, the solution is to draw god back into the human circle; to see god as a relational god ie. on an equal level of mutuality and reciprocity with his creation.

The notion of male privilege: It was discussed that in the Bible, God does not condemn patriarchy or male headship. Male privilege, in the sense that men use their status of headship to oppress women, or to benefit themselves at the expense of women, is due to a corruption or perversion of male headship as God intended.

The restoration of Samoan female privilege and sacred identity: The central premise of this position is that with the arrival of the European colonisers and missionaries, new, largely Eurocentric roles were imposed on Samoan women that devalued their cultural status and privilege. One example is the increasing relegation of women to domestic duties; another is the transferral of the *feagaiga* status to the church minister. A common factor is a desired removal of these imposed constraints, and a retracing of indigenous elements in order to

restore Samoan women to their rightful state of identity. This position combines Scripture with a number of secular ideologies. The core aspects of these ideologies are clearly reflected in the Samoan theology. Some of them are discussed here: a) *Liberation theology* is centred on praxis. Conceived in the 1970s by Catholic priests working in the poorest *barrios* of Latin America, it argues that the church must serve the oppressed by working towards social justice on earth, not just by preaching a heavenly kingdom in the future. Because it centred on the experience of the downtrodden and socially oppressed, many feminists naturally latched on to liberation theology. Letty Russell regarded it as genitive of women's empowerment. Rosemary Radford Ruether concluded that the Bible was incompatible with feminist theology, because it was corrupted by dualism and was therefore oppressive to women. Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza stated that the Bible was not normative or revelatory; authority comes not from the text, but from whichever community is interacting with the text. Feminists were to view the Bible with a 'hermeneutic of suspicion'; texts should only be considered genuinely 'scriptural' if they sought to end relations of domination and exploitation of women¹⁶⁹. Like critical race theory, liberation theology has its origins in Marxism. It redefines the task of the Church as being about communal empowerment and uplifting the oppressed. One of its outcomes, as demonstrated by James Cone's black liberation movement of the 1960s, is a renouncing of the substitutionary atonement as a form of weakness that constrains the plight of the oppressed¹⁷⁰. b) *Feminism*¹⁷¹ is a political ideology that aims to define and establish

¹⁶⁹ Cochran, *Evangelical Feminism: A History*, 121.

¹⁷⁰ Owen Strachan, *Christianity and Wokeness: How the Social Justice Movement is Hijacking the Gospel – and the Way to Stop It* (Washington: Salem Books, 2021), 56-57.

¹⁷¹ Sociologists view feminism as a denial that the natural order decrees that dyadic and social authority must be associated with men; they also see no reason for prominence of male headship in every society. This position is not hypothetical, but is unquestioningly accepted by feminists as truth. The challenge is that because feminism often views patriarchy and male dominance in economic terms (drawing from Marxism eg. Engels), it fails to explain the universality of patriarchy and the near / complete universality of the family, across thousands of (formerly) unconnected societies with endless religious, economic, and familial variabilities, and at various stages of development. Moreover, it forces the development of every society onto a single continuum of linear evolution when in reality there are a great many lines of social evolution. One outcome is the formulation of political policies predicated on a conception of the nature of men and women that ignores behaviourally relevant innate sexual differences (Goldberg, *The Inevitability of Patriarchy*, 24.)

the political, economic, personal and social equality of the sexes. Feminists believe society prioritises the male point of view and that women are therefore treated unjustly. Feminists are open to other sources of authority (eg. science, reason, experience) and are greatly influenced by liberal theology, as well as liberation theology. They are less bibliocentric, and more accepting of secular feminist social and political agendas. Doctrinally they subscribe to pluralism – God is both Father and Mother. Panentheism takes precedence over theism. Salvation is considered important not because of Jesus’ substitutionary atonement for sin, but as an exemplary model of selfless, relational love. Sin is redefined as something that keeps humans from pursuing justice (eg. patriarchy is therefore sinful). By their understanding of ‘justice’, feminists condone divorce, homosexuality, lesbianism and abortion¹⁷². Tofaeono and Ropeti-Apisaloma often touch on the notion and experience of intersectionality (or kyriarchy), which also has roots in feminism and critical race theory, and since the Black Lives Matter movement of 2013, has been a prominent aspect of the political and cultural landscape, particularly in the US. Intersectionality advances the “rights” of minorities of many kinds to remove inequality, or even difference itself, from the world. This includes the removal of men from positions of authority, and the training of boys to see strong manhood as akin to ‘toxic masculinity’¹⁷³; c) *Biblical feminism* adheres to bible inerrancy and traditional methods of doctrinal interpretation and practice. Their point of departure from the Protestant community is their interpretation of passages relating to the roles of women and men, in which they support ‘inclusivity’. For biblical feminists (eg. Schussler Fiorenza, Ruether), the Bible cannot simply be discarded, because of its enormous universal political power. The Bible must be transformed or women will continue to be subjected to its kyriarchal tyranny. The solution, then, is for experiential authority of the fully egalitarian religious community (ie. the

¹⁷² Cochran, *Evangelical Feminism: A History*, 147.

¹⁷³ Strachan, *Christianity and Wokeness*, 34-35.

‘womenchurch’) to supercede the supposedly ‘normative’ authority of the biblical text. The Bible, doctrines and traditions, etc. must be viewed from the experience and praxis of oppressed and overlooked communities. Women’s experience becomes the normative authority, by which feminists seek to transform theology for the purpose of women’s liberation. For Carter, biblical feminism is simply a method in which the Bible is retained as a source for theology - not accepted as spiritually inspired, but nor can it be rejected outright either. So it is supplemented (with traditions outside the OT and NT, including heretical traditions eg. Gnosticism, Quakerism; near Eastern and Greco Roman religion and philosophy; and critical post Christian worldviews like liberalism, romanticism and Marxism) and revised according to feminist principles (reference); d) *The Samoan Indigenous Reference (SIR)*¹⁷⁴ is a concept that Tui Atua Tamasese Efi developed and popularised in 2009. Both Tofaeono and Ropeti-Apisaloma reference Tui Atua’s works extensively. The reference provides the basis for the *faasamoa*, the social and political structure of Samoan society as it exists today. Though Samoan traditions are understood as being in a constant state of hybridity, they are underpinned by eternal values and principles, which include the following: a worldview that sees all of creation as integrated¹⁷⁵; man’s obligation for environmental stewardship; genealogical connection to Tagaloa as Parent; cultural diversity, and; recognition of the historical struggle for freedom. The aim of the SIR is for Samoans to know and embrace their identity unapologetically, and to apply that identity in their present day. This will involve the retracing of Samoan histories and traditions in their original, unadulterated forms, and to establish these henceforth ‘sanitized’ histories and traditions as authoritative, to guide the way

¹⁷⁴ SIR outlines how Samoan traditions are intertwined and embedded in ‘rituals and customs, symbols, metaphors and proverbs, chants, song and dance, myths and legends, genealogies and honorifics, oracles and riddles.’ (Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi, *Suesue Manogi / In Search of Fragrance: Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Taisi Efi and the Samoan Indigenous Reference* (Apia: National University of Samoa, 2009), 315.)

¹⁷⁵ In terms of religion, the Samoan achieves peace through harmony with the cosmos, the environment, his fellow man and himself. This harmony has as its premise a creation narrative, which has at its centre the progenitor god Tagaloa.

Samoans, both local and abroad, live out their present, and head into the future. 3 observations are made: i) The fact that the Samoan Indigenous Reference has been christened in some circles as ‘scriptural’¹⁷⁶, in the same way that Samoan myths are now regarded as ‘sacred texts’¹⁷⁷, immediately cancels out the view of the Bible as a singular authority; ii) The SIR perspective on European missionaries ‘sanitizing’ Samoan culture and history, is affirmed by the Samoan theologians. K.R Howe, however, paints a different picture. He states that the missionaries did indeed intend for there to be a minimum compromise (the assumption being that the Samoans would over time become familiar with Biblical teaching, and then eventually do away with old practices themselves).¹⁷⁸ But this was not a proposition met with indignation. Virtually all Samoans saw Christianity as a means for economic and political gain, and based their allegiance to Christianity on this.¹⁷⁹ Furthermore, the Samoans retained several of their old practices, suggesting that they had always had the final authority on which practices would be kept, and which would be discarded. The point is that Samoans were hardly victims (in the fullest sense of the word) to Christian influence. The quasi-independent, family-driven social structure of the local Samoan communities provided an environment of relative tolerance that allowed Samoans the freedom to respond to Christianity as they chose¹⁸⁰. What remains to be seen, is whether the *matai* who headed these communities acted after consultation with their families and villages, or whether they acted independently, with their own interests mostly in mind. The legacy of patriarchy, as it has been wrongfully applied and experienced in modern times, suggests that the latter route was taken in most cases. Furthermore, it could very well be that the idea of the Europeans impacting many of our traditions, was in many cases a

¹⁷⁶ Afereti Uili, ‘Scripturalise Indigenous References: An Invitation from Samoa’, *Theologies from the Pacific: Postcolonialism and Religions* (Cham; Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 120.

¹⁷⁷ Ropeti-Apialoma, *Nafanua Theology*, 252.

¹⁷⁸ K.R Howe, *Where the Waves Fall: A new South Sea Islands History from first settlement to colonial rule*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985), 249-255.

¹⁷⁹ Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, 26.

¹⁸⁰ Howe, *Where the Waves Fall*, 249-255.

misplaced assumption. The *feagaiga* is raised as a case in point. The conventional view is that the transposing of the *feagaiga* relationship between brother and sister onto the relationship between pastor and church, was part of colonial transformation, and weakened the spiritual power and authority of Samoan women¹⁸¹. Ioka offers a different perspective. First, the christening of the pastor as '*faafeagaiga*' (ie. imitator of the *feagaiga*) reflected Samoans' acceptance and appropriation of the biblical vision for Samoa. '*Feagaiga*' signifies covenantal living – on one hand, the pastor was to be a living symbol, an eternal reminder to Samoa of the historical decision that they made to be for Christ, as a 'covenanted community of faith.' On the other, it signified a transformation in the spirit and the manner of all cultural gatherings. Modern Samoa was brought about essentially as a product of historical, collective determination of Samoa to uphold its covenant status. Secondly, the *faafeagaiga* status was inspired by *Pili's*¹⁸² daughter *Tolufale*, who was designated advisor / counsellor to her brothers¹⁸³ (*Tolufale* was regarded by some as a male¹⁸⁴ and by others as a female.¹⁸⁵) For Ioka, then, attempts to ordain women on the basis of the cultural conception of *feagaiga* are unfounded, because how the *fa'afeagaiga* was conceptualised has nothing to do with gender-based considerations. It is the advisory role that is emphasised. Nor can the establishment of the *fa'afeagaiga* be wholly ascertained in the light of the *feagaiga's* cultural place and significance in the philosophy of the *fa'amatai*. Rather, it needs to be equally understood,

¹⁸¹Latai, '*Changing Covenants in Samoa? From Brothers and Sisters to Husbands and Wives?*', 102; Ropeti-Apialoma, *Nafanua Theology*, 82.

¹⁸²*Pili* was the head of an ancient 'founder family' of Samoan society from which also had originated the names and divisions of the cultural districts of Western Samoa.

¹⁸³Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the CCCS*, 27.

¹⁸⁴Turner, *Samoa, A Hundred Years Ago and Long Before*, 198; Kramer, *The Samoa Islands*, 28,250; Tofaeono Tanuvasa Tavale, *Nisi o Taofi i le Foafoaga o Samoa: A History of Samoa* (Auckland: Fue Lavelave Press, 2012), 109.

¹⁸⁵Efi, *Suesue Manogi / In Search of Fragrance*, 65; Penelope Schoeffel, 'Rank, gender and politics in ancient Samoa: The genealogy of Salamasina O le Tafaifa', *Journal of Pacific History*, 22: 4, 1987, 178; Lona Siauanane, *Faasamoa: A Look at the Evolution of the Faasamoa in Christchurch* (Christchurch: University of Canterbury, 2004) 35.

according to Meleisea, in the light of 'a new traditional order' in which 'the most influential of all the seeds of change to be planted in Samoa was Christianity.'¹⁸⁶

Two submissions have been made by the Samoan theologians, that will bring about desired change:

1) *The gradual dismantling of classical theology*. This is to say, by implication, that for two centuries Samoa been misled by false doctrine. Our study has suggested that this is not the case; that the problem is less the theology and more the natural human condition (in this context, mostly *men*); and that we can and must address our social tensions, particularly in relation to the roles of women, not by re-appropriating God's word, but re-appropriating ourselves to God's word. The alternative suggested is to uproot, on a basis of misjudgement, a rock-bed of classical doctrine, and replace it with a position claimed to be 'authentically Samoan', but which is based on secular, even pagan¹⁸⁷ ideologies unequivocally opposed to the Bible, and would most likely exacerbate the controversies of the present. Even the proponents of such a dismantling recognise the potential gamble involved. The fact that Ropeti-Apisaloma points immediately to practices such as abortion and same-sex marriage, establishes the certainty of the correlation of these issues with feminism. And although Ropeti-Apisaloma states her opposition to these practices, '*va tapuia*' has descriptors that would constitute the exact kind of ideological worldview that would accommodate and eventually usher them in: i) a relational worldview that 'rejects any notion of a God as a monarch ruling

¹⁸⁶ Meleisea, *Change and Adaptations in Western Samoa*, pp.9-25; Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the CCCS*, 30.

¹⁸⁷ The Gnostic roots of feminism (John Macarthur, *Titus 2.3-5: Gods Plan for Younger Women Part 2*, 2020, <http://www.gty.org>) are also evident in the Samoan theological position, via the implications of consubstantiality of self with God (James Robinson, gen. ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library: The Definitive Translation of the Gnostic Scriptures Complete in One Volume*, (Leiden: E.J Brill, 1996), 72, 88; Filemoni-Tofaeono, *A Theological Anthropology of Tamaitai*, 212; the androgyny of God (Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library*, 136; Carter, *An Evangelical Analysis and Critique of Feminist Christology*, 68-71; Ropeti-Apisaloma, *Nafanua Theology*, 256); the devaluing of Christ's salvation (Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library*, 199; Ropeti-Apisaloma, *Nafanua Theology*, 233, 253), and a definition of 'redemption' as an awareness of self as part of the divine, untrammelled by human traditions or creational structures (Ropeti-Apisaloma, *Nafanua Theology*, 18, 213; Filemoni-Tofaeono, *A Theological Anthropology of Tamaitai*, 223-224.)

from above, imposing his divine laws on the world'¹⁸⁸ (God's law forbids homosexuality, eg. Leviticus 18, 20; Romans 1.18-32; 1 Corinthians 6.9-11; 1 Timothy 1.8-11. Jesus quotes Genesis 2.24 in Matthew 19, indicating that only type of sexual union he endorsed was heterosexual union, in marriage); ii) an abolishing of the 'false dichotomy' of gender, so that God is redefined as a Parent, no longer a Father¹⁸⁹, and Jesus can be identified as a female¹⁹⁰; iii) the removal of dualism, or binaries, in which male is separated from female, or God is separated from creation; iv) A view of God as a deity that does not call people to submit (Eph 5.21), but to resist oppression and seek 'justice.'¹⁹¹ Jesus did not come to resist the oppressed, otherwise he would've liberated Judea from Rome, and would not have gone to the cross. The statement 'My kingdom is not of this world' (John 18.36) indicates that the oppression Jesus was referring to (Luke 4.18) was spiritual oppression from sin. Grudem puts the matter of classical theological traditions in clearer perspective, when he discusses the ordination of women:

'.... ordaining women is a very recent North American-European innovation accepted by a very small part of world Christianity. Whether that very small part represents the wave of the future or a temporary aberration of our theologically confused times is a question about which people can disagree. But to uphold women's ordination is equivalent to writing off two millennia of tradition and the practice of the overwhelming majority of Christians in the world today, in the service not of Christian unity, but of an *ober dictum* that 'it is self-evident that everybody else is wrong'. The entire Christian church from the first century until the 1850s agreed that only men could be pastors and elders, and the vast majority agreed that only men could do public Bible teaching of men and women. From the 1850s until the 1950s in the United States, women pastors were a tiny minority, but over 98 percent of evangelical churches (over 99 percent of the Christian church if Roman Catholic and Orthodox groups are included) had only men as pastors. The larger trend of allowing women to be ordained began with some liberal Protestant denominations in the 1950s and spread to a number of evangelical groups under the influence of evangelical feminism in the 1970s and

¹⁸⁸Ropeti-Apisaloma, *Nafanua Theology*, 181.

¹⁸⁹Ropeti-Apisaloma, *Nafanua Theology*, 180.

¹⁹⁰Filemoni-Tofaeono, *A Theological Anthropology of Tamaitai*, 258-270; Ropeti-Apisaloma, *Nafanua Theology*, 205.

¹⁹¹ Ropeti-Apisaloma, *Nafanua Theology*, 184, 205.

1980s. Before the advent of evangelical feminist writings in the 1970s, today's "disputed passages" on women in ministry were not thought to be unclear. This matter is much different from disputes over the end times, which have existed since the very early centuries of church history.'¹⁹²

Martin and Stovall also trace the misunderstanding and confusion regarding the role and function of women in the church, to the 1950s, and attribute this to an 'infiltration' of radical feminism and post-modern thinking within the church¹⁹³.

2) *The retracing of ancient beliefs and traditions*, a revival self-proclaimed as 'unapologetic' in its intentions. Where Christianity is perhaps seen to have failed, the better ways of old must be re-introduced, embraced and encouraged. Christianity must make compromises and adjust accordingly, in order to remain relevant.¹⁹⁴ The movement might also be 'unapologetic' if it knowingly accepts that what is entailed is a dismantling of the *Faasamoa* – a way of life which has been understood, embraced and nurtured for centuries as a marriage of Samoan and Christian values. The Samoan theologians would re-invoke, celebrate and put back on a pedestal, practices which our ancestors, compelled by holy conscience and with the guidance of the missionaries, had agreed should be solemnly stored away as remnants of a time past, and replaced by one singularly authoritative *taeao* of peace, ushered in by Christ. And so once again creation is recast as originating with *Tagaloa*. People and the elements are again considered as gods; practices with pagan origins are again proudly flaunted¹⁹⁵; basic doctrine such as the Fall, Salvation, and the Resurrection, are ignored.

¹⁹² Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 376.

¹⁹³ Jaye Martin, Terri Stovall, *Women Leading Women: The Biblical Model for the Church* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2008), 1-2.

¹⁹⁴ In 2004, Tui Atua Tamasese Efi stated: 'Christianity has effectively demonised the legacy of our Samoan ancestors to a point where their rituals, liturgies and beliefs have been rejected and spurned. Ironically, Christianity is today doing an about-face. In the latter part of the 20th century, Christianity has acknowledged the deep spirituality of indigenous religious culture and is strenuously trying to find an accommodation.' (Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi, *In Search of Tagaloa: Samoan mythology and Science*, (Address at the Samoan Exhibition, Kon-Tiki Museum, Oslo, 2004), 8.)

¹⁹⁵ Efi, *Suesue Manogi*, 58.

Again, although even the advocates themselves show some degree of uncertainty and premonition,¹⁹⁶ the movement proceeds undeterred. For them, it seems out of the question that the missionaries, in transforming many of our beliefs (particularly those concerning women), were acting under guidance of Spirit (as our Scriptural review strongly suggests they were), carrying out the mission they were called to by Christ, like scores of missionaries taking God's light around the world at the time. We must be open to consider that what Samoans received in the early 19th century was in fact genuine Christian doctrine, or something close to it, through the imperfect efforts of our European brothers and sisters. We must also confront the possibility that there was a denigration of that Christian doctrine, and that our own (well-documented) self-interest and manipulative ambition, played a central part in this. It would be negligent to discuss our experiences today - in our violence, in our loathing of 'patriarchy', in our yearning for 'equality' and 'love', and our divisiveness over the roles of men and women – without taking this premise into account.

4.5 Summary

Each theologian pursued a different facet of the Samoan female experience. Ropeti-Apisaloma focused on the struggle for the ordainment of woman ministers; Filemoni Tofaeono advocated for the restoration of the traditional dignity of the *tamaitai Samoa*; and Maliko discussed in depth the problem of domestic violence. However, there was common ground in what they perceived to be the root cause of their issues, as well as the means by which the issues would be addressed and solved:

4.5.1 The problem: Patriarchy poses the single greatest threat to equality and social harmony: a) The theologians decry patriarchy's 'foreign' origins, with roots in colonialism

¹⁹⁶ In his article 'Scripturalising Indigenous References,' Uili says that there is nothing unique about the Judeo-Christian Scripture (and so by association the Judeo-Christian God) that it should be deemed unique. He then accedes that the singular authority of God might still be a possibility (Uili, '*Scripturalise Indigenous References: An Invitation from Samoa*', 119-137.)

and classical theological thought; the use of concepts and machinations (chief among them the male-oriented Bible) to construct a distorted image of God as male, and endorse the myth of male superiority. These elements fly in the face of Jesus, who dismantled the patriarchal system by treating women as equals; b) Not only is domestic violence a product of patriarchy, it is aggravated by the seeming indifference of churches, or by churches' misinterpretation of Bible text, especially to endorse putting up with violence and suffering.

4.5.2 The solution: The removal of patriarchy and its foundational principles (classical theology) is the key to equality, and the restoration of the dignity of women alongside men. Patriarchy will be replaced by a position that draws from pre-colonial, indigenous values as well as modern theologies and ideologies. Where God is seen not as relational not hierarchical; immanent, not transcendent, society will be governed by the relational values of *fetausia* and *va tapuia*, and women will achieve *atoaga*, or *tagataaga*, ie. they will be restored to their traditional Samoan status of privilege and sacred identity, in equality with all creation.

4.5.3 Criticism: The perception of patriarchy as a problem, was challenged: a) Chapter 3 suggests that Samoa had been a patriarchal society before European contact; b) Our Chapter 1 Scriptural Review shows that the God and Jesus were Father and Son from all eternity, and that at creation God established male headship / patriarchy over the world, to be observed in both the worship gathering and the family, as mirroring God's relationship with the world; c) This is also reflected in God's word; there was a divine purpose behind God's use of patriarchal contexts, as well as male oriented concepts and terminologies; Scripture should not be considered redundant, then, because of these, but should be taken on the whole as reflective of God's will; d) It is true that Jesus did go against the patriarchal tendencies of his day (specifically in the mistreatment of women) but he did not overturn them. Rather he endorsed God's creational pattern from the OT, carrying it forth into the NT; e) Furthermore, evidence has also been provided for patriarchy / male headship as a fixture of the natural order

ordained by God for men and women – a notion that is not in conflict with science; f) Patriarchy is recognised as a source of domestic violence; however, we saw also that there is a biblical depiction of hierarchy that was intended by God as part of his divine will; characterised by loving authority of men to the willing submission of women, which, when both roles are rightly observed, leads to what amounts to an equal, mutual relationship. This ideal has been lost due to the distortion, abuse, exploitation of patriarchy, primarily by men; g) The indication that the clergy have not been forthcoming in addressing domestic violence is acknowledged; misinterpretation of biblical texts is also a problem, although as we have seen, not one for which the clergy is exclusively responsible; h) I suggested that the key is not the elimination of patriarchy, but the restoration of the biblical ideal of patriarchy. When redefined biblically, relational values such as belong to the *fetausiai* and *va tapuia* concepts will, within this framework, find their rightful place. The theologians' solution was also challenged. The call for the dismantling of classical theology was traced to what is suggested is a haphazard premise. If the classical theology introduced by the European missionaries is regarded as a threat because of its foreign origins, the supposed 'Samoan' alternative theology presented is just as alien in its conception and origins, and with the added disadvantage of being further removed from universally accepted Biblical foundations.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Findings

The objective of this paper was to evaluate the way that Section 18 of the EFKS Statement of Doctrine may have been understood and intended by its authors, particularly with regards to the roles of men and women in ministry. In the service of this objective, several steps were taken:

5.1.1 A review of Scripture pertaining to roles of men and women in church ministry, was conducted. 8 bible passages were reviewed by specific categories: context, roles of men and women, universal or contextual roles, and role of the Holy Spirit. Consensus was found in the following areas: a) In the church, men were to lead and have authority, and perform exemplarily in worship and ministry, in line with apostolic standards. Women were to submit to their leaders, and perform exemplarily in worship and ministry, in line with apostolic standards. In marriage and in the household, men are also to lead and assume authority; as fathers and husbands they are to be exemplary, especially in spiritual matters. Women are to submit to their husbands, and be exemplary in their responsibilities; b) The roles of men and women were found to be contextual, but the principles on which the roles are based are universal: authority and submission (distinction of roles); upholding the integrity of the church; upholding the integrity of the gospel; marriage as a model of the Christ-Church union. These four principles are justified in the bible passages via 3 indicators, one or more of which each principle may subscribe to: ecclesiastical practice, divine law, or nature/custom; c) The pattern for the ministry and the home, as revealed by the Holy Spirit in its guidance of the church, is that men and women work together in partnership, but with positions of leadership

and authority reserved for men. The Holy Spirit empowers men and women, and compels them towards this pattern, in ways that are preservational, character building, passed on (through the generations), authoritative, and compliant with an ‘authority-submission’ dynamic. This dynamic is central to the biblical position on roles of men and women in church, and in homes. It was shown to be part of God’s creation order, permeating all layers of society, natural and divine, even the Trinity itself. How men relate to women, how husbands relate to wives, is meant to reflect the way that God / Christ relates to his church, and also how the Godheads relate to each other.

5.1.2 A study of Complementarianism and Egalitarianism found mutual affirmation by complementarians and general theologians (from the Chapter 1 Scripture review) of several aspects of the man-woman relationship, the most important being the ‘authority-submission’ axis. On all of these aspects, egalitarians stood opposed. This signifies that the Scriptural worldview on the roles of men and women in ministry is more closely aligned to the complementarian position.

5.1.3 A background study on Samoa, the EFKS and the Statement of Doctrine indicate that in pre-colonial Samoan society, patriarchy was the central structure, and through it, the ‘authority-submission’ axis was demonstrated via the dynamics of various social institutions, such as the *pulega a matai* (village council), and the *nuu o tamaitai* (women’s group). When the LMS missionaries arrived in 1830, the incorporation of Christianity and the Samoan culture gave rise to a unique sense of identity – *lotu/faasamoa* - a marriage of culture and church that quickly permeated the social structure, and became the core of the EFKS church established in 1962. The EFKS leadership structure was modelled on Samoa’s village governance system, in which men held authority, and men and women performed different

roles. On the other hand, a range of factors point to the EFKS Statement of Doctrine 1957 as having been formulated with egalitarian preferences, at least in relation to Section 18: a) the influence of the burgeoning ecumenical movement; b) the evident partiality of the LMS missionaries towards Presbyterianism; c) the affiliation of the members of the Committee for the Statement of Doctrine with the above mentioned movements. The Statement of Doctrine may be regarded as an early manifestation of the ambitions of the LMS missionaries to gradually dispel Samoan hierarchy and patriarchy through secular, liberal values, as stated by Lovett in 1899. There were ramifications in the years following. The controversy over the establishment of the EFKS sister church in NZ in 1963, was perhaps the first major indication of friction; both the EFKS and EFKS-NZ churches were not so readily inclined to embrace the missionaries' progressive vision. Another significant episode was the 'miscommunication' between the EFKS elders and Malua Theological College over the candidacy of Dr Marie Ropeti-Apisaloma as a College student in 1974. These factors perhaps confirm a commitment of Malua Theological College to a more liberal theological position, in step with modern concerns of the global church, even in the midst of a traditional EFKS.

5.1.4 Interviews: The preceding view is more or less strengthened by the Malua alumni respondents of the Chapter 3 interviews, who were found to be mostly egalitarian in outlook. The commonalities in their outlook are that patriarchy is a colonial construct, a barrier to equality, and equality is particularly important to increase EFKS' credibility in the national and international Christian community. However, there were points of contention; respondents were divided as to whether: i) the Scripture facilitates or opposes equality; ii) the Samoan culture facilitates or opposes equality; iii) the roles of men and women in ministry is actually an issue or not. Today, the EFKS remains reserved and cautious in its treatment of the roles of men and women in ministry, but the survey suggests that the EFKS is currently in

a ‘transition zone’. Future research to explore and break down this view by demographic (gender, age, country), would provide greater certainty.

5.1.5 A study of modern Samoan hermeneutical approaches to the role of men and women in ministry, showed collective propensity towards egalitarianism. The ideal is the replacement of the patriarchal social system, church and theology, with a system based on relationality and re-incorporated indigenous traditions; where the dignity and privilege of women and all people will be realised, and where all will live in co-existent harmony with creation, physical and the divine, in mutuality and reciprocity. The theological position of the Samoan scholars (as I have done my best to outline) is considered incompatible with the findings of Chapter 1 and 2 which, I have suggested, affirm the Scriptural position on men and women as fundamentally complementarian. It is also at odds with the inherent values of the EFKS (based on the merging of *lotu* and *faasamoa*), which I have discussed in Chapter 3. I consider the following to be at the root of this incompatibility: a) It is overlooked that patriarchy is and always has been intrinsic to Samoan society. A ‘warped’ version of patriarchy emerged - influenced by European contact, but propagated mostly by Samoans, with male authorities primarily responsible not only for its continuation into the present day, but also in overlooking its consequences, for example in the area of domestic violence; b) if the view of patriarchy has been distorted, then so too has the view of classical theology. I have discussed at length my position that the reasons for the abandonment by the Samoan scholars of classical theology in favour of indigenous traditions and secular theologies and ideologies, are precarious.

Going back to the Thesis Statement, from our study of the NT usage of ‘word’ (*rhema*) in Ephesians 5.21-33, as well as the use of the word ‘ordain’, we concluded that Section 18 of the EFKS Statement of Doctrine was worded with an intended egalitarian approach, ie. Christ

calls men and women to equal ministries in the church, including positions of leadership and authority, ie. preaching of the Word and leading of the sacraments. However, our research from Chapters 1 and 2 shows that this view of men's and women's roles is incompatible with Biblical teachings, which translate theologically to a complementarian worldview (Christ calls men and women to equal ministry, ie. equal in worth, but different in functions). The Statement of Doctrine is the crux of a broader issue. From our Chapter 3 study, we see planted within the background story to the Statement of Doctrine, the seeds of an underlying unease, which may become more and more apparent in the years to come. It represents an unspoken tension, and air of uncertainty between: 1) a conservative faction of the EFKS that sees male authority, both in the village and church, as emblematic of their modern collective identity, forged in a union of culture and Christianity. An identity that, history shows, was fought for and defended against external influences; and 2) a progressive voice that, it is suggested, was birthed by the LMS missionaries and passed on to the EFKS through its theological school. We have confirmed that the missionaries had a clear strategy in place to gradually 'liberalise' the EFKS, and graft it into the stem of a global ecumenical church. The interviews of Chapter 3 have shown that authorities currently within the EFKS would see it as in the church's interests to take up this cause, based on a belief that this is God's will, on an obligation to stay abreast of the changing times, and to secure the EFKS' place within the national, regional and global community.

5.2 Recommendations

On the issue of men and women, the EFKS stands between the two poles of conservatism and liberalism. It may, in the near future, experience growing pressure to affirm its stance, both doctrinally and practically, in both the national and global arena. This paper makes

recommendations to help the EFKS consolidate its position, and move forward with confidence:

5.2.1 The supremacy of Scripture: Our Chapter 1 study has shown that the position of Scripture on the roles of men and women, is a complementarian one, ie. emphasis on male headship, in both the church and the home. There is equality in value and importance, but difference in roles. The way men and women / husbands and wives relate to each other, is to be characterised by loving authority of men, to willing submission of wives. Faithful observation of these roles enable men and women to mirror the relationship amongst the Trinity, between God and creation, and between Christ and the church. As per its Constitution, the EFKS *'accepts that the Holy Bible....is the greatest fountain of the Christian life, and contains all that is necessary for salvation. The Church must be always prepared to direct and to correct its life so that it is in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Bible as revealed to us by the Holy Spirit.'*¹⁹⁷ This is complemented by the EFKS Statement of Doctrine, which upholds the Word of God as the *'primary source and ultimate standard of the Christian life.'* Very simply and clearly, then, the EFKS must be true to the Scripture, if it is to thrive as a church, and if it is to continue to be used by God as a vehicle for God's saving grace to its members, and to the world. If the Bible is the *'ultimate standard'*, and *'contains all that is necessary'*, then the EFKS is not to take its cue from any system, institution, ideology or trend, especially when and where they operate contrary to biblical principles. God's Word must be honoured. Our inclinations and predispositions, our sinfulness and limited human understanding, which will make the Bible appear irrelevant, naïve, offensive and outdated, can only be overcome through faithful investment and commitment to the studying of the Word (Psalm 119), by which the Holy Spirit brings understanding.

¹⁹⁷ EFKS, *Notes Regarding the Revision of the Constitution*, 12.

5.2.2 Scriptural / complementarian configuration of roles of men and women: Some complementarians believe that while women shouldn't be ordained as ministers or pastors, it is acceptable to be evangelists, for example. This would not be placing women in top leadership roles in the church or family. Ultimately the position varies however, on which specific ministry roles are (or should be) open to women¹⁹⁸. In his book 'Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth', Grudem attempts to overcome this uncertainty by systematically listing and grouping roles and activities for men and women, based on the guidance of Scripture. The listings rest on the underlying premise: Scripture teaches not all, but *some* restriction on the roles women may fill in the church ministry. These restrictions are identified in 3 areas: a) Governing authority; b) Bible teaching; c) Public recognition / visibility. An activity list can be produced for each area. For each list, activities are levelled from 'greater' to 'lesser': (a) greater to lesser governing authority; b) greater to lesser teaching responsibility and influence; c) greater to lesser public recognition and visibility. These 'levels' are not rankings of value or importance. When talking about 'levels' of governing authority, bible teaching responsibility or public recognition, we defer to statements such as in 1 Cor 12.22-23 (all body members are needed; *'the parts of the body that seem weaker are (in fact) indispensable....on those parts of the body that we think less honourable we bestow the greater honour'*); and Mark 10.43 (*'Whoever would be great among you must be your servant'*). But we recognise that these levels are nevertheless essential, because Scripture says that *some* kinds of governing and teaching are inappropriate for women. Furthermore the lists are approximate; they are estimates. One can determine, via his/her own subjective assessment, to move items up or down. The lists do not include the *variation in attitudes* that determine how one governs or teaches (eg. is the chairman domineering, or gracious?) The

¹⁹⁸ Evans, *Bible Reasons*, <https://biblereasons.com>; Roat, *What's the Difference?* <http://www.christianity.com>. *The Truth About Church*, <https://www.compellingtruth.org>.

lists do not include *variation in goals* (is the woman's goal to gain more and more authority over men, or to genuinely use her gifts for the benefit of the church?). Finally, the lists do not include *widely varying situations and circumstances* of different churches (eg. a college-level class in one church will have 3 students; in another it will have 50). Depending on the circumstance, teaching and authority will mean different things, and it will boil down to evaluation of attitudes and goals, especially when it comes to borderline situations. It will come down to application of mature wisdom and judgement, on what is appropriate in light of Scripture. There is not a specific verse in the Bible for every type of situation a church might encounter. But the Bible does specify many principles of conduct God has given in his wisdom; principles that allow certain activities, and prohibit others. It is within this Scriptural parameter of what is clearly right and clearly wrong, that we make daily decisions and mature judgements. Grudem also provides a spectrum chart as a visual aide. Regarding the roles of women in ministry, the left end of the scale represents prohibitive instructions, the most vivid depicted in 1 Timothy 2.12, *'I permit no woman to teach or exercise authority over a man'* in an assembled congregation (See discussion in Appendix A, section on 1 Timothy 2.8-15). On the right end of the spectrum, we put verses such as Acts 18.26 where, in a less formal setting, (apart from an assembled congregation), Priscila and Aquila consulted Apollos and *they* took him and instructed him more accurately. This situation is similar to a small group Bible study in which both men and women participate, and in that way all are in some way teaching one another. It is also similar to a woman talking to a man privately about the teaching of Scripture. Titus 2.4 (in which older woman are instructed to 'train the young women to love their husbands and children'), is another verse that would be included on this side.

Roles of women - Spectrum of Activities

NO (action prohibited by Scripture)	Requires mature wisdom	YES (action approved by Scripture)
Governing and Bible teaching authority over the assembled congregation	Other kinds of governing / teaching activities	Informal Bible instruction (as in a group of two or three); Teaching women and children

The above spectrum places all activities at one point or another on the spectrum. The role of minister or pastor of a church, for example, would fall on the ‘No’ side of the scale, because the minister / pastor teaches the Bible and exercises authority over the congregation. Other activities, like leading a fellowship group or chairing a committee, may fall somewhere in the middle. At these points, it will rely on the discernment and judgement of people and churches to determine what activities are encouraged, and what activities are prohibited, for women in churches.

LIST 1: AREAS OF GOVERNING AUTHORITY

<i>Governing activities that should be restricted to men (selected)</i>	<i>Governing activities that should be open to both men and women (selected)</i>
Member of a governing body with authority over the whole church (eg. elder).	Committee chairperson
Presiding over a baptism or communion service	Director of Christian education
Giving spoken judgement on a prophecy given to the congregation (1 Cor 14.33-36)	Sunday school superintendent
Permanent leader of a fellowship group meeting in a home (both men and women); especially if the fellowship group functions as a ‘mini-church’ within the church	Missionary responsibilities (many administrative responsibilities in missionary work in other countries)
	Moderating a bible discussion in a home bible study group
	Leading singing on Sunday morning
	Deacon
	Administrative assistant to pastor / minister
	Church treasurer
	Church secretary
	Member of advisory council to regional governing authority
	Meeting periodically with church governing committee / board to give counsel and advice
	Regular conversations between elders and their wives over matters coming before the elder board (confidentiality preserved)

Formally counselling one man
 Formally counselling a couple together
 Formally counselling another woman
 Speaking in congregational business meetings
 Voting on congregational business meetings

LIST 2: AREAS OF BIBLE TEACHING

Teaching activities that should be restricted to men (selected):

Teaching Bible or theology in a theological seminary
 Teaching Bible or theology in a Christian college
 Preaching (teaching the Bible) at a nationwide denominational meeting, or a nationwide Christian conference
 Preaching (teaching the Bible) at a regional meeting of churches, or at a regional Christian conference
 Preaching (teaching the Bible) regularly to the whole church on Sunday mornings
 Occasional preaching (teaching the Bible) to the whole church on Sunday mornings
 Occasional Bible teaching at less formal meetings of the whole church (such as Sunday evening or at a midweek service)
 Bible teaching at a home Bible study (both men and women members)
 Bible teaching to a university-age Sunday school class

Teaching activities that should be open to both men and women (selected):

Bible teaching to a high school Sunday school class
 Writing a book on Biblical doctrines
 Writing or editing a study Bible
 Writing a commentary on a book of the Bible
 Writing notes in a study Bible
 Writing or editing other kinds of Christian books
 Bible teaching to a women's Sunday school class
 Bible teaching to a women's bible study group during the week
 Bible teaching to an intermediate school Sunday school class
 Evangelistic speaking to large groups of non-Christians (eg. an evangelistic rally on a university campus)
 Working as an evangelistic missionary in other cultures
 Moderating a discussion in a small group bible study (men and women members)
 Reading Scripture aloud on Sunday morning
 Reading Scripture to other, less formal meetings of the church
 Giving a personal testimony before the congregation (a story of how God has worked in one's own or others' lives)
 Participating in a discussion in a home Bible study (men and women members)
 Formally counseling one man
 Formally counseling a married couple
 Formally counseling a woman
 Teaching children's Sunday school class
 Teaching Vacation Bible School
 Singing a solo on Sunday morning (a form of teaching since the lyrics often have biblical content and exhortation)
 Singing to the congregation as a member of the choir
 Singing hymns with the congregation (in this activity, sometimes we teach and exhort one another in some sense, see Colossians 3:16)

LIST 3: AREAS OF PUBLIC VISIBILITY OR RECOGNITION

<i>Public recognition that should be restricted to men (selected):</i>	<i>Public recognition that should be open to both men and women (selected)</i>
Ordination as pastor (member of the clergy) in a denomination	<p>Helping to serve the Lord's Supper (in churches where this is not exclusively the role of clergy or elders)</p> <p>Giving announcements at the Sunday morning service</p> <p>Taking the offering</p> <p>Public reading of Scripture</p> <p>Public prayer</p> <p>Prophesying in public (according to 1 Corinthians 11:5 and 14:29, where this is not understood as having authority equal to Scripture or Bible teaching)</p> <p>Singing a solo on Sunday mornings</p> <p>Giving a personal testimony in church</p> <p>Giving a prayer request in church</p> <p>Being a member of a prayer team that prays for people individually after the service.</p> <p>Welcoming people at the door (a greeter)</p> <p>Editing the church newsletter</p> <p>Singing in the choir</p> <p>Singing of hymns with congregation on Sunday morning</p> <p>Participating in the responsive reading of Scripture on Sunday morning</p>

The intention of this exercise is to help us better discern and decide on what is appropriate and inappropriate for women. Many churches will draw a more restrictive line, others a less restrictive one. But as we attempt to observe male headship the way that Scripture directs, we are encouraged not to prohibit what the Bible doesn't prohibit. On all 3 lists, many activities are fully open to women, as well as many other activities that men and women are already carrying out, in areas different from the 3 mentioned above. Grudem relays a desire to open the doors wide to all the areas of ministry that God intends for women to have. These areas of ministry may indeed be more numerous, more visible, and more prominent in the life of the church than previously thought. If that happens, then debates over the roles of men and women will have served a wonderful purpose, and the church will be far stronger and far more pleasing to God as it carries out its ministry, until Christ returns¹⁹⁹.

¹⁹⁹ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 51-55.

5.2.4 Overhauling of concepts: Central to the egalitarian position is the abolishment of patriarchy. As such this is the greatest barrier to realising the ‘authority-submission’ ideal. A differentiation must be made between the ‘human’ patriarchy that we actually experience, and the ‘biblical patriarchy’, of which the former is a subversion and distortion. The evils of ‘human’ patriarchy are wrought by human sinfulness. To bring it closer to home, the evils of Samoan patriarchy are a Samoan problem – they do not reflect God’s purpose and intention. The solution, then, is not the abolishment, but the restoration of patriarchy to its natural biblical sense, from which will flow the complementarian ideal for men and women as outlined above. Furthermore, concepts must be redefined. For example, it is not far off to say that, today, the ‘Word of God’ means very little. Today the phrase may produce sentiment, perhaps in the way that an heirloom does, a traditional remnant of a passing era. But in terms of practical value, as the vehicle of God’s literally speaking to and communicating with his people, as the divine protocol to live by with love and fear, to be complied with unwaveringly, unconditionally and uncompromisingly as God intended, in that sense the Bible is becoming irrelevant for many. The clear demonstration of this is the divisiveness and uncertainty with which we presently view it. Never in human history has uniqueness for the sake of uniqueness, brought peace and stability. Uniqueness has always thrived and found meaning, when the diverse parts work together towards a common goal, for the good of all. So it is in families, sports teams, churches, governments, nations and so forth. The ‘Word of God’ is the common goal, the moral compass to which all our human dispositions, however unique, must be aligned and subjected to, in order to achieve true peace and stability. The reason for this is that it represents the holy mind of God, who is above the sin and corruption that our human opinions and interpretations are perpetually enslaved to. The Word of God therefore *must* be our standard. And so ‘patriarchy’, ‘love’ ‘justice’ and other concepts crucial to our understanding of God’s will, must also be freed from personal bias, social agenda and the trends of political

correctness, and recast in the light of Scripture²⁰⁰. We have discussed how the clergy, for example, should help marriage partners to recognise *alofa* as removing themselves from the volatile environment, not only for their sakes but for their children, relatives and everyone else involved; with the confidence in God that with time, self-evaluation and repentance, peace and reconciliation will happen. An example of the necessity of this is in the area of *reporting* of abuse. This continues to be an insurmountable challenge, because it has mostly been emphasised from a legislative platform. Laws will not change the sinful predisposition that continues to stifle and shield wrongdoing. Reporting must therefore be recognised as a solemn Christian duty. This will not happen unless, at the next level, abuse itself is repainted, in its primary biblical colours. Abuse is not merely a crime, it is above all a sin, a hallmark of the devil designed to destroy communities. Thus a shift in our understanding of social concepts is required, and the church has been called out to take initiative. Through genuine biblical teaching, the church must take ownership of violence prevention, in recognising that these are essentially moral issues, with spiritual and eternal implications.

5.2.5 Overhauling of institutional and educational approaches: The call for the training of ministers on the nature, causes and impact of violence, and for the equipping of the laity with relevant skills and sources, is supported. There are many organisations that can provide the necessary skills in counselling /rehabilitation /mediation, as well as resources and facilities for sheltering etc. But there must be an exclusively biblical goal. It is vital that the clergy centres itself in biblical teaching and then, armed with various multi-sectoral tools, lead a practical advance into their communities. Areas and methods for intervention are implied

²⁰⁰ For egalitarians, words such as complementarianism and patriarchy are considered to have become so corrupted, so offensive, that no constructive dialogue can be had unless such words are removed. This view is purely subjective, it is not universal nor representative of a majority position, nor does it recognise that any word in the world can be taken as compromised, including words like 'pride', 'equality' and 'love.' Furthermore, removing words at will sets a precedent with no end, resulting in a mass encroachment upon free speech.

by Scripture, eg. in dire cases, 1 Cor 7.10-11 points to temporary separation of the victim from the abuse, and building the grounds for safe reconciliation, via sheltering, counselling and mediation in the interim period.

A major part of the solution to problems such as domestic violence, is reversing those symptoms of *'lotu/faasamoa'* ethos that celebrate image and reputation, to which biblical education often historically takes a back seat; addressing the tendency of the church to take its moral cue not from Scripture but society and culture, so that over centuries the collective conscience of *lotu/faasamoa* has become increasingly de-sensitized to sins or crimes that it has decided are 'private matters', or a 'normal part of life', conditioning its subjects to believe the same²⁰¹. Rightly appropriated Scripture is the key to this reversal. It is not mere 'knowledge' of Scripture and doctrine that is in view, but the internal change, the essential quality of character that Scripture builds and facilitates. It imbues the devotee with the peaceable traits necessary to combating and subduing abusive traits. It produces courage to face the risk of ill-repute and danger, for the sake of speaking out against wrong, and defending the abused. By imparting biblical knowledge to the community, the minister also is expected to impart the moral calibre to live the Christian life in accordance with God's will, and as prescribed by the Word. It is time to divert our resources, to invest not in building houses, but in bible education and spiritual guidance. To see, with eyes of faith, the true measure of success and growth that lies beyond the present and the tangible, in the building up of real living 'churches' (1 Peter 2.5), made of God-fearing families and communities, grounded in the word of God.

If the realisation of biblical relationships depends on Scripture rightly appropriated, then this in turn depends on the leadership of ministers who are Scripturally proficient and, most importantly, faithful. This leads to the issue of pastoral and theological education. A

²⁰¹ SPC, *Samoa Family Health and Safety Study*, 26, 42-43; MWCSO, *2017 Samoa Family Safety Study*, 16-19.

challenge of Samoan theological institutions in facilitating student training regimes, is that goals and objectives have to be divided amongst both biblical and pastoral components of ministry, and the reality of managing Samoan-based institutions is that there is often a disproportionate allocation of time and resources. Both components are important. However, the many complex issues on which communities require guidance, especially in this morally and spiritually bombarded day and age, require the highest levels of proficiency in biblical exposition and insight. It seems that this one unique contribution a minister might make to the well-being of the community, and for which he was supposedly appointed by the community, and which he himself was supposed to make his central pursuit – that is, the teaching and preaching of the Word of God – is often the very task that he least has time for. To be fair, the challenge of seeing to the day-to-day administrative, financial and executive requirements of the church; of meeting obligations within the village, as well as a myriad of other supplementary, but necessary, commitments and responsibilities, is a reality he seldom has control over. Possible resolutions could be: a) The resetting of goals, the restructuring of church leadership to reduce risk of overloading, or of the pastor micro-managing, which will impede on overall capacity for biblical teaching. Just as there is a choir director and women's committee chairperson, a secretary and a finance manager, there must above all things be a biblical education director, with a focus on adult education. Most Samoans today most likely give up regular study of the Bible as soon as they complete Sunday School, due to their own lack of interest, but more so due to the absence of sustained encouragement and monitoring. There must be included among the class of elders and deacons, at least 1 or 2 capable individuals whose focus is to assist the pastor in the nurturing of biblical knowledge (not of the children, but the adult community within the church), and who are both capable and passionate; b) The introduction of an advanced class of the Malua Bible School, specially designed to train lay preachers and capable village church members who are interested in

becoming certified Bible teachers, to assist their pastors within their communities; c) What is ultimately clear is that to realise God-approved social harmony and stability requires a shift in priorities that can only be initiated by the parish leadership. It requires ministers and *faletua* placing biblical education among their highest ambitions; commitment to developing the competency and personal understanding, of both themselves and their parish, of the utmost necessity of Scripture, eg. establishing a lifelong adult bible study program within their parish, setting up network and referral systems with other ministers and parishes, as a means of further sharing the load when necessary; d) The receiving of direction and support from an overarching institution that has the same ambitions (eg. who believe it to be within the primary interest of the church to see that adult bible study is actively pursued across the church, and that there are financial and educational resources being made available to achieve this). Furthermore, as recommended at the parish level, so at the administrative level; that there be dedicated advisory staff, who are preferably equipped with analytical and research skills in order to take the moral temperature, to make well-informed discernments on matters pertinent to the spiritual growth and welfare of the EFKS community, and monitor the alignment of EFKS operations with Scriptural principles; e) A strengthened approach to the formal theological education for women is critical. I feel, however, that the goal should not be ordainment, but a transformation of women's fellowships/committees in the churches and villages, so that they become not just purely executive bodies, but community-based polemical centres for women, in line with Titus 2.4 (in which older women have the biblical responsibility of training and imparting their experience to the younger women). As an influential body (if not the most influential) in either setting, the impact of the women's committee will be far-reaching; f) The EFKS's youngest demographic cohorts live in a world immensely more complex, and more religiously lenient than the world 30 years ago. Already disconnected from their roots in many ways, the situation is exacerbated for them by a

seemingly indifferent EFKS leadership. As the EFKS looks to the future of its membership, it is imperative for the authorities at all levels to meet the youth where they are and guide them spiritually. This is a key reason why a lack of transparency on issues that may be pertinent to the EFKS community, such as Scriptural authority, the roles of men and women, current world affairs, LGBTQ, abortion, world religions, and others, may be disadvantageous in the long run. Again, Scriptural clarity is the remedy.

CONCLUSION

Since 1962, the role of men and women in ministry has been an unwritten part of the EFKS' voyage, never fully surfacing, but always present. As the issue became more visible in the second part of the 20th century and onwards, what has also become clear is the positioning of 2 views opposite each other, separated by an impasse of patriarchy. For Samoans who advocate for equality of men and women in all areas, patriarchy is the supreme impediment to progress, a barrier to be removed once and for all, for women in particular to be restored to their rightful place of dignity, within an ideally relational society. The LMS missionaries cultivated similar ambitions, in their commitment to a progressive, ecumenical world unfettered by traditional, 'backward constraints' such as patriarchy.

The world today is divided more than ever. As history repeats itself again and again, so too do communities continue to brace themselves for old waves of military and ideological aggression, in new dress. What is interesting about issues such as gender fluidity, same sex marriage, critical race theory, intersectionality, identity politics, feminism and egalitarianism, is that they all build around an ancient premise - the removal of male authority, that so 'unjustly' prevents the world from achieving the 'equality' it deserves. This paper has outlined its convictions with regards to patriarchy; how reconciliation is possible if the concept is handled correctly, from a Scriptural lens. I hope also that the wider implications of failing to do so have been made equally apparent. Research that is beyond the scope of this paper, shows direct associations between removal of male authority with ordination of women and with homosexuality, in some contexts deliberate and meditated²⁰². Virginia Mollenkott, a renowned feminist theologian, says:

²⁰² David Jones, "Egalitarianism and Homosexuality: Connected or Autonomous Ideologies?" *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, no. 8 vol. 2, 2003; Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism: A New Path to Liberalism?* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2006), 238; John Pless, "The Ordination of Women and Ecclesial Endorsement of Homosexuality: Are they Related?" *Women Pastors? The Ordination of Women in Biblical Lutheran Perspective* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2012), 231-245; Raymond Holmes, *The Tip of*

“Compulsory heterosexuality is the very backbone that holds patriarchy together.... If ever society is to turn from patriarchy to partnership, we must learn that transgender, lesbian, bisexual, and gay issues are not just private bedroom matters of ‘doing and being whatever turns you on.’ They are wedges driven into the superstructure of the heteropatriarchal system.”²⁰³

The above statement indicates that feminist theology and homosexuality share the same direction and outcomes. Not only is it evident in the historical development of both movements, but the same baseline theological assumptions and interpretation methodologies used in the approach to Scripture, are essentially the same. There are equally strong associations between removal of male authority and the breakdown of marriage and the family, which means the gradual disintegration of society as we know it. Most importantly, removal of male authority signals the departure from Scripture. These are the wider implications of the debate over the roles of men and women in the EFKS; a ‘slippery slope’ which has long been identified elsewhere and, should the Samoan church maintain its leftist theological leanings, would perhaps become apparent within the next quarter century. We saw from a sociological perspective that patriarchy is natural and universal – a scientific endorsement of the biblical mandate of male headship. The problem, I maintain, is that we have so abused patriarchy, due to our sin, so that if the world universally condemns patriarchy, it is completely justified – but for one small matter. The ‘patriarchy’ the world rails against is fraudulent. The original blueprint lies with God at creation, a view that has been echoed by many theologians over the centuries – patriarchy is a system in which men relate to women like Christ relates to the church, and women relate to men like the church responds to Christ. It is a loving, submissive authority by men, and a willing submission by women. This type of patriarchy actually leads to equality, because it prompts both parties to treat each other in

an Iceberg: Biblical authority, biblical interpretation, and the ordination of women in ministry (Wakefield: Pointer Publications, 1994), 157-176.

²⁰³ Virginia Mollenkott, *Sensuous Spirituality: Out From Fundamentalism* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), xiii.

mutual love, reciprocity and respect. In other words, loving authority – willing submission is tantamount to equality.

The sad reality is that a biblical solution to the roles of men and women – the only real solution there is - is the solution that keeps being ignored. It requires dedication to build up Scripturally informed churches and communities, through the sustained leadership of biblically competent ministers and laity; leaders of churches and villages, families, seeking through the Spirit's guidance, to all be on the same page with regards to Bible teaching. A concerted effort to mainstream an accurate, unified message, will lead to reinvigorated communities, who will see collectively to the elimination of sinful, violent behaviour at all levels (institutional, family and individual); the kind of behaviour that passes off as patriarchy, but is actually a corruption of God's ideal, forcing communities (especially women as the most victimised demographic), to seek recompense in a false sense of equality and relationality. When men leading church and villages institutions, families and the village *fono*, start to live up to the standard God expects of godly men, and become loving, submissive leaders, establishing biblical relationships in families and congregations, then male headship will be 'redeemed', and women will be restored to their rightful position of dignity and honour, to which they are entitled, and in the way that God intends. The challenge is that these are long-haul measures, that require generations of commitment. For the time being, we have for our consideration some theoretical objectives, the validity of which I have striven to establish: a) A renewed, sustained commitment to Scripture; b) Scriptural configuration of the roles of men and women in church and in the home; c) A mass 'overhauling' or restructuring movement, toward alignment with Scripture. This includes re-defining patriarchy and all associated concepts; d) An overhauling of educational and institutional approaches within the church; e) A multi-sectoral approach led by the church, built exclusively around Scriptural principles. Key solutions and recommendations for

collaboration and networking have already been identified by the government and NGOs, and I reaffirm that a multi-sectoral approach is crucial. However, the situation as it stands indeed necessitates church leadership. All forward planning and preventive strategizing in violence prevention, must be recast a scriptural light. The approach to violence must be led with a godly, biblical agenda, fuelled and energised by spiritual imperative.

Finally, with Scripture as the converging point of these discussions, I am compelled to return to my initial train of thought: Who can establish with all certainty what an actual ‘Scriptural’ position is? If God is a singular authority, whose will is to be obeyed by all, how are we ever to agree on what that will is, being by our very nature a subjective people, with biases and inclinations, viewing the world in relative terms? Some – perhaps most - will confidently conclude it is impossible. On the other hand, the Chapter 1 Scriptural review shows a degree of consistency of scholarly opinion across a wide range of sources. If this consistency strengthens the notion that interpretative harmony is not beyond us, it will have served a purpose. I do not believe God to be a God of confusion and ambiguity, who settles for the world agreeing to disagree on how to interpret his will. The God of Truth did not intend for his Word to be lost to a perpetual whirlpool of subjective debate, interpretation, compromise and misinterpretation. The more the world makes this its reality, the more devoid it becomes of truth, of morality, and therefore of God. No, God has established his singular authority, his standard of truth and morality, via Christ²⁰⁴. Then there must be a way that we can truly recognise this, and so become of one mind and one interpretation, even with our differences. It was stated at the beginning that the acid test of the presence of the Holy Spirit within a community, is obedience to God’s Word (which testifies to Christ). The Bible is, at the end of the day, not a human book, which is why it cannot be subjected to purely human

²⁰⁴ Romans 10.4: “For Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes”; Luke 24.27: “Then beginning with Moses with all the prophets, the Old Testament, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures”; John 5.39: “You search the Scriptures....and it is they that testify on my behalf.”

reason and understanding, or read through a ‘world’ lens. It is not simply a resource to be studied and referenced. It is foremost a divine word, to be honoured and obeyed. This inclination is only attainable when we are *saved*—when we receive the Holy Spirit, as part of our repentance from sin, our baptism, our belief in the salvation prepared by Christ, and the manifestation of that faith through works, as evidence of a sanctified life. The depth, wonder and unifying power of the Bible does not open up otherwise, it remains hidden²⁰⁵, and we will never overcome the endless ironies and contradictions of Scripture that we perceive. In the context of this paper, our interpretative differences, then, are not caused by how we view patriarchy, or any other human structure or ideology. It is caused by how we view, approach and relate to God’s word. Therefore, the entirety of this paper hinges on one choice: either Bible is the inerrant word of God, or it is not the inerrant word of God. My heart is that in order for this paper to be of any use, the former must first be true.

²⁰⁵ Isaiah 6.9: ‘Keep listening, but do not comprehend; keep looking but do not understand. Make the mind of this people dull, and stop their ears, and shut their eyes, so that they may not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and comprehend with their minds, and turn and be healed.’

GLOSSARY

Authority-submission	Scripture-based dynamic within church and the home, where mutual love is manifested by the woman/wife willingly submitting to the loving authority of the man/husband
Complementarianism	Theological belief that men and women are equal in value and dignity, but different in roles
Egalitarianism	Theological belief that men and women are equal in value and dignity, and equal in roles

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APPENDIX A

ROLES OF MEN AND WOMEN IN SCRIPTURE (CHAPTER ONE)

A1 CHURCH PASSAGES

1.1 1 Corinthians 11: 3-16¹ Head coverings

1.1.1 What is the context of the passage?²

A practice that Paul had established in the Pauline churches, and most visibly in Corinth, was that when Christians gathered for public worship, men worshipped with their heads ‘uncovered’, and women with heads ‘covered’ (the ‘covering’ of a woman’s head was either a reference to an external covering, or to having the hair bound/pinned up on top of the head). The underlying intent of the practice was the observance of sexual distinction among husband and wives, and men and women in general, particularly during worship. This points to a God-ordained, theological headship structure, expressed in v.3: *‘Christ is the head of every man, the husband is the head of his wife, and God is the head of Christ’*, which in turn signifies a broader creational order, that is underpinned by a submission-authority dynamic. In 1 Corinthians 11.2-16, Paul addresses a situation in which men and women were violating the abovementioned practice. In doing so they were rebelling against God’s established order for sex distinctions and marital relations; violating universal church protocol, and bringing the Corinthian church into social disrepute. Scholars see the situation as having been caused by one or several factors: *1.1.1.1 Men:* In Greek and Roman culture, men wore head coverings to express shame and mourning³. The adoption of this custom by Christian men led to a perceived association with pagan worship, causing division in the churches.⁴ *1.1.1.2 Women:* The ‘covering’ of a woman’s head was already an accepted practice in Greco-Roman and Jewish circles, associated with decorum.⁵ When Christianity was introduced, Corinthian

¹ 3. But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the husband is the head of his wife, and God is the head of Christ. 4. Any man who prays or prophesies with something on his head disgraces his head, 5. but any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled disgraces her head- it is one and the same thing as having her head shaved. 6. For if a woman will not veil herself, then she should cut off her hair; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or to be shaved, she should wear a veil. 7. For man ought not to have his head veiled, since he is the image and reflection of God; but woman is the reflection of man. 8. Indeed, man was not made from woman, but woman from man. 9. Neither was man created for the sake of woman, but woman for the sake of man. 10. For this reason a woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. 11. Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man or man independent of woman. For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman; but all things come from God. 13. Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head unveiled? 14. Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair, it is degrading to him, 15 but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering. 16. But if anyone is disposed to be contentious – we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.

² 1 Corinthians was written at around AD 55, near the end of Paul’s three-year ministry in Ephesus, during his third missionary journey. Paul had founded the Corinthian church around AD 50, during his second journey (Tyndale House Publishers, *Life Application Study Bible*, (Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers Inc., 2007), 1926.)

³ Dr Thomas L. Constable, *Dr Constable’s notes on 1 Corinthians* (Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary, 2016), 130. The Jews adopted head coverings during the Middle Ages (based on their misinterpretation of Exodus 33), but not during Paul’s day (Constable, 130.)

⁴ Preben Vang, *Teach the Text Commentary Series: 1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2014), 266.

⁵ Jackson Boyett, *Homily on 1 Corinthians 11.2-16*, 9 July 2022, www.sermonaudio.com.

women mistook the newfound unity and freedom in Christ (eg. Galatians 3.28) as implying transcendence of sexual barriers, so that they were free to forfeit their identity as both women and wives. This manifested in permissiveness, repudiation of social authority, and rejection of marital patterns,⁶ but most importantly the abandonment of the covering: a) Hair was let down in a loose, dishevelled fashion, a symbol of woman's independence. This brought a woman into disrepute⁷, especially from those who recognised that this was the traditional sign of a woman suspected of adultery (Numbers 5.18). It was also associated with paganism; in Greek mystery cults popular among first century women in the Mediterranean (eg. Dionysus, Cybele, Isis), women were encouraged to let hair flow free, contrary to custom⁸; b) Hair was cut short, equally a symbol of independence, but also connoting lesbianism or masculinity⁹; furthermore, prostitutes and adulterers were punished by having their heads shorn. Since Christian worship in the first century was mostly held in homes, the boundaries between public and private worship might have eventually become vague and indefinable.¹⁰ Women who wouldn't have been accustomed to wearing coverings in private worship in their own homes (in which they had a great degree of authority and oversight), may have continued as such, even when hosting corporate worship.

1.1.2 What does the passage say about the roles of men and women?

The generic words *aner* and *gune* refer to both husband/man and wife/woman, respectively. These terms are alternated throughout the passage, depending on the shifting context (eg. 'husband' and 'wife' is meant in v.3, but 'man' and 'woman' is meant elsewhere in the passage). Paul's instructions are perhaps therefore addressed to everyone in the community.¹¹ The reference cannot be exclusively for married people, since not only wives may pray or prophesy. Neither can it be exclusively for unmarried people, since 'veil' indicates marital status.¹² A double-entendre, therefore, is perhaps the most likely interpretation.¹³ *1.1.2.1 Men:* Man's duty in worship is to reflect God's image and glory by exposing his head. In doing so he distinguishes himself from woman (whose head is to be covered); more fundamentally he confirms that he is *the image and glory of God*. This is as much prescriptive as descriptive - man has the responsibility to *be* the glory of God¹⁴: a) to manifest on earth God's role, and to imitate / reflect God's dominion over creation; b) to image Christ's headship over the church. In both cases, it is a headship demonstrated by responsible initiative, love and self-sacrifice¹⁵. This is the kind of 'headship' meant in v.3. Consensus seems to be for 'head' / *'kephale'* as

⁶ Charles Talbert, *Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon: Smyth and Helwys Publishing Incorporated, 2002), 88; Craig Blomberg, *1 Corinthians: NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 297.

⁷ James Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1981), 170–171.

⁸ William Baker, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: 1 Corinthians* (Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers Inc., 2009), 354.

⁹ Blomberg, *1 Corinthians: NIV Application Commentary*, 300.

¹⁰ David Garland, *1 Corinthians, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 697.

¹¹ Richard Hays, *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching: First Corinthians* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press), 185.

¹² Garland, *1 Corinthians: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 707.

¹³ Constable, *Dr Constable's notes on 1 Corinthians*, 130.

¹⁴ The glory (*doxa*) of God is compared to the brightness of the sun. The glory of a thing is that which points to or manifests its dignity and station. When man is in harmony with God, he is relationally the glory of God, pointing to God's sovereignty over creation, and manifesting that sovereignty by his right actions, that is, through his love and self-sacrifice (Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, 174.), particularly in relation to the woman.

¹⁵ Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, 174.

meaning ‘authority’¹⁶ as opposed to other popular alternative definitions, like ‘source’¹⁷ or ‘pre-eminence.’¹⁸ Taylor observes that all three views are nevertheless consistent with the broader biblical and theological framework that woman is functionally subordinate to man¹⁹. The *manner* of man’s authority, however, is as aforementioned: responsible, benevolent and sacrificial. *1.1.2.2 Women*: Paul endorsed women’s praying and prophesying in public church gatherings (v.5,13)²⁰, provided they wore a head covering. The covering (either referring to a woman’s long hair or to an external covering eg. a shawl) is understood as a divine symbol for submission and humility. Since man is assigned the dominion and authority of God in the world, he is not to wear this symbol. That is the responsibility of woman, as *the glory of man*. Man reflects the role of God/Christ in the world; woman demonstrates the church’s role, by recognising man’s God-given calling. In other words, she fulfils her station as glory of man, by standing in proper relation to man, so acknowledging his station.²¹ And in distinguishing herself thus, she ultimately submits to, and glorifies, God. Paul furthers his argument by drawing back to the principle. He justifies the grounds for woman’s submissiveness, by affirming that though man’s headship is loving and sacrificial, it is headship nonetheless. It is an authority rooted in the creation order of Genesis 2, in which woman was made *from* man (v.8) and made *for* man (v.9).²² As Paul had indicated that the covering is the woman’s symbol of submission, in v.10 the implications given for this are twofold: a) the covering is the veil

¹⁶ Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, 146; Constable, *Dr Constable’s notes on 1 Corinthians*, 130; Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 297; Craig Keener, *1-2 Corinthians: The New Cambridge Bible Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 92; Roy Ciampa, Brian Rosner, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The First Letter to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 673; John MacArthur, *Homily on 1 Corinthians 11.2-6: The Subordination and Equality of Women*, 2022, <http://www.gty.org>; Jackson Boyett, *Homily on 1 Corinthians 11.2-16*, 9 July 2022, www.sermonaudio.com; Ted Trefsgar, *Homily on 1 Corinthians 11.1-16: The Beauty of Subordination*, 10 July 2022, www.sermonaudio.com; E. Ellis, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary* (London: T and T Clark, 2022), 398-399; Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More Than 100 Disputed Questions* (Sisters: Multnomah Publishers Inc, 2004), 4546; Charles Swindoll, *Swindoll’s Living Insights New Testament Commentary: 1 and 2 Corinthians*, (Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2017), 214.

¹⁷ Walter Kaiser Jr, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 570; Leon Morris, gen. ed., *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 Corinthians* (Nottingham: InterVarsity Press, 1985) 188; Gordon Fee, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), 503; Talbert, *Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, 86. Richard Horsley, *Abingdon New Testament Commentaries: 1 Corinthians* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998) 153.

¹⁸ Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Anchor Yale Bible: First Corinthians* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 410; Verlyn Verbrugge, Murray Harris, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 207; Garland, *1 Corinthians: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 709; Baker, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, 352; Hays, *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching: First Corinthians*, 184)

¹⁹ Mark Taylor. *The New American Commentary, An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: 1 Corinthians* (Nashville: B and H Publishing Group, 2014), 213.

²⁰ This was a dramatic break from traditional expectations throughout the Mediterranean (Greek, Roman and Jewish cultures), in which religious venues were segregated by sex, and women played a mostly passive role. Christianity’s introduction of equality in personhood and spiritual privilege for women was therefore liberating in this sense (John MacArthur, *Homily on 1 Corinthians 11.7-16: The Role of the Godly Woman*, 2022, <http://www.gty.org>.)

²¹ Fitzmyer, *The Anchor Yale Bible: First Corinthians*, 415; Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, 174; Keener, *1-2 Corinthians: The New Cambridge Bible Commentary*, 93; Morris, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 Corinthians*, 190.

²² The use of different prepositions *ek* (from) and *dia* (through) serves linguistically to differentiate the role of woman from man. Though man and woman are interdependent, the prepositions do not nullify the hierarchy of leadership, but reinforce it. This is further validated by the fact that the same preposition *ek* is used in the final affirming phrase, ‘...all things are from God’, thereby creating a similar hierarchical correlation between man /woman and God (Calef, “The Impenetrable “Logic” of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16,” 40.)

of the husband's authority over his wife²³; b) An equally (if not more) popular opinion is that the covering indicates that the woman voluntarily submits herself to this symbol of gender distinction, by which she is 'authorised' to worship with men. She thereby exercises control over her own head by covering.²⁴ Horsley claims, however, that (a) and (b) carry the same intention and are therefore directed towards the same goal - that the position of women is to reflect honour upon men. This view is reinforced by verses 11-12, even as these same verses endorse men being interdependent with women 'in the Lord'²⁵; c) as she contributes to a correct demonstration of God's creation order in the worship service, she displays the glory and honour of a church in which men and women worship together as God intended, and thereby exhibits God's wisdom, for the edification of the angels (Ephesians 3.10; 1 Peter 1.12). Verse 11 marks a turnaround in the discourse, when Paul highlights the interdependence of man and woman, and adds that if woman came *from* man, it is also true that man ever after comes *through* woman. This points to an equality of the Gospel order established in Christ ('...in the Lord...'), that offsets and balances out the authority-submission axis of the Creation order (v.2-10). More important is the affirmation of God's sovereignty and signature-ship over both these dimensions, and that is consistently above all things ('...all things come from God').²⁶

1.1.3 Are these roles to be regarded as universally applicable, or contextual?

There are 2 main interpretations of 'covering': a) it refers to a *woman's long hair*, which should be bound up on her head, and not left loose – v.15 provides justification for this. b) it refers to an *external covering*, such as a veil or a shawl. This is based on what Paul says in vv.4-7. (Others also note that, because of Paul's constant references to the marital relationship in the passage, and the fact that the veil was the mark of a married woman in that period and culture²⁷, the veil was what Paul had in mind). Long hair might be the more convincing of the two, if '*peribolaion*' (commonly translated as 'veil', is literally a 'thing wrapped or thrown around', and can just as easily be taken as meaning long hair.²⁸ But where both interpretations are supported, commentators are content to accept a double-entendre. Long hair is simply analogous to an external covering; the external covering emulates nature itself, which has seen fit to provide women with a natural extra covering of long hair.²⁹ There is consensus in the literature that whether Paul meant long hair or a shawl, the head covering is situational. The already existing practice in Corinth of coverings to distinguish women from men, is to be observed by the Corinthian Christians in their worship. But if the covering is situational, then the principle behind it - maintaining a sex distinction – is universal, based on the following: a) *The creation order*. The exhortation to respect sex distinction in church is based on the theologically ordered headship of God, Christ, man and woman (v.3), and on the observation

²³ Swindoll, *Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary: 1 and 2 Corinthians*, 216-217; John Calvin, *Commentary on Corinthians: Volume 1* (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library), 299-300; Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 339; Ellis, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary*, 418; Donald Metz, *Beacon Bible Commentary: Romans, 1 and II Corinthians*, (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1968), 390.

²⁴ Fitzmyer, *The Anchor Yale Bible: First Corinthians*, 417; Morris, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 Corinthians*, 191; Baker, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, 356; Blomberg, *1 Corinthians: NIV Application Commentary*, 301; Constable, *Dr Constable's notes on 1 Corinthians*, 136; Keener, *1-2 Corinthians: The New Cambridge Bible Commentary*, 94; Mark Taylor, *The New American Commentary*, 331-332; Hays, *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching: First Corinthians*, 187-188; Fee, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 520-521; Horsley, *Abingdon New Testament Commentaries: 1 Corinthians*, 155.

²⁵ Horsley, *Abingdon New Testament Commentaries: 1 Corinthians*, 155.

²⁶ Calef, "The Impenetrable "Logic" of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16," 40.

²⁷ Garland, *1 Corinthians: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 701.

²⁸ Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, 179.

²⁹ Ciampa, Rosner, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 709.

that ‘woman was made from man, and made for the sake of man’ (v.8,9). Both these elements are derived from the creation narrative of Genesis 2, particularly vv.18-23, and are therefore intended by God as applicable for all time. b) *Ecclesiastical protocol*. In v.16, Paul grounds the head covering with an appeal to universal custom practiced in all the ‘churches of God.’ c) *Nature and social convention* – a woman’s uncovered head in worship is shameful - Paul’s wariness of the social connotations of the Christians’ actions, prompts him to employ cultural assimilation (within scripturally defined boundaries) as a necessary tool. This is not for the sake of the local practice, but so that God’s purpose for sexual distinction (ie. the idea of the husband as the image and glory of God, and of the wife as the glory of the husband, etc.) can be realised³⁰. Paul is intent that this be attained without the Corinthian church provoking the hostility of the society around them. In other words, Christian practice must not be an excuse to disrupt life at the social level³¹; d) *Angels* - Paul presumed that the angels were fellow participants in worship.³² Scholars trace this belief to several sources, both within and outside the Old Testament.³³ This necessitated, therefore, the paying of even greater heed to conventions of modesty during worship, the woman’s head covering being particularly required as a symbol of womanly dignity³⁴.

1.1.4 Is there indication that the content of the passage is guided by the Holy Spirit?

The role of the Holy Spirit is not specifically emphasised in the passage, nor in the scholarly literature. But Hays observes that the applying of sex-affirming symbolism (ie. the concern that one’s dress and outward appearance reflect one’s sexual identity in the interest of both social and divine propriety), points to authentic, spiritual maturity in Christ³⁵. In this regard, then, it is an inclination that can only be prompted, fostered and reinforced by the Holy Spirit.

1.2 1 Corinthians 14.33-35³⁶ Weighing of prophecies

1.2.1 What is the context of the passage?

Paul’s intent here is to teach that women are not to participate in the weighing of prophecies in church³⁷. This is compatible with the role of submission as it applied to women, as per

³⁰ Blomberg, *1 Corinthians: NIV Application Commentary*, 305.

³¹ Hurley, pointing to Paul’s appeal to nature as justifying long hair for women, raises the question of whether long hair is intended as a cultural expression or as a divine principle. His study of Paul’s use of the word ‘nature’ / *physis* points to long hair for women as a normative symbol (Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, 183) noting that lengths and styles will vary across group and time (Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, 183).

³² Morris, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 Corinthians*, 191; Verbrugge, Harris, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: 1 and 2 Corinthians*, 209; Baker, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, 356; Garland, *1 Corinthians: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 727.

³³ Fitzmyer, *The Anchor Yale Bible: First Corinthians*, 419; Blomberg, *1 Corinthians: NIV Application Commentary*, 301, 302; Talbert, *Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, 88; Constable, *Dr Constable’s notes on 1 Corinthians*, 136; Taylor, *The New American Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, 332; Kaiser Jr, *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, 570; Garland, *1 Corinthians: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 726-727.

³⁴ Talbert, *Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, 88; Garland, *1 Corinthians: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 727.

³⁵ Hays, *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching: First Corinthians*, 191.

³⁶ 33 For God is a God not of disorder but peace. (As in all the churches of the saints, 34 women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as the law also says. 35 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.

³⁷ Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, 188; Morris, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 Corinthians*, 239-240; Andrew Spurgeon, “Pauline Commands and Women in 1 Corinthians 14”, *Bibliotheca*

universal church practice and social custom. The passage therefore does not contradict 1 Corinthians 11.2-16 (which doesn't prohibit women from praying and prophesying, provided they cover their heads), or the general direction of 1 Corinthians, particularly in light of chapters 12-14, where participation of the various members of the body of Christ in corporate gatherings, was expected.³⁸

- v.26 General theme of Edification
- v.27 SPECIFIC ISSUE 1 (TONGUES)
 - a) restriction on number of people speaking
 - b) edification of congregation
 - b1) let one interpret
- v.28 b2) if there is no interpreter, silence
- v.29 SPECIFIC ISSUE 2 (PROPHETS)
 - a) restriction on number of people speaking
 - b) edification of congregation
 - c) further comments
 - c1) prophets must speak in turn
- v.30-33 c2) *weighing of words, women be silent during judgement of prophets.*
- v.33-34

In the above structure, Hurley clarifies the specific context in which Paul commands women to 'be silent'. The context is specific, but Paul sees this as essentially contributing to a broader theme - doing things for edification in an orderly way, to reflect God's character of peace and order. 'Prophecy', in the Pauline context, is a broad category, and doesn't carry the same weight of the Old Testament prophecies. The prophecy here is in need of evaluation, and is inferior to the truth presented by Paul. Thus, Taylor sees no problem in Paul's permitting women to prophesy on one hand (ie. 1 Corinthians 11) and his forbidding them to take part in weighing of prophecy, on the other³⁹ (being authoritative process). For a woman to do the latter was therefore deemed by Paul as 'shameful' or socially inappropriate. Scholars have subsequently discussed potential scenarios for this, but the main one seems to be that, by participating in prophecy-weighting, women were liable to embarrass or demean their husbands / senior male relatives⁴⁰, and give the impression of undermining their husbands' authority, as well as the good order of the household⁴¹. This was perhaps characterised by: a) raising questions contradicting the prior views of their husbands / senior male relatives⁴²; b) interrupting repetitively with questions⁴³; c) cross-examining, undermining the authenticity of their own husbands' prophecies; d) provoking non-constructive arguments.⁴⁴ It is likely that cultic prophetic settings, such the Delphi oracle, had influence. There may have been involved a certain form of speech, or timing of speech, other than prayer or proclamation, derived more

Sacra (July-September 2011), no.168, 324-325; Garland, *1 Corinthians: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 919; Constable, *Dr Constable's notes on 1 Corinthians*, 186; Taylor, *The New American Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, 408-409; Vang, *Teach the Text Commentary Series: 1 Corinthians*, 348; Blomberg, *1 Corinthians: NIV Application Commentary*, 400.

³⁸ Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, 191.

³⁹ Taylor, *The New American Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, 409;

⁴⁰ Garland, *1 Corinthians: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 918-919.

⁴¹ Taylor, *The New American Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, 409;

⁴² Garland, *1 Corinthians: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 918-919

⁴³ Taylor, *The New American Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, 409;

⁴⁴ Warren Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: New Testament* (Colorado Springs: David Cook, 2007), 492.

from Hellenistic than Jew influence. Women may have treated prophets like pagan oracles (who only prophesied in response to questions), and made personal inquiries, confusing pagan practice with Christian worship, in ways that conflicted with Paul's view of prophecy, ie. prophets speak in response only to the prompting of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁵ As with the context of 1 Corinthians 11.2-16, the prominence of house-churches most likely meant it was hard to differentiate 'home' and 'church.' Women may have felt more comfortable in home, and accustomed to more open expressiveness and other behaviour that would have been permissible in private settings, but out of place in the church or in public / corporate gatherings.⁴⁶

1.2.2 What does the passage say about the roles of men and women?

Scholars seems to lean towards 1 Corinthians 14.33-35 as referring to both married and unmarried men and women.⁴⁷ 1.2.2.1 *Women: 'Women should be silent in the churches'* (v.34) The silence and subordination requested of women in this passage, is to be demonstrated specifically and exclusively by their not participating in evaluation of prophecy. Where the word 'speak' is used 21 times in 1 Corinthians, it refers directly or analogously to: a) *speaking in tongues*; b) *the interpretation of tongues*; c) *prophecy*; d) *the evaluation of prophecy*. We know from 1 Corinthians 11 that women engaged in (a) to (c). The prohibitions in this passage must, therefore, refer to (d).⁴⁸ The instruction for wives to 'ask their husbands at home' (v.35) is perhaps best understood within the frame of submission, if we recognise by connection the highly vulnerable position of a married couple within the church setting (ie. prophecy-weighting exercise). Then the wife's subordination is seen as crucial to safeguard the relationship. It demonstrates that one's own sense of freedom and entitlement is secondary to the protection of the consciences of other Christians, as well as the order, faith and unity of the Christian community⁴⁹. Equally essential, however, is the man's responsibility to justify his authority in the home, by being competent to impart spiritual truth and build his wife up in faith. At the least he must be knowledgeable of church affairs and Christian life in general, to the extent he is able to respond adequately to his wife's inquiries⁵⁰. A husband inadequate in this regard will discourage his wife from faith in the biblical pattern, so that she is forced to seek assistance from other avenues.

1.2.3 Are these roles to be regarded as universally applicable, or contextual?

It is important to first touch on a longstanding debate regarding the placement of the phrase: '*As in all the churches of the saints*' (v.33). There are 2 camps; there are those who say this phrase should be read as the completion of v.33 (ie. '*God is not a God of disorder but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints*')⁵¹; and those who say it prefaces v.34 (ie. '*As in all the*

⁴⁵ Vang, *Teach the Text Commentary Series: 1 Corinthians*, 357.

⁴⁶ Garland, *1 Corinthians: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 919.

⁴⁷ Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, 193; Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: New Testament*, 492; Ted Trefsgar, *Homily on 1 Corinthians 14: Women in Church*, 10 July 2022, www.sermonaudio.com.

⁴⁸ Blomberg, *1 Corinthians: NIV Application Commentary*, 400-401.

⁴⁹ Tyndale House Publishers, *Life Application Study Bible*, 1952.

⁵⁰ David Pawson, *Homily on 1 Corinthians Chapter 14*, <http://www.davidpawson.org>

⁵¹ Constable, *Dr Constable's notes on 1 Corinthians*, 185-186; Taylor, *The New American Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, 404; Ciampa, Rosner, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 919; Fee, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 697; Fitzmyer, *The Anchor Yale Bible: First Corinthians*, 527; Hays, *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching: First Corinthians*, 248; Keener, *1-2 Corinthians: The New Cambridge Bible Commentary*, 116; Constable, *Dr Constable's notes on 1 Corinthians*, 189.

churches of the saints, women should be silent in all the churches.’)⁵²: a) The first camp argues that Paul uses this phrase to conclude a teaching, ie. to summarise its theological basis (eg. 1 Cor 4:17, 1 Cor 7:17, 1 Cor 11:16). The phrase ‘*As in all the churches of the saints*’ looks and reads better as the conclusion to the ‘major’ portion of Paul’s argument (ie. prophecy and tongues), than it would look if it was assigned to vv.34-35, verses which are (apparently) misplaced, inauthentic and, at any rate, deal with an issue that is merely an ‘aside’.⁵³ In addition, linking the phrase to vv.34-35 produces an awkward redundancy on account of ‘*churches*’ being repeated. b) For the second camp, Morris is unable to logically discern how such a core principle as God’s divine order, should qualify as no more than the custom of the churches⁵⁴. And if linking the phrase with vv.34,35 should make for awkward reading, linking it with v.33 makes it no less awkward (a point that even proponents of the former placement agree with⁵⁵). In fact, Chrysostom’s insertion of the verb ‘*to teach*’ so as to arrive at ‘*As [I teach] in all the churches...*’ may well have been prompted by a noted ambiguity of the phrase when placed with v.33, that he felt could not have been resolved otherwise⁵⁶. Furthermore, the emphasis by advocates of the first camp on repetition, and on the need for a placement that is ‘fitting,’ seems to belie a preoccupation with the aesthetic qualities of the phrase and its surrounding structure (to prevent the phrase from looking ‘ugly’⁵⁷), that perhaps overshadows concern for how the phrase should be best translated, within the drift of Paul’s thought. Fee himself will acknowledge, with the placement of the phrase with v.34,35, that ‘maybe this is Paul’s emphasis as it was needed’⁵⁸. The claim that vv.34,35 are inauthentic, is countered by strong manuscript and textual evidence⁵⁹ for the location of these verses as they stand. Finally, the repetition of ‘*churches*’ can perhaps be explained by Paul transitioning from the non-Corinthian ‘congregations’ to the ‘local house-churches’/ assemblies of Corinth – both of which are plausible derivations from the term *ekklesia*⁶⁰. Perhaps the only consolation lies ultimately in recognizing that both camps arrive at one and the same end ie. respect for ecclesiastical custom and tradition. Having said that, I am inclined to agree with the second camp. The factors presented above I find to be justification enough, but there are other considerations. We will see below how Paul gives the same threefold rationale for his directives in v.33-35, as he did for head coverings in 1 Cor.11.2-16:

⁵² Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, 189; Morris, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 Corinthians*, 239, Taylor, *The New American Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, 409 (Taylor holds that a case can be made for both views); Trefsgar, *Homily on 1 Corinthians 14: Women in Church*, www.sermonaudio.com; Garland, *1 Corinthians: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 919; John MacArthur, *Homily on 1 Corinthians: Does the Bible Permit a Woman to Preach?* 2022, <http://www.gty.org>; Keith Burton, “1 Corinthians 11 and 14: How Does a Woman Prophecy and Keep Silence at the Same Time?” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, no.10, Vol. 1-2 (2000), 280; Blomberg, *1 Corinthians: NIV Application Commentary*, 401; Baker, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, 447; David Pawson, *Homily on 1 Corinthians Chapter 14*, <http://www.davidpawson.org>.

⁵³ Fee, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 698; Hays, *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching: First Corinthians*, 249.

⁵⁴ Morris, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 Corinthians*, 239.

⁵⁵ Fee, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 698.

⁵⁶ Taylor, *The New American Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, 404;

⁵⁷ Fitzmyer, *The Anchor Yale Bible: First Corinthians*, 527. Here Fitzmyer is quoting Clarke.

⁵⁸ Fee, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 698; Fee here is quoting Martin.

⁵⁹ Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, 185; Baker, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, 448; Taylor, *The New American Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, 410.

⁶⁰ James Strong, *Dictionaries of Hebrew and Greek Words taken from Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, Christian Classic Reprints, 113.

		1 Cor 11	1 Cor 14
Contextual principle		Men's heads uncovered, women's heads covered during worship	Women refrain from weighing prophecies
Universal principle		Distinction of roles in church	Distinction of roles in church
Universal principle	Ecclesiastical practice	v.16	v.33
Indicators	An appeal to divine law	v.8,9	v.34
	Social disgrace	v.4-6	v.35

The contextual practice (ie. women wearing head coverings in the case of 1 Cor 11; and women refraining from prophecy evaluation in the case of 1 Cor 14), is underpinned by the broader principle of sexually differentiated roles in worship, grounded in the 3 indicators listed above⁶¹. This suggests a systematic approach by Paul that necessitates, and altogether justifies, the placing of the phrase '*As in all the churches*' with vv.34,35, offering hopefully an acceptable compromise for the problem of unattractive phrases. Paul's meditated approach might also be cause to decide that the issues of sex distinction and order in church, are more than an aside. At the very least it will be deduced from Paul's revisiting of the issue of men's and women's roles in vv.34,35, after discussing it in chapter 11, that he considered it a critical part of his assessment of disorder in the Corinthian church, and it was yet a matter of unfinished business for him⁶². We have confirmed the placement of the phrase '*As in all the churches of the saints*,' with v.34,35, and we have also established a general premise for the universality of the roles of men and women, in the context of this passage. The express features of this universality are as follows: a) As in all the churches of the saints (v.33): Paul is calling on Corinthian men and women to perform their assigned roles, because this is in accordance with universal church practice⁶³; b) As the law says (v.34): Scholars interpret 'the law' mentioned here as a reference to either (or all) of the following: i) *A general reference to Old Testament Scripture*⁶⁴ Either there is no particular law in view⁶⁵, or it is a simultaneous reference to several scriptures.⁶⁶ The point is that Paul is exhorting men and women to exercise authority and discernment. This derivation of 'law' serves then as an umbrella term, under which other more focused evaluations of the term will later be made. We gather, however, that in the context of 1 Cor. 14, Paul's view of the Old Testament pattern of male headship remains prominent, but so too is the new freedom of women to participate in worship. This is

⁶¹ Blomberg, *1 Corinthians: NIV Application Commentary*, 401.

⁶² Baker, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, 454;

⁶³ Garland, *1 Corinthians: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 925; Morris, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 Corinthians*, 240; Burton, "1 Corinthians 11 and 14: How Does a Woman Prophecy and Keep Silence at the Same Time?" *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 280; Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Corinthians: Does the Bible Permit a Woman to Preach?* 2002, <http://www.gty.org>; Baker, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, 447; Blomberg, *1 Corinthians: NIV Application Commentary*, 401; David Pawson, *Homily on 1 Corinthians Chapter 14*, <http://www.davidpawson.org>.

⁶⁴ Garland, *1 Corinthians: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 923; Vang, *Teach the Text Commentary Series: 1 Corinthians*, 357; Fitzmyer, *The Anchor Yale Bible: First Corinthians*, 531.

⁶⁵ Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, 192.

⁶⁶ 'The law' may refer to Isaiah 28.11, which Paul previously quoted in 1 Cor.14.21 when he said 'In the law it is written;' at the same time it can refer to Genesis 2 or Genesis 3.16.

the case in his other teachings, such as his view of both marriage and celibacy as proper kingdom responses⁶⁷. ii) *The Genesis creation narrative (Gen. 1.1-2.3 / 2.4-25)*⁶⁸: This refers specifically to the theologically ordered structure of authority and submission, and the observations that ‘*woman was made from man, and made for the sake of man.*’ It is in this sense that Genesis 2 constitutes to law, or instruction (Torah/Pentateuch) regarding the ordered character of creation and human life, as well as regulative dire, boundaries and differentiations⁶⁹. For Blomberg, as Genesis 2 was applied in 1 Cor.11 as the basis for the directives ‘*woman made from man, woman made for man*’ (v.8,9), so it is applied in this passage to validate the silence and subordination of women⁷⁰. iii) *Genesis 3.16b*⁷¹: The reference here is the phrase: ‘*yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you*’, which constitutes part of God’s imprecatory address to Eve. Conflict in marriage is a universal reality, to one degree or another, borne for the most part out of a wife’s desire to dominate her husband (‘Your desire shall be for your husband’), a husband’s tendency to domineer over his wife (‘he shall rule over you’), and the tensions and frustrations in between. This is just as universal as the pain of childbirth decreed by God in 3.16a⁷². Paul’s instruction to women to be silent and subordinate, then, is partly due to a guardedness against what he sees as woman’s propensity (due to her fallen tendencies prescribed under the curse of Gen. 3.16) to upset the divine order of authority and submission⁷³. c) ‘*It is shameful*’ (v.35): Where the act of women evaluating prophecy with men is ‘shameful’ (ie. undermines the authority of the husbands and male relatives, violates Christian practice, tarnishes the image of a well-ordered household, and disrupts God’s design for worship), ‘shameful’ fits well as a moral / universal concept. The word ‘*aischron*’ (‘shameful’) appears only 2 more times in the New Testament writings, in 1 Cor.11.6, and Ephesians 5.12. *Aischron* refers to disorder, the inappropriateness of something, that manifests in physical ugliness / unseemliness, that merits social reproach. Bizon sees *aischron* as semantically a physical word, with predominantly functional and aesthetic components; its use as a moral or ethical concept is minimal⁷⁴. However, the ancient philosopher Polus observed that the committing of a shameful act is often motivated by ‘feeling’, whereby we appeal to our moral sense⁷⁵. When we call something ‘*aischron*’ / ‘ugly’, we do so ‘looking toward pain.’⁷⁶ Socrates maintained furthermore that there is objective criterion by which we establish the shamefulness of human action. We not only assess whether a shameful act contradicts ‘*logos*’ (universal law), but also

⁶⁷ Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, 192.

⁶⁸ Taylor, *The New American Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, 408; Keener, *1-2 Corinthians: The New Cambridge Bible Commentary*, 118; Spurgeon, “Pauline Commands and Women in 1 Corinthians 14”, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 330; Blomberg, *1 Corinthians: NIV Application Commentary*, 401.

⁶⁹ Taylor, *The New American Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, 409.

⁷⁰ Blomberg, *1 Corinthians: NIV Application Commentary*, 401.

⁷¹ Spurgeon, “Pauline Commands and Women in 1 Corinthians 14”, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 330; MacArthur, *Homily on 1 Corinthians 14.33-38 Does the Bible permit a woman to preach?* 2022, <http://www.gty.org>; Warren Wiersbe, *Be Wise: NT Commentary, 1 Corinthians* (Colorado Springs: David Cook, 1982), 128; Anthony Thiselton, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary, The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 2479.

⁷² MacArthur, *Homily on Corinthians 14.33-38 Does the Bible permit a woman to preach?*, 2022, <http://www.gty.org>

⁷³ MacArthur, *Homily on 1 Corinthians 14.33-38: Does the Bible permit a woman to preach?*, 2022, <http://www.gty.org>

⁷⁴ Michal Bizon, “Aesthetic Ethics without Evil: Aischron in Greek Popular Ethics”, *The Polish Journal of Aesthetics*, no. 56 (2020), 26.

⁷⁵ Jessica Moss, “Shame Pleasure and the Divided Soul”, *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, no.29 (2005), 10.

⁷⁶ Jessica Moss, “Shame Pleasure and the Divided Soul”, 41.

whether it conveys the ideas of ‘reason’, ‘nature’ and ‘order.’⁷⁷ As with 1 Cor 11, scholars see Paul’s directives in chapter 14 tied to a desire to prevent social indecorum, lest the Corinthian church be confused with other emerging churches and marginal Greco-Roman cults, particularly where women exercised more ‘prominent’ roles in those gatherings⁷⁸.

1.2.4 Is there indication that the content of the passage is guided by the Holy Spirit?

In v.37, Paul calls on Corinthians who consider themselves *pneumatikos* (‘spiritual’ ie. in tune with the Holy Spirit), to exercise that gift by confirming Paul’s instructions (including vv.33-35) as the Lord’s command. Denial of Paul’s instructions would indicate the lack of true prophetic / spiritual insight. The foundational test of the Spirit’s presence in a Christian community, then, was submission to the apostolic writings, and recognition that Paul’s words were marked by the very authority of Christ himself. We recognise that Paul confidently asserted this spiritual ‘oneness’ of mind in all his writings (eg. 1 Cor 2.14-16; 7.12)⁷⁹.

It was implied previously in chapter 11 that the Corinthian women’s submission to propriety (via head coverings) exemplifies an advanced faith; we would be remiss not to recognise in chapter 14, that wives’ submission (by voluntarily exercising their freedom at home for the good of the church), can similarly be taken as the fruit of genuine maturity on their part.

1.3 1 Timothy 2.8-15⁸⁰ Prohibitions - appearance, public teaching and authority

1.3.1 What is the context of the passage? ⁸¹

From the social and historical context, scholars deduce 3 catalysts for Paul’s instructions in vv.8-15: *1.3.1.1 Women: a) Heresy:* A misinterpretation of Paul’s teaching that Christians were ‘raised with Christ’ (Ephesians 2.6; Colossians 2.12; 3.1) and that in Christ there is neither ‘male nor female’ (Galatians 3.28), was being circulated. Heretical teachers were saying that this implied full realisation of God’s kingdom at that present time; Christians were to deem themselves spiritually removed from the world, and they were to consider creational aspects like marriage, sex, child-bearing and sex distinctions unnecessary, thus distorting the Genesis view of marriage. Paul’s exhortation for young widows to remarry and have children in v.15 (and also 1 Tim 5.14) is regarded partly as Paul’s way of countering these teachings⁸²;

⁷⁷ Popularised by Heraclitus, ‘logos’ was eventually taken up by the apostle John to refer to divine theos, through which all things exist, and then to further identify Jesus Christ as the incarnate ‘logos’ (Carlo de blasio, *The Blood and the Soul* (Naples: Guida editori, 2019).

⁷⁸ Taylor, *The New American Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, 409.

⁷⁹ Blomberg, *1 Corinthians: NIV Application Commentary*, 402.

⁸⁰ 8. I desire, then, that in every place the men should pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or argument; 9 also that the women should dress themselves modestly and decently in suitable clothing, not with their hair braided, or with gold, pearls, or expensive clothes, 10 but with good works, as is proper for women who profess reverence for God 11 Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. 12 I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve; 14 and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. 15 Yet she will be saved through childbearing, provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.

⁸¹ Paul wrote 1 Timothy between AD 63 and 66, from either Rome or Macedonia (possibly Philippi), just prior to his final imprisonment in Rome. Paul had assigned Timothy to Ephesus within that same time period. 1 Timothy is a personal letter, but because of the practical advice Paul gives Timothy with regards the ministry, it is often considered and treated as a ‘manual’ for church administration and discipline (Tyndale House Publishers, *Life Application Study Bible*, 2055).

⁸² William Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 624; Gordon Fee, *New International Biblical Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988), 94; Paul Zehr, *Believers Church Bible Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 2010), 68; Donald Guthrie, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The Pastoral Epistles* (Nottingham:

b) *The 'new woman' movement*: An emancipation trend traced to around 44 BC began to spread throughout the Roman empire⁸³ pushing for abandonment / reversal of traditional roles. Dress codes synonymous with modesty and chastity were rejected, along with domestic values. The impact of the trend was felt in the religious domain, wherein women of all cultures felt particularly suppressed and deprived. Involvement of women in Judaism was severely limited, and among the gentile cults of Asia Minor they were regarded in particular low esteem. The role of the priestess of Diana in Ephesus was equivalent to that of the prostitute; even respectable Greek women in general saw very little public exposure, confined by stringent rules for movement, dress and appearance⁸⁴. The confluence of these forces – the 'over-eschatologization' of Christianity by the heretics, plus the boldness and materialistic appeal of the 'new woman' wave – incited the women of Corinth to: i) *dress extravagantly and permissively*. The sculpture and literature of the period⁸⁵, particularly the writings of Juvenal, Philo and Pliny⁸⁶, all testify to the dress of the newly liberated woman as being a public statement, a deliberate spectacle. In both Greek and Jewish culture the promiscuity of dress signified lack of moral respectability, and 'neon-signed' sexual availability. It was perceived as wantonness, insubordination and unfaithfulness on the part of wives⁸⁷. It was further interpreted as the flaunting of wealth, signifying pride and self-centredness. There was gross insensitivity in knowing that such excessiveness in that environment and culture was potentially offensive, and yet continuing to do so regardless. Paul most likely saw the actions of these women from within the same general cultural framework⁸⁸. The result was divisiveness in the church - the poor were demeaned, other women were made to feel indignant or trivialised, and they may have experienced tensions with their husbands as a result. The negative perception from the outside community, furthermore, brought disrepute on the church⁸⁹. Most importantly, attention was diverted away from God, leading to a desecration of the worship. ii) *pursue more public roles in the church*, which eventually manifested in their teaching, and exercising gifts in a manner heavy handed and disrespectful towards husbands / men⁹⁰. Padgett makes the following observations: 'Only a specific class of wealthy, influential women would have been able to set this shift in motion; these women most likely owned the houses in which the churches met, thus would have aspired all the more to scriptural training, and ultimately church leadership. These women were the prime targets of the abovementioned heretics, and were used – wittingly or unwittingly – as purveyors of their false message teachings⁹¹. Padgett also suggests that Paul's mentioning of expensive dress and jewellery, was with this group of women in mind. 1.3.1.2 *Men*: The men may have resorted to c) *In-house squabbling*. Confrontations may have arisen between men and those false teachers who were distorting the views of the women; or there may have been conflict among the men and women themselves, over the disregard and insubordination the latter were

InterVarsity Press, 1990); John Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Timothy 2.12-15: God's High Calling for Women Part 4*, 2022, <http://www.gty.org>; Phillip Towner, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), 240, 270).

⁸³ Zehr, *Believers Church Bible Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 63; Towner, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 237-238.

⁸⁴ John Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Timothy 2.11: God's High Calling for Women Part 3*, 2020, <http://www.gty.org>

⁸⁵ Zehr, *Believers Church Bible Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 63.

⁸⁶ John Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Timothy 2.9: God's High Calling for Women Part 1*, 2020, <http://www.gty.org>

⁸⁷ Zehr, *Believers Church Bible Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 185.

⁸⁸ Gordon Fee, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series: 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1988), 122.

⁸⁹ Guthrie, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The Pastoral Epistles*, 105.

⁹⁰ Zehr, *Believers Church Bible Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 67.

⁹¹ Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 547-548.

demonstrating, via their appearance and attitude⁹². Again, the men's anger and resentment may have surfaced during their prayers, disrupting the worship.

1.3.2 What does the passage say about the roles of men and women?

The strength of arguments on both sides suggests that, as in 1 Cor 11 and 14, Paul is here referring to both married and unmarried men and women.⁹³ Paul's directives in vv.8-15 appear designed specifically to counter the consequences of those contextual forces mentioned, as they manifested within the Ephesian church. *1.3.2.1 Men:* To 'pray, lifting up holy hands, without anger or argument' (v.8). Four key observations are made: a) This instruction likely serves 2 contexts, the first the duty of men to make intercession for *'everyone'* (v.1,4) with a particular emphasis on saving the lost (v.4, note also the mentioning of Hymenaeus and Alexander in v.29); and the second to address disruption in worship, where it is tied to v.9-15 by the word *'also'* or *'likewise'* (v.9); b) The phrase *'in every place'* may refer to local house churches in Ephesus⁹⁴ or it literally means *'everywhere Christians might assemble'*⁹⁵. At the least, this can be remedied where the latter's universal scope would automatically include local churches⁹⁶. Grudem sees the connection between 1 Tim 2.8-10 and 1 Tim 3.1-16 as justification that Paul is referring to any Christian assembled congregation⁹⁷; c) The duty of praying in v.8 is considered exclusive to men. As opposed to *anthropos* ie. people in general), here the specific term for men / males, *andras*, is applied together with the definite article, suggesting that the conducting of public worship by *'the men'*, was Paul's prescribed pattern⁹⁸. It is difficult to reconcile this command with 1 Cor. 11.5, in which women are permitted to pray. It is possible that *'women praying'* there indicated passive participation, whereas the praying that 1 Timothy 2.8 refers to is the vocal, authoritative leading of the prayer, to be carried out by male leaders; Paul permitted women to pray and prophesy in Corinth and elsewhere, insofar as this did not involve exercising formal authority or authority on the level of teaching and ruling. Teaching involved providing normative instruction from

⁹² Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 537.

⁹³ Some scholars point to unmarried women (Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 549), while others point to married women (Zehr, *Believers Church Bible Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 65).

⁹⁴ Baker, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary*, 129; Zehr, *Believers Church Bible Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 61; Fee, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series: 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 122; Gordon Fee, *New International Biblical Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 89; George Knight III, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary, The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992), 222-223; David Platt, Daniel Akin, Tony Merida, *Christ Centred Exposition: Exalting Jesus in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus* (Nashville: B and H Publishing Group, 2013), 46.

⁹⁵ Platt, et. al, *Christ Centred Exposition: Exalting Jesus in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 46; Mark Love, *Reformation Heritage Bible Commentary: Pastoral Epistles, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon* (St Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2015) 86; Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, 201; John Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Timothy 2.5-8: Evangelistic Praying Part 3*, 15 February 2023, <http://www.gty.org>; Towner, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 244-245; Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 538-540; Constable, *Dr Constable's notes on 1 Timothy*, 29; Guthrie, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The Pastoral Epistles*, 103; John Stott, *The Bible Speaks Today: The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 77.

⁹⁶ Robert Thomas, Andreas Köstenberger, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 259.

⁹⁷ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 92.

⁹⁸ John Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Timothy 2.5-8: Evangelistic Praying Part 3*, 2020, <http://www.gty.org>; Constable, *Dr Constable's notes on 1 Timothy*, 30; Love, *Reformation Heritage Bible Commentary: Pastoral Epistles, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, 86; Guthrie, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The Pastoral Epistles*, 103; Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: New Testament*, 753; Zehr, *Believers Church Bible Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 61; Thomas and Köstenberger, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 259).

Scripture, whereas prophesying, in New Testament times, involved only sharing something God had brought to mind. In every case, the prophet was to subject his or her prophecy to what God had inspired previously (1 Cor. 14:29)⁹⁹ d) The lifting of washed hands was an assumed posture of prayer of Old Testament Israel. Levitical priests washed their hands to signify a presumed inward condition of purity, holiness and devotion of those engaged in ministry. It is not the posture therefore that is significant, but what the posture is intended to reflect: i) a pious attitude; ii) peaceful conduct ie. devoid of anger and argument; iii) a sign confirming that any discord that had arisen between parties, had been resolved (otherwise the prayer would be insincere and pointless). Whatever may have caused the discord, Wiersbe sums up the ideal solution as follows: 'Effective praying demands a right relationship with God ("holy hands") and with fellow believers ("without murmurings and disputings")¹⁰⁰.

1.3.2.2 Women: a) To dress modestly and decently in suitable clothing (v.9). 'Modestly' (*aidous*), is rooted in the idea of 'shame' - a woman should feel ashamed to have contributed (through indecorous appearance or inattention thereof), to provocation of an evil or lustful impulse, and ultimately the distraction of a person from worship¹⁰¹. 'Decently' (*sophrosyne*) is better defined as 'self-control', but also carries a sense of sound judgement. b) To adorn themselves with good works (v.10). The idea of 'good works' has its roots in the Old Testament emphasis on care for socially needy, particularly foreigners, orphans and widows (Exod 22:22; Deut 10:18; 14:29; Isa 1:17, 23; Jer 5:28; Ezek 22:7; Hos 14:3; Zech 7:10). Throughout the New Testament the concept 'good works' is frequently highlighted, but perhaps finds its highest expression in Jesus' description of the judgement of the nations: '*I was hungry, and you fed me....*' (Matthew 25.35-36). It is James furthermore who establishes good works as materialisation of genuine faith: '*Faith without good works is dead*'; (Jas. 2.17). Paul's picturing of good works as 'adornment', then, is to understand good works as an inevitable, necessary outworking of obedience and right behaviour, wrought by faith. Paul is not condemning or dismissing external beauty. But the internal spirit is the only 'attire' that reflects sincerely the communion of saints, where each woman is equal to all others in terms of sin and salvation; understanding that no one is more sinful, or more saved, than the other¹⁰². In a homily on 1 Tim 2.8-10, Chrysostom does not mince words: 'Are you come....to a carnival? Costly things (braided hair, gold plaits) are seasonable. Here not one of them is wanted. You are come to pray, beseeching the Lord and hoping to render him propitious to you. Away with such hypocrisy'¹⁰³. c) To learn in silence with full submission (v.11): Paul employs two words adverbially to describe the manner in which he requests women to learn: i) in quietness - Paul is not calling here for total silence but for *hesychia* (stillness, desistance from bustle, calm demeanour), a manner conducive and necessary for learning to take place; ii) 'in full submission' (*hupotage*). This does not mean a surrendering of conscience, nor is there emphasis on the object of submission (ie. submission to who?) but on the woman's manner / attitude¹⁰⁴; that she voluntarily take the position of learner in church meetings¹⁰⁵. This happens when there is respect for order in church. *Hupotage* literally means to 'rank under.' A sergeant is not necessarily better than a private because of his higher rank; a son is not superior to a father because he may be more knowledgeable. Decency and order are divine principles God follows in creation. Furthermore, not all men were teachers. 2.11-15 is tied

⁹⁹ Constable, *Dr Constable's notes on 1 Timothy*, 36.

¹⁰⁰ Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: New Testament*, 753.

¹⁰¹ Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Timothy 2.12-15: God's High Calling for Women Part 4*.

¹⁰² Love, *Reformation Heritage Bible Commentary: Pastoral Epistles, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, 88.

¹⁰³ Members of the English Church, *The Homilies of S. Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the Epistles of St. Paul the Apostle to Timothy, Titus and Philemon* (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1843), 64.

¹⁰⁴ Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 565-566.

¹⁰⁵ Constable, *Dr Constable's notes on 1 Timothy*, 32-33.

closely with both passages preceding (2.8-9) and following (3.1-7), meaning that the context was specific. A woman was supposed to learn from, and submit to, teachers/overseers, in the times in which public teaching was given¹⁰⁶; d) ‘I do not permit a woman to teach’ (v.12a). 4 questions arise: i) *What is meant by ‘teach’?* *Didaskein* is almost always used by Paul in a positive sense, and exclusively to refer to the act of teaching as would be expected of the verb. ii) *What are they not to teach?* With regards to object or content, the overwhelming use by Paul of *didaskein* is to describe the positive teaching of the Gospel (ie. the authoritative public transmission of tradition about Christ and the Scriptures), often by a person in authority. Women are forbidden to teach the Gospel because the abovementioned authoritative context allots this responsibility to men, as church leaders and overseers. iii) *Who are they not to teach?* The context and grammar places ‘man’ (*andros*) as the object of both ‘teach’ (*didaskein*) and ‘have authority over’ (*authenthein*), ie. women are not to teach men. However, we know that the scope of ‘man’ didn’t mean *all* men. In Tit. 2.3-5 and 2 Tim 1.5, women were expected to teach women and children, and Acts 18.26 shows women instructing men privately. It is not difficult to identify the group of men being specified in v.12, then, if we see ‘not to teach or have authority over’ as defining characteristics of ‘submission’ in the previous verse, thereby limiting the context of women’s learning and submission to overseers/teachers. This matches the context in Ephesus. Paul must counter the false teachers by building up competent and able teachers, placing them in authority to communicate and defend the Gospel truth. And where women are not only being deceived by heresy but manipulated into promoting it themselves¹⁰⁷ they are not to authoritatively teach the men in authority¹⁰⁸; iv) *Where are they not to teach?* The phrase ‘in every place’ (v.8), as well as the general nature of v.12 suggests that the directive applies ‘in all the churches’, the church understood as a public assembly. Mounce finds chapter 2 as falling under the scope of 3.15, which refers to the ‘household’ of God. The absence of a modifying definite article before *oiko* means that ‘household of God’ is a reference to the local churches. Women, then, are forbidden to authoritatively teach the Gospel to teachers / overseers in the public assembly of the church¹⁰⁹; e) ‘or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent.’ (v.12b). There are two major interpretations of the word *authenthein* (‘to have authority’, around which the whole phrase revolves). The first is ‘to exercise authority’ (neutral sense) – Paul prohibits any kind of authoritative teaching that places a woman over a man. The second is ‘to domineer’ (negative sense) – Paul prohibits authoritative teaching that is coercive and domineering. This means women are free to exercise teaching authority over men, in a proper way. In a premier study, Baldwin arrived at four possible meanings of *authenthein*: i) to control, to dominate; ii) To compel, to influence; iii) To assume authority over; iv) To flout the authority of. The context of 1 Timothy 2, particularly the parallel of *authenthein* with *didaskein* (‘teaching’), better accommodates *authenthein* as a positive term, as in (iii): ‘to assume authority over.’¹¹⁰ Payne submits that the conjunction *oude* (‘or’) is only used to link two related concepts, to convey a single idea (for example, hit ‘n’ run), further validating the close relation of *didaskein* and *authenthein*, in a coordinating fashion¹¹¹. Kostenberger, upon comparing the syntactical construction of v.12 (*ouk...oude* / ‘not...nor’) with similar constructions from the New Testament and from extra biblical sources, found a distinct pattern: either two activities /

¹⁰⁶ Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 566-567.

¹⁰⁷ Towner, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 258.

¹⁰⁸ Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 567-568.

¹⁰⁹ Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 567.

¹¹⁰ Henry Baldwin, “An Important Word: *Authentein* in 1 Timothy 2:12-39”, in Andreas Köstenberger, Thomas Schreiner, gen. eds., *Women in the Church: An Analysis and Application of 1 Timothy 2.9-15* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 56-61.

¹¹¹ Phillip Payne, *Man and Woman in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul’s Letters* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 352.

concepts are viewed positively in and of themselves, but are denied due to conditions in the context of the passage, or; two activities / concepts are viewed negatively and are consequently denied¹¹². We may conclude as follows: i) Given the positive sense of *didaskei* as indicated by Baldwin, both *didaskei* and *authenthein* must then have a positive sense. *Authentein* doesn't mean a domineering, but a positive, exercise of authority. ii) If, as Kostenberger asserts, two concepts must be viewed positively in and of themselves, then 'teach' and 'have authority over' are two separate acts that Paul is prohibiting. This is an important argument against the view held by some that *authenthein* is an adverb that modifies *didaskein*, ie. 'I permit no woman to teach in a domineering way.'¹¹³ As two separate acts, Mounce then views the relationship as being between a principle, and a specific application of the principle. In other words, Paul forbids women from positions of authority in church (principle), and teaching is one means of applying this principle¹¹⁴.

The following section will look at the reasons Paul gives for the abovementioned roles: a) For Adam was formed first, then Eve (v.13): In Genesis 2, after God forms man from the ground, He creates Eve from Adam's rib; thus she comes after Adam. For Paul, this is grounds for man's authority and headship.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, Adam, as the epitome of male headship, was formed during the pre-Fall creation period ie. creation as God originally intended it. The inference for Ephesian women, then, is that they must not try to reverse man's authority, since it is part of God's ideal creation). Further support for Paul's use of Genesis 2 as a backdrop, is his use of the word *plassein* ('to form, mold'), often used in Scripture to refer to God's creative works. Paul's only other use of this word is in Romans 9, where he quotes Isaiah 29.16 - also about God's forming of man.¹¹⁶ b) 'and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor' (v14).¹¹⁷ Verse 14 is drawn from the temptation narrative of Genesis 3, in which Eve is deceived by the snake into eating the fruit, which she then gives to Adam who also eats, consciously and voluntarily. Paul's intention is to parallel Adam and Eve with the Ephesian men and women. Though both Adam and Eve were guilty, Paul's focus on the Ephesian women justifies the bulk of attention he directs towards Eve. Having been deceived, Eve 'became a transgressor' when she exercised authority over Adam based on what the serpent told her (in Genesis 3.17, God says to Adam, '*Because you listened to the voice of your wife...*'). Eve assumed the role of an 'instructor', reversing the responsibilities accorded by God¹¹⁸. The most sound interpretation of v.14 is that it is simply a logical continuation of vv.11-12, and the passage on the whole.¹¹⁹ It was proposed earlier that v.13 is *illative*, ie. it is the cause and reason for vv.11-12. By contrast, v.14 is *illustrative*, specifically expanding the statement of v.13. It becomes a precaution to accepting false teaching (as Eve listened to the snake), and to the unhappy consequence of interchanging roles and reversing authority. This brings to bear, furthermore, the reading of v.14 as confirmation of male headship. Firstly, Adam was held responsible for bringing sin into the world (Rom.

¹¹² Andreas Kostenberger, "A Complex Sentence: The Syntax of 1 Timothy 2:12-13", in Andreas Kostenberger, Thomas Schreiner, gen. eds., *Women in the Church: An Analysis and Application of 1 Timothy 2.9-15* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 88, 92-93.

¹¹³ Zehr, *Believers Church Bible Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 66-67; Linda Belleville, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: 1 Timothy* (Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers Inc., 2009), 149.

¹¹⁴ Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 574-575.

¹¹⁵ George Montague, *Catholic Commentary on Scripture, First and Second Timothy, Titus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 83.

¹¹⁶ 30 / 33 times that *gar* (for) is used in the Pauline epistles, it is used not illustratively, but illatively, ie. to express cause or reason (Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 592-593).

¹¹⁷ v.14 is structurally identical to v.13, and the close proximity strengthens the likelihood that *kai* ('and') connect a second idea with a similarly functioning first idea (Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 601-602).

¹¹⁸ Love, *Reformation Heritage Bible Commentary: Pastoral Epistles, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, 89,99.

¹¹⁹ Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 601-602.

5.12-21; Gen.9-11), though it was Eve who was deceived and transgressed. Not that Adam was innocent. He was as culpable as Eve, perhaps even more so.¹²⁰ But the broader point of v.14 is to validate God's pattern of male authority in church. Just as the snake and Eve had disrupted that pattern at creation, so too were the Ephesian women doing in their refusal to learn '*in silence with full submission*,' thus deriding male authority in church. Secondly, v.14 tacitly implies that God *prepared* or trained man, to assume leadership in religious and family matters, and to discern lies (to not be deceived). The snake may have strategically approached the woman knowing she was not appointed religious leader, and unprepared to discern lies. From this perspective, v.14 encourages a return to the creational pattern of Christian worship in which men faithfully teach God's truth (which protects from heresy and false teaching), and women listen with submission.¹²¹ An advantage of this position is that it strengthens the point made above, that v.14 *illustrates* v.13. Adam's not being deceived is related to his being made first, which entailed that he received necessary religious instruction. What this points to overall is that Adam assumes 'primary responsibility' (ie. responsibility for the overall pattern of life), which further validates his headship. This concept will be discussed further.

vv. 8-10	'the men should pray...the women should dress themselves....'	Plural/present
vv.11,12	'let a woman....I permit no woman...'	Singular
vv.13,14	'Adam was formed.... Adam was not deceived.... woman was deceived ...'	Singular/aorist
v.15a	'she will be saved...'	Singular/future
v.15b	'provided they continue in faith....'	Plural/present

c) '.... yet she will be saved through childbearing, provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.' The above table shows that, although Paul weaves in and out of nouns and tenses, it is in the service of a logical argument. Having used the singular to present a principle as well as its scriptural support, his concern now, as he reaches v.15, is to establish the crucial typology between the singular (Eve) and the plural (Ephesian women)¹²². *Sozein* (saved) is to be understood as spiritual salvation, rather than physical. The close proximity of words places *sozein* as the remedy for the deceit (*apatan*) and transgression (*parabasei*) of Eve (v.13), where *apatan* literally means to 'entice into sinning.' Thus, in the first half of v.15 (15a), Paul appears to be transitioning Eve into the singular woman who in future 'will be saved', before reverting to plural form to refer to Ephesian women – and women in general for that matter – in the second half (15b). Furthermore, in all 7 uses of *sozein* in the Pauline epistles, it refers to salvation from sin¹²³. Both the context and the verb use, therefore, confirm that v.15 is talking about spiritual salvation, as opposed to physical or psychological (for which arguments have been made). Several positions have been presented with regards to the mode of spiritual salvation for the woman, each position with its own challenges. One of the more feasible modes suggests the woman's salvation is by her acceptance of her God-given role, which is primarily to take care of the home and household (childbearing would then only be an illustration of this primary role), and by her persevering in performance of that role, in faith, love, holiness and modesty. This is in line with Paul's (as well as other NT authors')

¹²⁰ Montague, *Catholic Commentary on Scripture, First and Second Timothy, Titus*, 85.

¹²¹ Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, 216.

¹²² Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 617

¹²³ Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 618.

doctrine of salvation, that a person must continue in his/her state of salvation ie. relationship with Christ¹²⁴. This view overlooks, however, that childbearing is not presented by Paul as optional, but is compulsory. There is another view that does tie a woman's salvation more strongly to her responsibility to bear children. The stigma of the Fall is balanced out, the woman's dignity is restored, by her acceptance of the task of raising a godly seed. From a panoramic standpoint, the woman leads the human race out of sin into godliness. This view rests on the premise that virtuous, wholesome upbringing by mothers will have the greatest influence on the lives of the next generation. Making exceptions for single and childless women, motherhood / childbearing as a general rule reverse the consequences of the Fall.¹²⁵

1.3.3 Are these roles to be regarded as universally applicable or contextual?

	Principle (normative)	Application (situational)	Scriptural basis (normative)
Men	Order in worship; no anger / argument	Lifting up holy hands (v.8)	<i>*Psalm 24; 63.4; 134.2; 141.2; 1 Kings 8:22; Nehemiah 8:6; Isaiah 1:15</i>
Women	Modesty, respectability in appearance and manner; good works	No expensive clothes, elaborate hairstyles; good works (v.9)	<i>*Isaiah 3.16-24</i>
Men	<i>*Men assigned authority in church</i>	<i>*Men assigned to teach</i>	Adam formed first, then Eve (Genesis 2); and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor (Genesis 3)
Women	Be submissive	Learn in silence (quiet demeanour) (v.11)	
Women	Not to have authority over men	Not to teach (v.12)	“ “
Women	Childbearing	Childbearing	Female assigned at creation to bear children (Gen 1)

**Implied by scholars*

In this passage Paul presents at least 4 universal conditions of Christian living, as well as the ways these were applied in the Ephesian church, taking into account the context there: 1) vv.8-10: Men praying with raised hands was an ancient religious practice (continued by Christians), as was the gold-braided hairstyle a Greco-Roman trend. But the principle of order in worship, (ie. peace and modesty in both conduct and appearance) is a universal theological standard. Any behaviour that disrupts order in worship - abrasiveness, promiscuity, the flaunting of wealth, etc. - is always wrong¹²⁶; 2) vv.11,12: Similarly, Paul prohibits women from positions of authority (principle), of which teaching is one example (situational). 3) vv.13,14: The key to Paul's rhetoric is the link between vv.11-12 and the Genesis narratives (vv.13,14). The latter serves as an unshakeable premise by which the reversal of authority is considered illegitimate; the complicity of Eve in the fall is also depicted in a way as to discourage the

¹²⁴ Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 623-624.

¹²⁵ Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Timothy 2.12-15: God's High Calling for Women, Part 4*; Montague, *Catholic Commentary on Scripture, First and Second Timothy, Titus*, 87; Warren Wiersbe, *Be Faithful: NT Commentary, 1, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon* (Colorado Springs: David Cook, 1982), 19.

¹²⁶ Belleville, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: 1 Timothy*, 136.

Ephesian women from the urge to consider themselves free of the constraints brought on by the Fall¹²⁷; 4) v.15: Childbearing is not a cultural feature, but a permanent distinction between men and women. The commissioning of women to bear children is rooted in the created order.¹²⁸

1.3.4 Is there indication that the content of the passage is guided by the Holy Spirit?

Paul's instructions in 1 Timothy are geared towards the preservation of the integrity of the Gospel. The discord among the Ephesian men and women he has attributed to external false teachings / influences. In chapter 4.1, he affirms the spiritual dimensions of this situation. '*Now the Spirit expressly says,*' (4.1) is Paul's way of saying that what he is writing to Timothy in real time for the Ephesian church (the whole text of 1 Timothy) is literally Scripture, the Spirit-inspired word of God, to be regarded as having the same authority even as the creation narratives alluded to in Genesis chapter 2.13,14, and to thus be adhered to the same way. In this section of the letter, Ephesus adheres by accepting and preparing for the inescapable reality that they will be attacked by heretics led by '*deceitful spirits and teachings of demons*' (4.1). We know that this had been spiritually revealed to Paul based on what he said to the Ephesian elders, years before the writing of 1 Timothy: '*I know that after I am gone, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock*' (Acts 20.29)¹²⁹ The guidance of the Holy Spirit in this passage, then, is for the church to fortify themselves against false teaching, against infighting, immodesty and disorder in church, so that by being a steady '*pillar and bulwark*' (3.15), they will be able to safeguard the Gospel truth, the word of God.

1.4 1 Timothy 3.11¹³⁰ Deacons

1.4.1 What is the context of the passage?

1 Timothy 3:1-13 presents a twofold pattern for the official ministry of the church in Ephesus - oversight (*episkopos*) and service (*diakonos*). Conceptual and linguistic parallels suggest that a similar pattern was introduced in Jerusalem, Philippi and, to a lesser degree, Crete. In Ephesus, problems concerning elders had apparently arisen (cf. 1 Tim. 5:19-25), that warranted the spelling out of official duties and qualifications¹³¹. Wariness over the threat of heresies and subversive movements, may have also influenced Paul's demanding of particular qualifications, such as a wide-ranging propensity for self-control, but more importantly a firm grasp on the gospel faith.

1.4.2 What does the passage say about roles of men and women?

1.4.2.1 Men: Men are given the following qualifications: a) 'Deacons likewise must be serious, not double tongued, not indulging in much wine, not greedy for money (v.8)': To be

¹²⁷ Towner, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 268.

¹²⁸ Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 625; Steven Goldberg, *The Inevitability of Patriarchy: Why the Biological Difference Between Men and Women Always Produces Male Domination* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc. 1973), 227.

¹²⁹ Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Tim 2.12-15: God's High Calling for Women, Part 4*.

¹³⁰ 8 Deacons likewise must be serious, not double tongued, not indulging in much wine, not greedy for money; 9 they must hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 And let them first be tested; then, if they prove themselves blameless, let them serve as deacons. 11 Women likewise must be serious, not slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things. 12 Let the deacons be married only once, and let them manage their children and their households well; 13 for those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

¹³¹ Knight III, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary, The Pastoral Epistles*, 292-293.

‘serious’ means to be dignified and worthy of respect. The next three aspects are all to do with self-control¹³². To be ‘double tongued’ (*dilogous*)¹³³ has a different nuance from ‘slandering’ (which is applied to women deacons) in that it leans more towards deceitfulness ie. not saying what one means. Not indulging in much wine is much the command given to the older women of Crete (Tit 2.3). ‘Not greedy for money’ (*me aischrokedeis*) anticipates that deacons would have been regularly involved with management of the church bursary; the term is considered general enough to encompass most kinds of financial misjudgement and abuse¹³⁴. *aischrokedeis* is a compound of *aischros* (shameful) and *kerdos* (gain). Elsewhere Paul points to teaching for ‘disgraceful gain’ (Tit 1.11; 1 Peter 5.2)¹³⁵; b) ‘They must hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience’ (v.9): The closest parallel to the ‘*mystery of the faith*’ is ‘mystery of the gospel’ (Eph 6.19). The content of the gospel is the mystery of God’s plan for salvation through Christ, that was revealed in history. It is a mystery because it was hidden from sinners but has been graciously revealed in Christ. There are important circumstantial elements here; the shift to the term ‘faith’ is most likely pointing to heresies that threatened not only the Christian mission, but the future of the church. In light of these distortive influences, it was imperative that those appointed as deacons were able to hold firm to the gospel faith, of which having a ‘*clear conscience*’¹³⁶ is a fundamental prerequisite¹³⁷; c) ‘And let them first be tested; then, if they prove themselves blameless, let them serve as deacons.’ (v.10): Being tested entails an assessment of a candidate’s life and testimony (against the given qualifications) to confirm civic and domestic propriety¹³⁸. The phrases ‘*let them be tested*’ and ‘*let them serve*’ are regarded as more linear than punctiliar, ie. the examination took place within a set timeframe.¹³⁹ Again, the problem in Ephesus set the tone for how and why these examinations were conducted. ‘*Blameless*’ is synonymous with ‘beyond reproach’¹⁴⁰; d) ‘Let the deacons be married only once, and let them manage their children and their households well’ (v.12): The deacon is called to marital fidelity and good management¹⁴¹ of his children and household; Three observations are made: a) The carry-over of these duties from the bishops (vv.2,4) signifies that the home is the proving ground for the fidelity of all officers¹⁴²; b) The fact that v.5 wasn’t carried over (which establishes a correlation between household management and management of the church), reinforces the view that deacons did not have direct oversight and instruction responsibilities¹⁴³; c) the emphasis on management ability indicates that deacons were householders with standing in the social structure, and leadership / administrative duties at the household level¹⁴⁴. 1.4.2.2.

¹³² Knight III, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary, The Pastoral Epistles*, 279.

¹³³ duplicitous, repetitive (Towner, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 293.)

¹³⁴ Towner, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 293.

¹³⁵ Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 738.

¹³⁶ Towner, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 294.

¹³⁷ Towner, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 294; Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 738-740;

¹³⁸ Towner, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 295.

¹³⁹ Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 741; Knight III, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary, The Pastoral Epistles*, 281.

¹⁴⁰ Towner, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 295.

¹⁴¹ *proistamenoi* (‘to manage’), which carries the double nuance of leading by serving, points to the concept of authority-submission which canvasses Paul’s theology on Christian relationships (Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 750.)

¹⁴² Thomas and Köstenberger, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 285; Knight III, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary, The Pastoral Epistles*, 286.

¹⁴³ Knight III, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary, The Pastoral Epistles*, 286.

¹⁴⁴ Towner, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 296.

Women.¹⁴⁵ Because the word *gyne* can mean either wife or woman, v.11 may refer to either a deacon's wife¹⁴⁶, or a woman deacon / deaconess¹⁴⁷. The majority of scholars prefer the latter meaning, and see 'woman deacon' as the more accurate wording terminologically¹⁴⁸. The following qualities are required for women deacons: a) 'serious' (*semnos*), which can mean dignified¹⁴⁹; worthy of respect¹⁵⁰ or principled and honourable in conduct¹⁵¹; b) 'not slanderers', ie. not double tongued¹⁵², lying or gossipy. The word *diabolous*, devil, indicates that one of the key aspects associated with the devil is a malicious tongue¹⁵³; c) 'temperate', ie. self-controlled, primarily with regards to wine consumption.¹⁵⁴ *Nephalious* means 'well-balanced'.¹⁵⁵ The sense therefore is more towards drinking non-excessively, as opposed to complete abstinence. There is a double nuance where physical sobriety allows for sobriety in judgement¹⁵⁶; d) 'faithful in all things', ie. full trustworthiness and loyalty in character¹⁵⁷.

1.4.3 Are these roles to be regarded as universally applicable, or contextual?

As suggested, Paul may have purposefully selected the requirements for the deacons (vv.8-12) based on circumstances the Ephesian church was facing at the time.¹⁵⁸ In the concluding statement of v.13, Paul says that faithful deacons will be rewarded with a good standing (ie. a

¹⁴⁵ Fee, *New International Biblical Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 107; Zehr, *Believers Church Bible Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 84; Towner, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 295.

¹⁴⁶ Support for v.11 as referring to deacons' wives: Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 745-746; Fee, *New International Biblical Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 106; Stott, *The Bible Speaks Today: The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus*, 94.

¹⁴⁷ Support for v.11 as referring to women deacons: Platt, et. al, *Christ Centred Exposition: Exalting Jesus in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 74,75); Fee, *New International Biblical Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 106; Zehr, *Believers Church Bible Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 83-84; Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 747; Stott, *The Bible Speaks Today: The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus*, 94-95; Zehr, *Believers Church Bible Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 84; Thomas and Köstenberger, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 284-285; Belleville, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: 1 Timothy*, 176-177; Constable, *Dr Constable's notes on 1 Timothy*, 51; John Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Timothy 3:8-12: Qualified Servants for the Church: Deacons, Part 2*, 15 February 2023; Risto Saarinen, *Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible: The Pastoral Epistles with Philemon and Jude* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2008), 87.

¹⁴⁸ Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Tim 3.8-12*.

¹⁴⁹ Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 749; Zehr, *Believers Church Bible Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 84; Constable, *Dr Constable's notes on 1 Timothy*, 51.

¹⁵⁰ Constable, *Dr Constable's notes on 1 Timothy*, 51; Fee, *New International Biblical Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 106; Thomas and Köstenberger, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 285; John Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Timothy 3:8-12: Qualified Servants for the Church: Deacons, Part 2*, 2020, <http://www.gty.org>; Towner, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 295).

¹⁵¹ Belleville, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: 1 Timothy*, 177.

¹⁵² Fee, *New International Biblical Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 106; Zehr, *Believers Church Bible Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 84; Belleville, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: 1 Timothy*, 177.

¹⁵³ Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Timothy 3:8-12: Qualified Servants for the Church: Deacons, Part 2*; Towner, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 295.

¹⁵⁴ Fee, *New International Biblical Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 106; Zehr, *Believers Church Bible Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 84; Belleville, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: 1 Timothy*, 178.

¹⁵⁵ Constable, *Dr Constable's notes on 1 Timothy*, 52.

¹⁵⁶ Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 749; Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Timothy 3:8-12: Qualified Servants for the Church: Deacons, Part 2*.

¹⁵⁷ Zehr, *Believers Church Bible Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 84.

¹⁵⁸ These requirements are also contained in the requirement lists of many other Pauline churches. *Diabolous* (v.11) ('slandering') is applied to the older women of Crete (Tit 2.3). Both *nephalios* (moderation) (v.11) and *semnos* (dignity) (v8), appear in Tit 2.2, both terms of which fall under the *sophron* word group, applied frequently in the Pauline epistles.

good reputation within the community)¹⁵⁹ and deeper confidence in Christ¹⁶⁰. The statement is essentially a summary of vv.8-12. It is considered by scholars as being on par with (and perhaps intentionally parallel to), the ‘faithful saying’ addressed to the bishops in v.1¹⁶¹. This is important, because if ‘sayings’ are seen as directives passed down through church tradition¹⁶², and pertain to issues and doctrines of utmost ecclesiological importance, then it follows that Paul elevates the call to office of bishops and deacons to that same level of importance¹⁶³. From this viewpoint, we can conclude that whereas the church office requirements (vv.8-12) are circumstantial to Ephesus, the conditions premising, and the positive consequences of honourably fulfilling, those requirements (vv.1, 13), are universal.

1.4.4 Is there indication that the content of the passage is guided by the Holy Spirit?

Thomas and Kostenberger note Paul’s emphasis on behavioural qualities, as opposed to more measurable outputs, or other physical aspects. This draws them to conclude that what Paul is looking for with regards to diaconal candidacy, is spiritual maturity, not perfection, much less personality or social / professional status¹⁶⁴. It is furthermore obvious to Knight III that Paul’s encouragement in v.13 is spiritually delineated, and not limited in any other way¹⁶⁵.

1.5. Titus 2.1-6¹⁶⁶

Christian virtues

1.5.1 What is the context of the passage? ¹⁶⁷

Even before the spread of imperial Rome, Crete was one of the cities within the region that took a more liberal stance on women. It was therefore fertile ground for the planting of the ‘new Roman woman’ morality, which classicists trace as having emerged around 44 BC. The new ideal shunned the restrictive and biased practices of a predominantly patriarchal society, and subsequently devalued the home and domestic responsibilities; it was characterised by sexual ‘progressiveness’, extravagant dress and outspokenness¹⁶⁸. Christians in Crete may have incorporated ‘new woman’ ideals based on what they assumed was compatibility with Christianity, particularly its more egalitarian elements (eg. Galatians 3.28, and the tendency to forego preoccupations with social status especially during public gatherings). Titus is

¹⁵⁹ ‘Standing’ is not to be misinterpreted as ‘rank’, as has been done previously. This implies a vain desire on the part of the deacon to climb the church ladder, so to speak (Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 751-752).

¹⁶⁰ Fee, *New International Biblical Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 107-108.

¹⁶¹ Towner, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 297; Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 754.

¹⁶² Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 667.

¹⁶³ Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Timothy 3:8-12*.

¹⁶⁴ Thomas and Kostenberger, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 284;

¹⁶⁵ Knight III, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary, The Pastoral Epistles*, 287.

¹⁶⁶ 1. But as for you, teach what is consistent with sound doctrine. 2. Tell the older men to be temperate, serious, prudent, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance. 3. Likewise tell the older women to be reverent in behaviour, not to be slanderers or slaves to drink; they are to teach what is good, 4. so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5. to be self-controlled, chaste, good managers of the household, kind, being submissive to their husbands, so that the word of God may not be discredited.

¹⁶⁷ Titus was written at around the same time that 1 Timothy was written (ie. around AD 64). Paul had assigned Titus to Crete around AD 63, and the purpose of this letter was to advise Titus in his administrative and supervisory duties there. Thus Titus resembles 1 Timothy in its content (Tyndale House Publishers, *Life Application Study Bible*, 2076).

¹⁶⁸ Steve Robbins, *1 Timothy 2:8-15: Paul and the “New Roman Women” at Ephesus* (Columbus: Vineyard Leadership Institute, 2009), 6.

believed to have been written at around the same time as 1 Timothy¹⁶⁹, giving credence to this context, where the new Roman movement had also infiltrated the Ephesian churches at this time. The fact that Paul attributes the disrupting of homes to false beliefs (1.11) prompts one commentator to say that the household was the chief theatre Paul's campaign¹⁷⁰, that the home was one with the church (ie. the stability of the one was dependent on the stability of the other), and that this is why Paul's directives in the passage are geared towards family relations. At least four of the seven qualities assigned to young women (vv. 4,5) pertain to marriage and the home¹⁷¹. Towner sees this passage as a critique of the social character of Crete, and the non-Christian influences corroding it. This points to a broader theme at work in the letter to Titus - that of the need for the Christian church to be present and at work in the world¹⁷². In the face, then, of opposition, Paul exhorts Titus to provide *sound teaching*; this phrase is used exclusively in the Pauline epistles to contrast heresy. They are to display virtues and behaviour consistent with that sound teaching, in the service of an ethical standard, so that the word of God might not be dishonoured, and so the Christian church would not fall into disrepute. Some see the passage as drawing from Greco-Roman household codes which dictate family relations; this is particularly true of the section dealing with young women (the overlapping with household codes is evident in several other Pauline epistles); however, Paul's focus here is inarguably the reputation of the church¹⁷³.

1.5.2 Are these roles universally applicable, or contextual?

In this passage, Titus place equal emphasis on age as he does on gender. He progresses chiasmatically through requirements for older men, older women, younger women, and younger men. **1.5.2.1 Older men:** *Presbuteros* is the term for the office of elder, but the term used here is *presbutis*, which refers to older men in general. However, it is believed that Paul is addressing all the adult males of the church.¹⁷⁴ A study by Chrysostom shows how the qualities Paul assigns to older men, are qualities particularly lacking in them, so the assignment is based on relevancy. This is also the case with younger men and women¹⁷⁵: a) sobriety / clear-mindedness (*nephalios*); b) seriousness (*semnos*) – to be preoccupied with things that are noble and of moral worth; c) prudence, self-control, moderation (*sophron*); d) to be sound in faith, love and steadfastness.¹⁷⁶ This is a common Pauline trilogy found elsewhere in the epistles. Older women, younger women and younger men are called to bear the quality of *sophron*, a common concept; 12 of its 26 occurrences are found in Titus. *Nephalios* and *semnos* both fall under the *sophron* word group, as they all express self-control and emotion. The idea seems to be to connect the basic virtues of moderation with the prime Christian virtues of being - faith love and hope – hope being substituted here with 'endurance' (Fee expands the virtues in their doctrinal sense as faith towards God, love towards all, endurance to the end)¹⁷⁷. Christian doctrine goes together with the three civil virtues of a sound mind.¹⁷⁸ **1.5.2.2 Older women:** The categorizing of the age groups relatively, rather

¹⁶⁹ Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 1182.

¹⁷⁰ Thomas Constable, *Dr Constable's notes on Titus*, 2016, 20.

¹⁷¹ Knight III, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary, The Pastoral Epistles*, 472.

¹⁷² Towner, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 663-665.

¹⁷³ John Muddiman, John Barton, gen. eds. *The Oxford Bible Commentary: The Pauline Epistles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 261.

¹⁷⁴ Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 1179-1180.

¹⁷⁵ Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 1184-1185.

¹⁷⁶ This is a common Pauline trilogy found elsewhere in the epistles.

¹⁷⁷ Fee, *New International Biblical Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 203-204.

¹⁷⁸ Saarinen, *Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible: The Pastoral Epistles with Philemon and Jude*, 215-216.

than specifically, has been mentioned. The older women are called to be: a) reverent (*ieroprepes*) in demeanor; *ieroprepes* is literally ‘to be fitting for a temple’ ie. to be as a priestess in conduct¹⁷⁹; this involves sacredness/holiness of character, and the mediating of that character to other family members. A more palatable meaning is that ‘we must take seriously that we belong to God’¹⁸⁰; b) to not be slanderers (*diabolous*): this points to the reality of the excesses in Crete, which were apparently more severe there than in Ephesus and other churches. There may have been a verbal roughness or violence; or the women were given to criticism and gossip, which led to slander; c) to not be enslaved to much wine (*pollo dedoulomenas*); as above, this virtue referenced the alcohol addiction that was not only prevalent in the region, but more so in Cretan society (as evidenced by the use of *doulouo* (enslavement, bondage), which was not used in the exhortative to Timothy on this matter (1 Tim 3.8). *Sophrone* (self-control) is specifically prescribed here in relation to alcohol; d) and to teach what is good (*kalodidaskalos*) – this is not referring to public teaching but informal, one-on-one encouragement in the home.¹⁸¹ This virtue is crucial for two reasons: i) It entails a ministry that depends solely on older women imparting their age and experience, teaching the next generation of women to be sensible, disciplined, prudent, wise, discreet, restrained, and overall committed to God’s will.¹⁸² This again is the heart of *oikeiosis* – the transferral of one’s self-value (how one learns to appropriate life circumstances) into value for another, which prompts the imparting of knowledge and skills; ii) It debunks any view of redundancy associated with old age and retirement, and views elderly people as equally and continually valuable contributors to the good of the church. *1.5.2.3 Younger women*: The older women are exhorted to mentor and encourage the younger women. It is perhaps best to say that Paul assumes a culture in which most younger women will be married¹⁸³. Otherwise he omits any reference to single women in a discussion that encompasses the entire congregation¹⁸⁴. The following qualities are listed for young women: a) ‘...love their husbands.’ The exhortation to love fills out Paul’s instructions elsewhere to wives where he speaks of submission, confirming that love and submission operate jointly.¹⁸⁵ Love for husbands involves a prioritizing of the home; self-control; and sexual fidelity – the two latter virtues were crucial in combating the influence of the ‘new woman,’ who felt free to pursue sexual liberties that denigrated marital relations and household management. Love towards the husband was expected to be not a passive but an active love that required a certain level of acceptance and appropriate adjustments on the part of the wife¹⁸⁶. b) ‘love for children.’ As with the previous

¹⁷⁹ David Pawson, *Homily on Titus 2*, 2020, <http://www.davidpawson.org>; Guthrie, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The Pastoral Epistles*, 190; Fee, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series: 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 204;

¹⁸⁰ Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 1186.

¹⁸¹ Guthrie, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The Pastoral Epistles*, 267; Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 1186.

¹⁸² Constable, *Dr Constable’s notes on Titus*, 18.

¹⁸³ Fee, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series: 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 205.

¹⁸⁴ Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 1188; John Macarthur, *Homily on Titus 2.3-5: God’s Plan for Younger Women, Part 2*, 2020, <http://www.gty.org>; Love, *Reformation Heritage Bible Commentary: Pastoral Epistles, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, 273.

¹⁸⁵ Love is regarded as something that young women must be trained in, particularly in a culture like Crete’s where wives did not choose their husbands (Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 1189.) Women learning to love their husbands is juxtaposed with the way people learn to love the Lord (Pawson, *Homily on Titus 2*). Pastoral guidance helps Christians develop a strong relationship with God, as mentorship by older women is necessary for younger women to develop strong relationships with their husbands. Platt, Akin and Merida perceive love as progressing beyond natural affection to a specific lifestyle and plan of action, that cultivates godly character and affection (Platt, et. al, *Christ Centred Exposition: Exalting Jesus in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 290.)

¹⁸⁶ Constable, *Dr Constable’s notes on Titus*, 19.

quality, love for children requires mentorship, particularly in areas such as self-control, and devoting of attention to the home¹⁸⁷, and to the husband. There is no greater demonstration for a child on the meaning of love and submission, than a mother and father who have learned to love and submit to each other wholly and unconditionally¹⁸⁸. c) ‘be sensible...’ (*soprhonas*), better translated as ‘self-controlled’. This is the third appearance of this word group in this passage; d) ‘pure’ (*hagnos*), better translated as ‘holy’, or ‘chaste’ in the context of women. Originally an attribute of God, it developed the transferred sense of moral behavior. Both *soprhonas* and *hagnos* carry nuances of sexual fidelity¹⁸⁹. d) ‘workers at home’ (*oikourgos*). The duty and responsibility of the women, ie. the place where her impact and contribution to the world is to be greatest, is in the home. The attempt to reconcile this view with that of the progressive working woman, is yet to register a breakthrough. Several scholars, however, point to the women mentioned in Proverbs 31 as a failsafe against the notion that a woman is to operate exclusively within the home¹⁹⁰. The Proverbs context does allow for women to work outside the home, provided that it does not impact her physical and spiritual duties in the home, and that it enhances and enriches life in the home. e) Be subject to her own husband – the use of *idiois* (‘own’) indicates this is not the general submission of man to woman, but of the wife to her husband. It must be noted that Paul doesn’t allow the husband to demand submission, but instructs the latter to give it¹⁹¹. 1.5.2.4 *Younger men*¹⁹²: An almost immediate association by scholars of young men with lack of self-restraint¹⁹³ is perhaps related to the use of the imperative *parakalei* (‘urge’), which is absent elsewhere in the passage¹⁹⁴, noting also the contrast with the softer *lalei* (‘speak’) that was used in v.1¹⁹⁵. Paul apparently decides that the majority of qualities he feels are particularly essential to younger men (eg. control of temper and tongue, ambition, bodily appetites) can all be placed under the rubric of self-control (*sophronein*)¹⁹⁶. This is the fourth and final use of this word group in the passage.

1.5.3 Are these roles universally applicable, or contextual?

It is equally possible for the roles in this passage to be either universal¹⁹⁷ or contextual¹⁹⁸. However, based on the unique insights by Chrysostom that suggest assignment of roles based on relevancy, as well as the conditions of excess and addiction that scholars find were more explicit in Crete than elsewhere, I am inclined to view the roles in this passage as contextual.

¹⁸⁷ Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 623-624; Macarthur, *Homily on Titus 2.3-5: God's Plan for Younger Women, Part 2*; Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 1190.

¹⁸⁸ Constable, *Dr Constable's Notes on Titus*, 20.

¹⁸⁹ Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 1190.

¹⁹⁰ Macarthur, *Homily on Titus 2.3-5: God's Plan for Younger Women, Part 2*; Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 1190).

¹⁹¹ Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 1191.

¹⁹² Towner, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 672.

¹⁹³ Thomas and Köstenberger, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 413; Constable, *Dr Constable's notes on Titus*, 19; Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 1191-1192.

¹⁹⁴ Thomas and Köstenberger, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 413.

¹⁹⁵ Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 1192.

¹⁹⁶ Thomas and Köstenberger, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 413.

¹⁹⁷ Fee, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series: 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 216; Knight III, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary, The Pastoral Epistles*, 202.

¹⁹⁸ Saarinen, *Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible: The Pastoral Epistles with Philemon and Jude*, 214 Love, *Reformation Heritage Bible Commentary: Pastoral Epistles, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, 272.

v.5 ('so that the word of God may not be maligned') is considered to refer not to the immediate preceding clause, but all instruction that precedes it (vv. 2-5 ¹⁹⁹). The verse confirms that Paul sees behavioural qualities as fundamentally 'Christian', so that their ultimate purpose is to 'endorse' the Gospel ²⁰⁰. Paul's concern is to rob the enemies of the church of any reasonable grounds to criticise the church, and bring the Gospel into disrepute. The integrity of the Gospel, then, is the universal element of this passage.

1.5.4 Is there indication that the content of the passage is guided by the Holy Spirit?

This passage suggests that the holistic, spiritual poise that defines Christian character and activity, is passed down generationally, through mentorship. Here the focus is on older men and women; their age and experience is expected to have led them to a high level of spiritual maturity, evidenced in the outward showing of their inward spiritual commitment, but more importantly in their ability to impart their experience to younger men and women.

A2 HOUSEHOLD PASSAGES

1.6 Ephesians 5.21-33²⁰¹ The marriage relationship

1.6.1 What is the context of the passage? ²⁰²

Paul here draws a parallel between the church of Christ, and the Christian household. Paul's wider instruction is for the three household groups (wives-husbands, children-fathers, slaves-masters), but he concentrates most on the first group, and the marriage relationship, for the following reasons: a) Sexual ethics have figured prominently in the admonitions given so far to the Ephesians, and have taken a rather negative tone ²⁰³; here Paul provides a more positive note, ie. sexual relations are to be kept within marriage, as God intended from the beginning when he created human beings in two sexes; b) The theme of Christ's benevolent authority over the church was already extensively developed in the first part of the letter, using the extended metaphor of a body and its head; The relationship between wife and husband uniquely portrays the relationship between the church and Christ. The theme of Christ's benevolent authority over the church was extensively developed in the first part of the letter,

¹⁹⁹ Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 1191; Knight III, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary, The Pastoral Epistles*, 206.

²⁰⁰ Towner, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 671-672.

²⁰¹ 21. Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. 22. Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. 23. For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Saviour. 24. Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands. 25. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church, and gave himself up for her, 26. In order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, 27. so as to present the church to himself in splendour, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind – yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. 28. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29. For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, 30. because we are members of his body. 31. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. 32. This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. 33. Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.

²⁰² Paul wrote this letter at around AD 60, while imprisoned in Rome. The polemical position that Paul takes with regards to the nature and purpose of the church, the body of Christ, is the core of the letter (Tyndale House Publishers, *Life Application Study Bible*, 1998).

²⁰³ We know from the epistles to Timothy that Ephesus was especially susceptible to heretical and subversive influences such as the 'new Roman woman' movement, that promoted the reversal of conventional roles, and devalued the authority-submission framework upon which the household and the society in general rested.

using the extended metaphor of a body and its head.²⁰⁴ Paul deliberately pursues the husband's love for his wife (as reflective of Christ's love for the church). This is obvious by the comparative size of the instruction, and the one-sidedness of Paul's conclusive statement in v.33, towards husbands.

1.6.2 What does the passage say about roles of men and women?

1.6.2.1 Men and women in general: 'Be subject to one another' (v.21a) – This command is directed to the general body of believers, ie. both men and women. Verse 21 is a hinge verse: a) it completes the preceding passage, where 'submission' serves as the third and final characteristic of life filled with God's Spirit (v.18-21); b) it is also a standard. The following passage (vv. 5.22— 6.9) illustrates how 'submission' manifests in specific relationships within the community of believers.

Three behavioural contrasts

v.5.15 'not as unwise but wise'

v.17 'don't be foolish but understand the rule of the Lord'

v.18 'don't get drunk with wine but *be filled with the Spirit.*'

Three demonstrations of 'filled with the Spirit'

v.19 singing hymns, making melodies

v.20 giving thanks

v.21 *submitting to one another out of 'fear' of Christ*

Three contexts for living out 'submission to one another'

5.22 *wives to husbands*

6.1 *children to parents*

6.5 *slaves to masters*

There has been an extensive discussion as to how Paul intended 'submission' to be understood. The most feasible position is that it is not mutual / reciprocal submission in view as some suggest²⁰⁵, but submission to appropriate authorities, indicating a hierarchical structure in place²⁰⁶. Patzia makes the point that the authority-submission dynamic is the very basis of ordered, social life²⁰⁷. O'Brien sees this position justified in v.22-33, on the grounds of the passage's semantic and syntactical properties, as well as the flow of the argument. 'Submission' (*hupotassomai*) is essentially a military term meaning 'to rank under.' It is used invariably in the Pauline epistles to express authority / order, and subjection to it. O'Brien

²⁰⁴ In 1:22–23 Paul has said that Christ is the head over all things for the benefit of the church, which is his body. Then in 4:7–16 Christ becomes the head especially of his church body. In this role Christ supplies all that the body needs in order to grow to maturity and function smoothly.

²⁰⁵ Markus Barth, *The Anchor Bible: Ephesians, Translation and Commentary on Chapters 4-6*, Garden City, Doubleday and Company, Inc., 610-611.

²⁰⁶ Peter O'Brien, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Letter to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 402-403; Thomas Slater, *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary: Ephesians* (Macon: Smyth and Helwys Publishing Incorporated, 2012), 154; F.F Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament, The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, William Eerdmans Publishing Company), 382; Harold Hoehner, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Ephesians* (Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, 2008), 252.

²⁰⁷ Arthur Patzia, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series: Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1990), 282-283.

notes that the relationships in vv.22-33 are never reversed; each relationship is ordered, with one person ‘over’ and the other person ‘under.’ This is the same overtone of authority and subjection that the verb conveys in its 40 or so usages, across the New Testament writings. Mutual courtesy or deference is not indicated. To do so would be reaching outside the semantic range of the term. Not that mutual courtesy is absent from the Pauline epistles; but where that is meant, it is directly inferred (eg. vv.25, 28, 29). In addition, O’Brien highlights texts such as Revelation 6.4 (*‘...that men should slay one another....’*) and Galatians 6.2 (*‘Bear one another’s burdens’*) to make the point that, while the phrase ‘one another’ often has symmetrical / reciprocal significance in the New Testament (Eph. 4:25; John 13:34, 35; 15:12, 17; Rom. 1:12), this is not always the case, as Revelation 6.4 and Galatians 6.2 show. Two people cannot simultaneously kill each other, nor should everyone exchange burdens with everyone else. What the Galatians text is saying, rather, is that those who are more able should help the burdens of those less able (cf. also 1 Cor. 11:33). It is this view of submission, then, that is in mind in the current passage. O’Brien brings to bear the progression, or flow of the text. In its original form, verse 22 reads ‘Wives to your husbands’ - the verb ‘be subject’ is absent; therefore, verse 22 derives its meaning and sense from verse 21 (without the verb having to be repeated). So that in essence Paul is saying, ‘Submit to one another, and what I mean is - wives *submit* to your husbands, children *submit* to your parents, and slaves *submit* to your masters’²⁰⁸. Other scholars observe it is possible to apply both principles of hierarchy and mutuality without one destroying the other, and that there is ample confirmation of a middle ground at the very least, within Ephesians 5.22-33. For Thielman, there is coexistence between submission and an ordering of roles within a household. 1 Peter 5.5 is used as a parallel. When Peter says, ‘*You that are younger be subject to the elders*’ followed immediately by ‘*clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another*’, the sense is that the latter phrase doesn’t rule out the former. There is a hierarchy, but it is attended by a fundamental submission; elders put their congregation’s interests before their own²⁰⁹. Thielman concentrates on the submissiveness of those in authority. Authority is tempered by an attitude of service, so that ultimately there is no qualitative difference between those in authority and those under authority.²¹⁰ Thielman ultimately sees Paul’s specific commands to those in authority (husbands, parents and slaves) as purposely designed to restrain them; hence the closing reminder that they too, are under the authority of God (6.9). The interplay between submission and hierarchy, then, is understood against the backdrop that all people, regardless of status, level or position, are under submission. It has been common also to view the Trinity as further justifying the coexistence of authority and subordination²¹¹. Even within the Godhead, there is equality and yet lines of hierarchy. The Son is subordinate to the Father (Matt 10:40; 26:39, 42; John 8:29, 42; 12:49), the Holy Spirit to the Father (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-15), and the Holy Spirit to the Son (John 16:7; cf. 14:26; 15:26), yet there is no inequity, for all three Persons are qualitatively equal (4:4-6; Matt 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14; 1 Pet 1:2; cf. also John 13:16; 17:21)²¹². Christ Himself set the supreme precedent, whereby all believers are expected to submit themselves, and put the interests of others before their own, because of Christ who “*emptied himself,*” “*humbled himself,*” and “*became obedient,*” even when the

²⁰⁸ O’Brien, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary, Ephesians*, 403.

²⁰⁹ Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 1011.

²¹⁰ Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 747.

²¹¹ Hoehner, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Ephesians*, 259; Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 382; David Pawson, *Homily on Ephesians 5.21-33*, 2020, <http://www.davidpawson.org>; Klyne Snodgrass, *Ephesians: NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 362; O’Brien, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: Ephesians*, 408; Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 375.

²¹² Hoehner, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Ephesians*, 259.

path of obedience led to death on the cross (Phil. 2:3-8)²¹³. ‘....out of reverence for Christ’ (v.21b) The motivation for believers to submit to one another, is ‘fear’ of Christ. The toning down of the term in most translations to ‘reverence’ or ‘respect,’ is considered too weak to capture the intended nuance.²¹⁴ *Phobos* can be used negatively to mean “intimidation” (e.g., 1 Pet. 3:14), something that produces fear (e.g., Rom. 13:3), or “fear” itself (e.g., 2 Cor. 7:5). It can also have the positive connotation of showing respect to someone who, because of their position of authority or power, deserves obedience or deference (e.g., Rom. 13:7; Eph. 6:5; 1 Pet. 2:18; 3:2, 15)²¹⁵. The fear of God as a motivation for obedience, was a prominent element of the Old Testament law, as well as for piety in general. In the New Testament ‘fear’ is followed by a noun (objective genitive) referring to one of the persons of the Godhead, often ‘the Lord’ or ‘God.’ Ephesians 5.21 is the only instance in which the fear of ‘Christ’ is mentioned. Lastly, on every occasion that Paul employs the term ‘fear’ (of God, the Lord, or Christ), it is within an eschatological context.

Fear of Christ is produced by knowledge of Christ. We know of the unfathomable depth of Christ’s sacrificial love and grace, and we know that to Him God has subjected all the inimical power of the universe. In connection, we know of Christ’s power and holiness, which will be made fully manifest at the final day of His judgement. As a consequence, we fear to disobey him²¹⁶. This points ultimately to ‘fear’ as conveying a serious sense of reverence and obligation, that is less than terror / fright / intimidation, but more than deference / respect. It is a sense of awe in the presence of one who is Lord and coming Judge²¹⁷. 1.6.2.2 *Wives: ‘Wives, be subject to your husbands, as you are to the Lord (v.22).’* It was mentioned in the previous section that although the verb ‘submit’ (*hupotassomenoi*) does not appear in the original form of v.22, scholars agree this same verb is supplied from v.21 with an imperatival force²¹⁸. It is preferably middle participle in form, indicating: a) the subject / wife is responsible for the action; b) the wife acts freely – ‘wives, be [voluntarily] submitting to your husbands...’²¹⁹ Though some scholars differentiate ‘submission’ from ‘obey’ (*hypakouo*) which is used for children (6.1) and slaves (6.5), others find the distinction inconsequential. The two terms are more or less synonymous, and used interchangeably. Talbert sees the shift from ‘submit’ in chapter 5 to ‘obey’ in chapter 6 as stylistic only, but the same sphere of obligation is intended²²⁰. Thielman refines Talbert’s position by perceiving one term as the umbrella under which the other falls ie. submission entails obedience. This is justified by: a) the semantic similarities in the terms; b) the submission of wives and the obedience of children / slaves are all seen as part of the mutual subordination enjoined in v.21; c) obedience would certainly have been seen as part of a wife’s role in relation to her husband in most parts of the ancient world; d) the fact that the Church’s subordination to Christ, on which the wife’s subordination to her husband is based in v 24, would be seen as involving glad obedience; e) elsewhere in the NT, (eg. 1 Pet 3:5,6), submission of wives to husbands and obedience of wives to husbands are explicitly paralleled; f) finally, if there is an obvious difference between

²¹³ Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament: Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 382.

²¹⁴ O’Brien, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary, Ephesians*, 404; Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 978.

²¹⁵ Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 374.

²¹⁶ O’Brien, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary, Ephesians*, 404-405; Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 978; Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 375.

²¹⁷ O’Brien, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary, Ephesians*, 404-405; Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 374.

²¹⁸ Charles Talbert, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: Ephesians and Colossians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 140.

²¹⁹ Snodgrass, *Ephesians: NIV Application Commentary*, 365; Voddie Baucham, *Homily on Ephesians 5.22-24: The Better Half*, 2020, <http://www.sermonaudio.com>

²²⁰ Talbert, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: Ephesians and Colossians*, 162.

willing submission and imposed obedience, there is little difference between voluntary subordination and voluntary obedience²²¹. The word *idiois* ('your') expresses a sense of one's own, implying something private or separate. This confirms that a wife's submission is to her own husband, not to another's husband, or men in general. This corresponds with the reflexive pronoun *eauton* ('their own') in v.28 ('husbands should love their own wives'²²². 2 major interpretations have been assigned to the phrase '*as to the Lord*', both of which are widely accepted: a) Submit to your husbands '*as if you are submitting to the Lord*.' 'The Lord' is not appositional to 'husbands,' but refers to Christ. Wives' submission to husbands is to be analogous, as if they were submitting to Christ. This is further appropriated when viewed as a counterpart to the church's submission to Christ²²³; b) Submit to your husbands '*because of the Lord*.' The wife's relation to Christ is the basis, motivation, and qualification for her submission to her husband. Put another way, submission to her husband is one aspect of her obedience to Christ. Obedience therefore is not by any innate authority in the husband; the husband does not have the authority of Christ, except in the case of marriage, and then only by analogy, not in reality. Christ is the wife's authority. Furthermore, contrary to Aristotelean thought, there is nothing here about the natural inferiority of women to men and the appropriateness, then, of men ruling over women²²⁴. 'and a wife should respect her husband' (v.33b): The original directive given to wives is not to 'respect' (preferred by translators as a more palatable option), but to 'fear' their husbands. The term in v.21 (*phobo*, out of 'fear' for Christ), is also used here in v.33 (*phobetai*). In its positive connotation, 'fear' involves observance of appropriate authority structures (eg. citizens to the state, children to parents, slaves to masters, and wives to husbands)²²⁵; it is acknowledging someone who, because of their authority, deserves obedience /reverence. This is the attitude of the wife to her husband, which in turn mirrors the attitude of the church to Christ. Martin sees this as the reason why the wife is not specifically asked to 'love' her husband, or a husband to 'respect' (fear) his wife. As the primary model, the Christ-church union appropriates the respective roles and responses in the marriage relationship²²⁶. Ultimately, then, the one puts the other in the right perspective. The fear expected of the wife is understood only in connection with the love expected of the husband. If a husband loves his wife as Jesus loves the church, then the wife will respond as the church responds to Christ: with a reverence²²⁷ that results from her knowledge and experience of this love from her husband to her. It would be an unnatural response for the wife to seek autonomy from him, to want sufficiency for herself, or dominance over him, if she recognizes that he is loving her sacrificially, unwaveringly, and with a concern for her purity, righteousness and welfare, in accordance with the authority that obligates him to perform and fulfil these tasks. The proper balance of the relationship, and the correct application and management of the dynamics within, are crucial, to keep 'authority' from becoming interpreted as domineering, and to keep 'fear' from being thought of as degrading, or associated with inferiority. Paul never intended to depict wives as primarily

²²¹ Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 980.

²²² Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 375.

²²³ Talbert, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: Ephesians and Colossians*, 162; Snodgrass, *Ephesians: NIV Application Commentary*, 365; Patzia, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series: Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, 282.

²²⁴ Snodgrass, *Ephesians: NIV Application Commentary*, 365; Hoehner, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Ephesians*, 262; Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 375.

²²⁵ Francis Foulkes, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Ephesians* (Nottingham: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 206; Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 1015.

²²⁶ Ralph Martin, *Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching: Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1991), 72.

²²⁷ Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 374); Dr Thomas L. Constable, *Dr Constable's notes on Ephesians* (Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary, 2016), 88.

passive, nor inferior to husbands. He describes the marriage union as a give and take, an exchange of offering and receiving, seeking and finding, tension and fulfilment²²⁸. 1.6.2.3 *Husbands: 'Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church, and gave Himself up for her' (v.25)*. Paul's prioritising of the husband's responsibility to his wife is clear – 116 words addressed to husbands, compared with 41 words for wives. The word *agapate* is understood as love given unconditionally, regardless of merit. The present imperative form signifies an ongoing love, independent of emotions or responses (of the husband to others, or of others to the husband). It is an act of the will²²⁹. The exhortative itself is unique to Paul; it is not found in the Old Testament, or rabbinic literature, or the household codes of the Greco-Roman era. Though the patriarchal model was maintained in which the husband remained as head of the household, Paul saw this authority as existing not for the husband's own prestige, gain or well-being, but for the service and care he could provide for the well-being of others. On this basis the exhortative was deemed revolutionary, unconventional and radical²³⁰. It is a love marked by the subordination of one's own person, a dying to self²³¹. The crowning aspect of *agapate* is that it is a sacrificial love, modelled on Christ's love for the church²³², implying that in loving his wife the husband must make even the ultimate sacrifice of life itself. Furthermore, it is a self-denial realised and manifested daily. Not separated from, but in and through, natural affection and love²³³. *'in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word' (v.26)*. The reason Christ gave himself up for the church was to 'sanctify' her, or set it apart. His was therefore not only a sacrificial love, but a purifying love²³⁴. In the NT, the LXX and other sources, 'cleansing' (*katharizo*, purification) is often a metaphor for cleansing from sin²³⁵, whereas 'make holy' (*hagiazō*, sanctification) is to effect a state and condition of moral purity²³⁶. 'Make holy' and 'cleansing' are both aorist tense participles. Rather than consecutive actions, the two verbs are coincidental. The NT and LXX often speak of all aspects of the soteriological experience as having been accomplished in the past, together at the same time (1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:21; Heb. 10:29), where cleansing (*katharizo*) is also often coupled with purification (*hagiazō*)²³⁷. Within the marital context of Ephesians 5, the sense is that a husband be concerned for the spiritual state of his wife; that he seeks for her holiness and purity and strives to maintain it; that he not expose her to iniquities or circumstances of temptation. The love of Christ for his church, that causes him to desire to keep his church clean, is the love a husband is to have for his wife, that produces the same desire²³⁸. The cleansing / sanctification process is said to take place by a 'washing of the water by the word'. The two dimensions of the phrase must be dealt with separately. a)

²²⁸ Barth, *The Anchor Bible: Ephesians*, 650.

²²⁹ Hoehner, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Ephesians*, 262.

²³⁰ William Klein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: Ephesians, Philippians Colossians, Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 216; Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 381.

²³¹ Patzia, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series: Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, 286; Foulkes, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Ephesians*, 200; John MacArthur, *Homily on Ephesians 5.25: God's Pattern for Husbands, Part 1*, 2020, <http://www.gty.org>.

²³² Slater, *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary: Ephesians*, 156; Hoehner, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Ephesians*, 262.

²³³ Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 994.

²³⁴ Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 385; John MacArthur, *Homily on Ephesians 5.25: God's Pattern for Husbands, Part 1*, 2020, <http://www.gty.org>.

²³⁵ Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 383.

²³⁶ Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 995.

²³⁷ Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 383; Barth, *The Anchor Bible: Ephesians*, 621-622; Foulkes, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Ephesians*, 200; Snodgrass, *Ephesians: NIV Application Commentary*, 369.

²³⁸ MacArthur, *Homily on Ephesians 5.25*; Slater, *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary: Ephesians*, 157.

‘...washing of the water...’ There is concurrence that ‘washing of the water’ refers to the rite of baptism²³⁹. The article preceding *loutro* (ie. the bath) points to a specific, literal event, most likely baptism²⁴⁰. Furthermore, in several NT texts the external washing of baptism deliberately signifies inward cleansing from sin -Titus 3.5; Acts 22.16; 1 Cor 6.11. The ritual washings at Q’mran were also associated with sanctification and cleansing²⁴¹. b) ‘...by the word’ – the addition of ‘by the word’ dramatically modifies the entire phrase, as well as our perception of Paul’s overall intention and meaning, so much so that the literature divides into three camps of interpretation: (i) ‘by the word’ is linked with the phrase ‘washing of water’ and is thus an extension / continuation of the baptism process. The ‘word’ refers to a candidate’s confession /formula that accompanied baptism (ie. baptism in the name of the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit), or some kind of pre-baptismal utterance²⁴²; (ii) ‘by the word’ is linked to the term ‘cleansing’. Paul would then be saying that, as well as being cleansed through baptism, the Church is cleansed through the purifying word of the gospel. On either (i) or (ii), Paul sees the Church’s cleansing from sin not through (water) baptism only, but through baptism accompanied by the word; (iii) The ‘washing of water’ need not necessarily mean the literal water bath of baptism, especially if the reference is metaphorical, or spiritual. In stark contrast to the term *baptizo* that Paul usually employs for ‘baptizing’ in the epistles, the term *loutro* is a common reference to ceremonial baths, particularly bridal baths²⁴³. Several scholars therefore see the prenuptial bath and marital imagery of Ezekiel 16.8-14 as standing behind Ephesians 5.26.²⁴⁴ The ruling out of baptism, then, also cancels out the claim that ‘by the word’ refers to a baptismal confession or formula. Baker observes that ‘word’ (*rhema*) is never used in the NT of a word spoken at baptism, but it refers either to the word of God (Ephesians 6.17) or the Gospel (Rom. 10:8, 16–17; Heb. 6:5; 1 Pet. 1:25). If ‘washing of water’ is a metaphorical reference to the bridal bath of Jewish custom, then ‘by the word’ points to the substance that bathes those who receive this bath. In other words, they receive ‘the water bath in the word’ which is the Gospel²⁴⁵. The conclusion of this line of thought: Christ cleansed and sanctified his church by washing them exclusively in the verbal proclamation of the gospel, by which they were sealed as God’s special people by the Holy Spirit, upon hearing and believing the word²⁴⁶. The determining factor is how accurate a portrayal these contexts provide of the example set by Christ; how applicable and meaningful they are to the marital relationship, particularly the role of the husband. From that perspective, both (ii) and (iii) appear feasible. The loving authority of the husband entails that he be both responsible and capable of spiritual discernment, instruction and imparting of truth, toward the purification and consistent strengthening of his wife. That responsibility is demonstrated by: a) a husband’s encouraging of his wife to participate in baptism, where necessary; b) a husband’s constantly exposing of his wife to the Word of God, to the preaching and teaching

²³⁹ Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 388; Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 995; Patzia, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series: Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, 286; Klein, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: Ephesians*, 217; Foulkes, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Ephesians*, 201.

²⁴⁰ Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 995.

²⁴¹ Barth, *The Anchor Bible: Ephesians*, 694-695.

²⁴² Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 997; Klein, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: Ephesians*, 217; Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 388; Patzia, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series: Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, 287.

²⁴³ Foulkes, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Ephesians*, 201.

²⁴⁴ Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 998; Talbert, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: Ephesians and Colossians*, 163.

²⁴⁵ Talbert, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: Ephesians and Colossians*, 142; Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 385; Foulkes, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Ephesians*, 201; Snodgrass, *Ephesians: NIV Application Commentary*, 369.

²⁴⁶ Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 385.

of the Gospel,²⁴⁷ through regular participation in church services, bible study, and provision of resources (eg. books, media). There is a sacrificial element involved. It is impossible for the husband to perform his responsibilities unless he initiates; unless he is present beside his wife, and leading by example – attending, participating and engaging. *‘so as to present the church to himself in splendour without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind – yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish’ (v.27)* Here are 2 further objectives for why Christ gave himself up for the church: a) *To present the Church to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle*. Paul apparently continues the imagery of Ezekiel 16 from the previous verse²⁴⁸ but effectively remoulds it. Whereas in Ezekiel 16 the bride that God bathes and clothes in finery and jewels (Israel) becomes promiscuous, Paul reverses the process; he sees the bride (the church) cleansed once more, through sanctification /cleansing and the preaching of the Gospel, where Christ eventually sets the church apart and presents her to himself a bride glorious and resplendent. Faulkes emphasises how the bride can do nothing of herself to make herself beautiful in the eyes of her Lord. That Christ must purify the church / bride and present the church to himself, indicates that it is all his doing²⁴⁹; b) *So that she may be holy and without blemish*. The terms ‘holy’ and ‘blameless’ indicate that the bride’s beauty is moral as it is physical. Purity is always the mark of the people of God, in both individual (1.4; Col 1.22) and corporate identity (5.27). It is possible, as Thielman suggests, that some verses in this passage such as v.23 (which elaborates Christ’s headship), and v.27 (which depicts Christ’s sanctifying activity), were probably not intended by Paul to apply to the husband’s responsibility to the wife. Rather, they are only intended as a pattern for the husband’s role in the marriage. I would argue that these verses do apply to the husband’s responsibility to the wife, allowing of course for the fact that both husband and wife are ultimately imperfect imitators of the Christ-church union. How the husband applies v.23 in marriage, has been discussed in the section on 1 Cor 11.3-16 (v.3). For v.27, it was said above that the church (by implication the wife) does nothing of herself to affect her own purification and union with Christ. This is not to say that the church is passive, but it points to the authority-submission dynamic, which I believe underlines v.27; the wife wilfully and graciously submits to the husband’s responsibility and his efforts to provide spiritual guidance. At the core of this paraenesis for husbands is Christ’s love. This was introduced in v.23; here in vv.26,27, Christ’s sanctifying actions illustrate the nature of his love. Paul returns to the notion of love in v.28²⁵⁰. *In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself (v.28)*. *Houtos* (‘in the same way’) points back to the manner of Christ’s love for the church as outlined in 5:25–27²⁵¹. The statement of 5.25 is made more emphatically in v.28; the element of duty is elevated - husbands ‘are obligated’ (*opheilousin*) to love their wives²⁵². On the notion of husbands loving their wives as their own bodies, 3 observations are made: a) it parallels how Christ’s love for the church is also seen as his love

²⁴⁷ Macarthur, *Homily on Ephesians* 5.25.

²⁴⁸ Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 386.

²⁴⁹ Foulkes, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Ephesians*, 201. Several scholars deduce from the wording that Christ’s presentation of his bride to himself is to be understood in an eschatological context (Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 389; Klein, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: Ephesians*, 217-218; Barth, *The Anchor Bible: Ephesians*, 671-677. By contrast Thielman points to v.32, where the ‘one flesh’ marriage union is applied to the present relationship between Christ and the church, and is the model for husbands and wives (Patzia, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series: Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, 288).

²⁵⁰ Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 1000.

²⁵¹ Klein, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: Ephesians*, 217-218; Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 387.

²⁵² Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 374; Barth, *The Anchor Bible: Ephesians*, 632-633.

for his body (v.23,30)²⁵³; b) it points to Genesis 24, in which the act of marriage makes husband and wife one flesh. Genesis 24 is considered the basis for the phrase ‘*as their own bodies*’ as opposed to ‘as themselves.’ The distinction is important, especially where: c) the last half of the verse (‘he who loves his wife loves himself’) alludes to Leviticus 19.18²⁵⁴. But Thielman points out that while the Leviticus passage speaks of loving one’s neighbour *in the same way* as oneself, Paul here expects the husband to love his wife because she *is* himself²⁵⁵. This position is supported by Talbert, who suggests that ‘bodies’ (*soma*) here is not metaphorical but refers to the fleshly body of the husband. This is apparently the route that Paul’s argument takes in v.29, with the reference to flesh (*sarx*)²⁵⁶. The ‘one flesh’ concept of Genesis 24, then, dictates that loving one’s wife is in effect loving one’s self, or one’s own flesh. Adam’s recognition of Eve as ‘bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh’ (Gen. 2.23) was to love her as part of himself²⁵⁷. In other words, only through love do a man and a woman become so intimately one that the husband can call her ‘his body,’ and his love for her, love for his ‘body’²⁵⁸. Not only is a husband’s love to be sacrificial (v.25), and purifying (v.26), it is also to be characterised by care and devotion. This diverts the argument from potentially degenerating into self-interest, where ‘love for one’s own body’ can easily be misinterpreted. The sense of ‘one body’ is that of a husband and wife being inseparable. In meeting his wife’s needs, in making his wife prosper through his devotion to her, the husband meets his own needs, and prospers himself. This is understood only through Christ, who loved and gave himself for the church, and was glorified in the process²⁵⁹. This notion prepares the readership for the content of vv.29,30 (discussed below in section 1.6.3). *Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself* (v.33a): *Plen* (‘in any case’) is used to round off the entire discussion, and to accentuate its main point²⁶⁰: marriage is a sacred depiction of the relationship between Christ and his church²⁶¹, and is to be observed as such. Several aspects show how the literary unity of the passage culminates with v.33: a) Exhortations were given to both husbands and wives in a chiasmic progression (wives, vv.22-24; husbands, vv.25-32; husbands, v.33a; wives, v.33b); b) the mention of ‘fear’ in verses 21 begins an *inclusio* that is completed only with the mention of ‘fear’ in v.33²⁶². Paul addresses the husbands first, ‘*let each one of you,*’ meaning every husband²⁶³; and then wives second and less emphatically, ‘*let the wife.*’ The instruction to husbands to ‘love their wives as themselves’: a) not only summarizes the line of argument from v.28 in terms of loving their wives as their own bodies, but also incorporates the argument from v.25 about loving wives as Christ loved the Church²⁶⁴; b) it clearly reflects Lev 19:18, with its command to love one’s neighbour as oneself²⁶⁵. The natural assumption is

²⁵³ Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 1002.

²⁵⁴ Barth, *The Anchor Bible: Ephesians*, 632-633; Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament: Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 391; Snodgrass, *Ephesians: NIV Application Commentary*, 367.

²⁵⁵ Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 374.

²⁵⁶ Talbert, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: Ephesians and Colossians*, 142.

²⁵⁷ Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 392; Talbert, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: Ephesians and Colossians*, 142.

²⁵⁸ Barth, *The Anchor Bible: Ephesians*, 633.

²⁵⁹ MacArthur, *Homily on Ephesians 5.25*; Klein, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: Ephesians*, 219.

²⁶⁰ Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 1013; Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 374.

²⁶¹ Patzia, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series: Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, 291; Martin, *Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching: Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon*, 72.

²⁶² Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 1016; Martin, *Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching: Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon*, 72.

²⁶³ Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 374.

²⁶⁴ Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 1014.

²⁶⁵ Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 391.

that love of self is a natural human trait (v. 29) but it should be transcended by a love directed to another, in the same way. So that in the case of the husband, the wife becomes the special instance of the neighbour. Barth states: ‘the special form of *agape* between husband and wife flourishes within the framework of a general love for neighbours and enemies, (it) is the school and test case of the latter, and publicizes its reality and power. The wife is the husband’s primary and exemplary neighbour.’²⁶⁶ The exhortation to wives in v.33b to respect their husbands completes the context of ‘love’ and ‘fear’, by which both are thereby to mirror the mystery of Christ and the church (this role of wives is discussed above).

1.6.3 Are these roles universally applicable, or contextual?

Verses 23, 24, 29, 30, 31 and 32 suggest that the roles of husbands and wives in this passage are to be considered universal. 1.6.3.1 *Wives: For the husband is the head of the wife (23a) just as Christ is the head of the church (23b), the body of which he is the Saviour (v.23c).* The reason for a wife’s submission to her husband in v.22 (ie. *as to the Lord*) is extended to v.23a, by virtue of *hoti* (‘because’). v.23b provides the model that the wife is to imitate²⁶⁷. *hos kai* (‘just as’) does not have the force of ‘in exactly the same way as,’ as this would place the husband on an equal level with Christ. Instead, the force of *hos kai* is comparative, and serves merely to introduce the analogy²⁶⁸. The claim that *kephale* (‘head’) in this passage carries overtones of authority, is supported as follows: a) the instruction in v.33 for the wife to respect her husband, is not an act reciprocated by the husband, indicating a hierarchical element in place; b) the close verbal relationship between 5:21–23 and 1:20–23. Where in the latter Christ’s headship over all things is defined by God’s *hypotasso* (‘subjection’) of all things to Christ, the pairing of these same terms in 5:21–23 justifies that *kephale* here has an authoritative nuance. This corresponds also with the use of *kephale* in 1 Cor 11. However, whereas Paul argues from creation in 1 Corinthians 11, here ‘head’ is modified by the specific example of Christ’s headship over the church; Jesus demonstrates headship by giving his life to reconcile the church to God, and equipping the church in order to serve God²⁶⁹. For this reason, Thielman prefers the phrase ‘responsibility for’ over ‘head’ – the example Christ provides here for the husband is not so much authority as self-giving love²⁷⁰ – a position affirmed and further strengthened by the parallel of Christ as saviour of the body. The picture is effectively completed: The wife submits by recognizing the authority of the husband, who imitates the self-sacrificial, nurturing, and supporting roles that Christ fills with respect to the church²⁷¹. ‘*Saviour*’ seems to depict primarily Christ’s divine act of deliverance, which involves his sacrificial death, that enables him to reconcile people with God²⁷², and make the church holy²⁷³. But is Christ as saviour of the body analogous to the husband as saviour of the wife? The question is provoked by the observation that the act of salvation cannot be duplicated. Christ, unlike the husband, is the saviour of his own body²⁷⁴. Then there are syntactical considerations. The place and force of *autos* (himself) indicates that Christ is the focus of attention. The saviour-body axis is perhaps therefore intended only as a parallel for the head-body axis, not as a further model for the husband’s role in marriage. Furthermore, the word *alla* that begins v.24 (because it re-introduces the analogy between Christ-church and husband-wife), would be better understood as ‘but’ (as opposed to ‘for’), so that it contrasts

²⁶⁶ Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 1015.

²⁶⁷ John Macarthur, *Homily on Ephesians 5.22: God’s Pattern for Wives, Part 2*, 2020, <http://www.gty.org>

²⁶⁸ Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 1022; Barth, *The Anchor Bible: Ephesians*, 613.

²⁶⁹ Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 984.

²⁷⁰ Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 367.

²⁷¹ Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 391.

²⁷² Slater, *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary: Ephesians*, 156.

²⁷³ Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 988.

²⁷⁴ Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 385.

the preceding verse²⁷⁵. *Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands (v.24)*: v.24 restates and reinforces the exhortation for wives to submit (and its warrant in the analogy of Christ and the church) from vv.22,23²⁷⁶. Barth observes that if v.24 is to be taken as identical to v.23, then it would consist of two indicative statements: as the church subordinates, so wives subordinate. As the church is well off in its dependence on Christ, so wives will benefit when they yield to their husbands²⁷⁷. It follows though that if there is no limit to the church's obedient service to Christ, then the level of wives' subordination is also expected to be full and complete²⁷⁸. The modifier is the certainty of benefit. Because the Church's submission enables its growth and maturity, the wife presupposes that her husband also has her welfare constantly in view. The modifier, however, requires the self-renunciation of not just one but both parties. The wife offers complete subordination to a husband's complete love²⁷⁹. The husband's duty (outlined in vv.25-27) is expressed in nothing short of the highest example of self-giving, a responsibility no less demanding than that asked of the wife—but the two are different, and complementary²⁸⁰. The success of the authority-submission concept, then, depends invariably on both parties equally honouring their responsibilities. Submission is to be given willingly; authority is to be regulated, and exercised with love and responsibility. It is the only grounds on which a wife can accept, for instance, that her submission to her husband does not depend on him first loving her after the pattern of Christ's love²⁸¹, because she expects that her husband *will* love her, after the pattern of Christ's love. Paul expands the concept with the phrase '*in everything*,' (*en panti*). When Paul used this same phrase to say that he was oppressed in every way (2 Cor. 4.8 and 7.5), he expected the Corinthians to recognise he did not bear every affliction known to man, only that he experienced much suffering. Paul presumes his readers will approach the current verse with similar sensibility and insight. Within the context, then, '*in everything*' bears on the sense and discernment of the wife; she is to submit to the husband to the extent he complies with God's will, signifying that a husband's authority is derivative, ie. from God, and subject to Scripture, and that he is not at liberty to guide his wife in ways that contradict it²⁸². Authority- submission is unpopular, estranged to modern Western thinking in particular, because of profuse haemorrhaging in modern marriages. A discussion of ideals counts for little when translation into practice is so often abused and mishandled. By far and large the reality of authority-submission, both theoretically and pragmatically, is that it is universally misunderstood and derided. Endemic divorce rates are but one indicator. Domestic violence rates are another. Authority-submission must be a primary investment as we pursue what the ideal is intended to look like practically, and in relation to men and women in the church.

1.6.3.2 Husbands: For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church.' (v.29): The original Greek text has *sarka* ('flesh') instead of 'body' - flesh being a synonym for the husband's own body. The sense is that every ordinary human finds it in his own self-interest to feed and care for his own body. It is unnatural for a person to hate himself or deprive his own body. Furthermore, 'flesh'

²⁷⁵ Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 986; Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 385.

²⁷⁶ Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 989.

²⁷⁷ Barth, *The Anchor Bible: Ephesians*, 619.

²⁷⁸ Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 991; Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament: Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 386.

²⁷⁹ Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 991; Barth, *The Anchor Bible: Ephesians*, 620.

²⁸⁰ Foulkes, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Ephesians*, 199.

²⁸¹ O'Brien, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary, Ephesians*, 404; Klein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: Ephesians*, 215-216.

²⁸² Klein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: Ephesians*, 215-216); Constable, *Dr Constable's notes on Ephesians*, 83; O'Brien, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary, Ephesians*, 418.

anticipates the quotation in v.31 from Gen. 2.24 (*'...the two shall become one flesh'*).²⁸³ It follows that if the wife is 'one flesh' with her husband, if in marriage she becomes her husband's body, then he cares for her, and in doing so cares for himself²⁸⁴. The words *ektrephei* ('nourish') and *thalpei* ('cherish') are, for Thielman, practical features of a husband's love²⁸⁵. He feeds and cares for his wife as he would his own self. The two terms occur in Eph 6.4 and 1 Thess 2.7, respectively, both referring to the raising of children. For this reason, scholars believe the context of v.29 corresponds best with the analogy of Ezekiel 16, in which the child bride is brought to maturity under the bridegroom's care, mirroring Christ's provision for and building up of his body, the church²⁸⁶. The analogy between Christ-church and husband-wife is then paralleled with the first half of v.29. Believers are members of Christ's body, and Christ cares for them as anyone would care for his own body²⁸⁷. *'...because we are members of his body.'* (v.30): Whereas 4.25 designates the church exclusively as a 'body', 5.30 goes further by pointing to a body of which Christ is head. It is Christ by which the body is manifested, and from which the body receives life, unity and direction. The body is part of Christ, as branches are part of the vine²⁸⁸. This point emphasises the peculiarity of the doctrine in 5.30, to Ephesians and Colossians: a) the body expresses the exclusive solidarity of believers with Christ²⁸⁹; b) the ensuing relationship is of a lover so closely united with his beloved that she has become part of his very life; so that in loving, caring for and nourishing her, he performs the same for himself²⁹⁰; c) where this relationship governs the nature of the marriage bond, it is recognised that what is valid for the church as a whole, benefits 'each one' of the believers. Nothing is asked of husbands that has not first been realised in the church, for the benefit of each saint²⁹¹. *For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh* (v.31). This verse quotes Gen 2.24, regarded as the primary influence on Paul's current thoughts, and the source of the imagery that he uses²⁹². As such it is the foundational aspect of several doctrinal positions Paul has developed in this passage: a) Unity of Christ and the church as one body: The Christ-church union is Paul's main reference point for employing Gen. 2.24²⁹³, as opposed to the husband-wife relationship (also a focus, but not primary). The quotation comes directly after Paul's statement that Christ nourishes and cares for the church as his body (he opens v.31 with *'for this reason'*²⁹⁴ pointing back to that preceding statement), and in v.32 he applies the quotation to Christ and the church. Furthermore, Paul begins v.33 with *plen* ('nevertheless') to indicate he is reverting to the original train of thought he had (ie. the

²⁸³ Klein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: Ephesians*, 219; Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 391-392; Patzia, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series: Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, 289; Barth, *The Anchor Bible: Ephesians*, 634; Foulkes, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Ephesians*, 203.

²⁸⁴ Klein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: Ephesians*, 219; Barth, *The Anchor Bible: Ephesians*, 634.

²⁸⁵ Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 388.

²⁸⁶ Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 1004; Barth, *The Anchor Bible: Ephesians*, 635; Foulkes, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Ephesians*, 202).

²⁸⁷ Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 391.

²⁸⁸ Foulkes, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Ephesians*, 203; Patzia, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series: Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, 289.

²⁸⁹ Foulkes, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Ephesians*, 203.

²⁹⁰ Barth, *The Anchor Bible: Ephesians*, 636; Foulkes, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Ephesians*, 203.

²⁹¹ Barth, *The Anchor Bible: Ephesians*, 636.

²⁹² Foulkes, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Ephesians*, 203-204; Patzia, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series: Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, 289; Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 986; Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 392; Patzia, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series: Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, 289).

²⁹³ Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 388.

²⁹⁴ Barth, *The Anchor Bible: Ephesians*, 638.

husband-wife relationship), as he had digressed to talk about Christ and the church in v.29²⁹⁵; b) Unity of husbands and wives as one body – the quotation itself concerns the union of a man and woman in marriage, and the larger context in which it is used is that a husband should love his wife as he loves himself²⁹⁶. Several important observations are made: (i) Genesis 2.24 sanctifies marriage; it is the most fundamental statement in all of Scripture concerning God's plan for marriage. The marriage bond is more binding, more permanent than any other tie that unites two human beings. The high view of marriage presented in this verse underpins Scripture's forbidding of promiscuity, polygamy, adultery, divorce, same sex relations, and all sexual immorality²⁹⁷; ii) The unique formula '*one flesh*' occurs nowhere else in the Bible²⁹⁸; sexual union is considered the most obvious evidence of '*one flesh*'. The very nature of sex incites the expression and engagement of the personality, in a unique mode of self-disclosure and self-commitment²⁹⁹. The new bond and obligation of '*one flesh*' transcends the old bond between parent and child, and though filial duty is not dissolved, the highest loyalty and intimacy is now realised between husband and wife³⁰⁰. There is thus a *leaving* of parents (attended by a renouncing of rights by parents themselves), and a *cleaving* of husband and wife in '*one flesh*' – elements basic to the officiating and sanctifying of marriage. Even so, the husband-wife relationship is not regarded as the primary aim of Gen 2.24, for even marriage, as v.32 states, is designed to point to Christ's relationship with his body the church, and the love shared therein. The '*one flesh*' or 'one body' union of husband and wife is illustrative of the union of Christ and church, which is said to be of one spirit (1 Cor 6.17). *This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church (v.32): 'Mystery'* may be generally defined as a truth, a secret meaning that has now been revealed, and that could only be known through God's gracious revelation³⁰¹. The application of '*mystery*' in v.32 is thought to be consistent with other uses of the term in Ephesians (1:9; 3:3, 4, 9; 6:19), if it is understood that different aspects are highlighted based on context. The problem with O'Brien's insistence on one definition of mystery is that there is no concurrent definition. However, it may be possible, drawing on similarities in the available contexts, to generalise '*mystery*' as the saving or unifying work of Christ. Within the specific context of v.32, '*mystery*' is the union between Christ and his church.³⁰² This indicates that the Christ-church union is not incidental to marriage, nor is it secondary, as if Paul's argument is broken up into

²⁹⁵ Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 389.

²⁹⁶ Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 389.

²⁹⁷ Constable, *Dr Constable's notes on Ephesians*, 87; Patzia, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series: Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, 289; Foulkes, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Ephesians*, 204;

²⁹⁸ Barth, *The Anchor Bible: Ephesians*, 640.

²⁹⁹ Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 393.

³⁰⁰ Slater, *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary: Ephesians*, 159; Foulkes, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Ephesians*, 204; Pawson, *Homily on Ephesians*, 5.21-33.

³⁰¹ Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 389; Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 1007; O'Brien, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary, Ephesians*, 433; Snodgrass, *Ephesians: NIV Application Commentary*, 365; Talbert, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: Ephesians and Colossians*, 143; Hoehner, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Ephesians*, 266; Klein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: Ephesians*, 220.

³⁰² Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 1008; O'Brien, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary, Ephesians*, 434-435; Hoehner, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Ephesians*, 262; Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 395. (O'Brien, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary, Ephesians*, 430-431); b) the relationship between Christ and the church as a typology or parallel of marriage (Talbert, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: Ephesians and Colossians*, 142; Slater, *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary: Ephesians*, 159; Klein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: Ephesians*, 220-221; Barth, *The Anchor Bible: Ephesians*, 646; Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 394; Patzia, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series: Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, 289-290).

two parts, or ideas³⁰³. But marriage reveals the mystery of the Christ-church union, and is to bear living witness to it. Furthermore, as part of the unity of Christ and church, marriage is a pledge of God's purposes for unity of the entire cosmos. The understanding of marriage is derived not only from Gen 2.24 (prefigured in Adam and Eve), but from YHWH's covenantal role in relation to Israel (Isa. 54:25-8; Jer. 2:1-3; 31:31-32; Ezek. 23; Hos. 1—3). This is a role that Jesus assumes in the New Testament, as 'Bridegroom' (Mark 2:18-20; cf. John 3:29)³⁰⁴. This view of the Christ-church union (as foreshadowed by marriage) is what makes it not only a mystery, but a mystery that is 'great' ie. important, eminent, glorious³⁰⁵. Paul's emphatic use of *ego* and the particle *de* in v.32 indicates that he wanted his readers to recognise that this interpretation of Gen 2.24 (as a reference to the mystery of the Christ-church union), was his own³⁰⁶. Whether Paul intended 'mystery' to point back to the preceding verse (ie. the 'one-flesh' concept of Gen 2.24³⁰⁷ or forwards ('I am speaking of Christ and the church')³⁰⁸, either way the emphasis is on the Christ-church union. But Paul's point is that he is aware that what he is proposing is unusual, extraordinary and unprecedented, thus adding to the 'greatness' of the mystery. It is likely that Paul was moved to assert this rendition of Gen 2.24 in light of other general interpretations³⁰⁹. Lincoln suggests Paul was deliberately addressing specific interpretations that led to a devaluing of marriage, and a distortion of the Christian understanding on sexual ethics³¹⁰.

1.6.4 Is there indication that the content of the passage is guided by the Holy Spirit?

The imperative in v.18 ('...*be filled with the Spirit*') is central to this series of exhortations (vv.21-33). Paul emphasises the need to be full of the Spirit in order to maintain unity and order (as prescribed by Christ) within the husband-wife relationship. All truly Christian behaviour results from being filled with the Spirit, or walking in the Spirit (Ga 5.16). It is not a static 'filling' as with wine, but it is the sense of a sail filled, of moving along and being constantly in motion³¹¹. The roles of husbands and wives, therefore (as the tenses of the relevant participles in most of the verses will also indicate), are meant to be performed continuously. Fee points out that though these roles are addressed to individuals, v.18 as an imperative has to do with community life overall. The authority and submission, the love and respect by which not only husbands and wives, but parents and children, masters and slaves are to relate to each other, is the means by which believers express love in the family and the community, as Christ loved the church and gave himself for the church³¹².

³⁰³ Barth, *The Anchor Bible: Ephesians*, 646.

³⁰⁴ O'Brien, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary, Ephesians*, 435.

³⁰⁵ Barth, *The Anchor Bible: Ephesians*, 644.

³⁰⁶ The same wording (ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω, "but I am speaking") is found in the antitheses of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5, where it serves to introduce an interpretation contrary to the generally accepted interpretation of the Scripture passage in view (Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 1009), and implies full divine authorization (Barth, *The Anchor Bible: Ephesians*, 646.)

³⁰⁷ Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 1008; Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 393.

³⁰⁸ Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 390.

³⁰⁹ Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 395; Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 389-390.

³¹⁰ Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, 1012-1013.

³¹¹ John Macarthur, *Homily on Ephesians 5.18-19: Spirit-Filled Music*, 2020, <http://www.gty.org>

³¹² Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc. 1994), 722.

1.7 Colossians 3.18,19³¹³ Husbands and wives

1.7.1 What is the context of the passage? ³¹⁴

Colossians 3.18 - 4.1 is an example of what Martin Luther called *Haustafeln* – house tables, codes, or rules for the household; how members of a family in its various stations (eg. husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and slaves) were to relate to one another.³¹⁵ All codes roughly adhere to a standard pattern: the party (eg. wives) is named, followed by a command or prohibition re: party's behaviour, followed by a motivation for that behaviour. The key idea is submission, although there is reciprocity between members – a notion not found outside the NT in contemporary writings³¹⁶. Scholars agree that the house tables originated from several sources: a) Jewish Wisdom literature (eg. Proverbs and Sirach); b) Classical Greek and Stoic philosophy eg. Plato and Aristotle; c) Hellenistic Jewish writings (eg. Philo and Josephus)³¹⁷. In all these cultures, perhaps most visibly in the Greco-Roman world, household management was a serious matter that lay at the very foundation of society³¹⁸. Scholars suggest several reasons as to why the *Haustafeln* was incorporated into the NT texts (ie. the Christianisation of the *Haustafeln*): a) to serve as a balance; to correct the perception of Paul's charter of freedom (Gal 3.27-29), which had been distorted as meaning the casting off of all restraint; b) to uphold and safeguard the socio-political economic framework of society, both theologically (ie. God's creation ordinances in marriage and the family) and pragmatically (ie. Christians are not to entertain revolutionary, feminist or any other subversive notions). The codes, therefore, are conditioned by the existing structures of first century society in which the church lived out its corporate life³¹⁹; c) to restore stability shaken by forces antagonistic to the gospel mission. Colossians 3.18-4.1 draws from traditional *Haustafeln* material, giving it a style and structure different from the rest of the chapter. It is therefore recognised as an independent, self-contained unit of teaching³²⁰. However, the connection is that where Paul in vv.12-17 points to responsibility of the new humanity or the new 'self', as the ground of all activity (with an emphasis on mutuality), vv.18

³¹³ 18 Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly.

³¹⁴ Colossians is believed to have been written by Paul around 60 AD, whilst imprisoned in Rome. Scholars suggest the church at Colosse to have been founded by Epaphras and other converts from Paul's missionary travels. Paul himself never visited Colosse. Eventually the church was subjected to relativist teachings, with some believers attempting to combine Christianity with elements of paganism and secular philosophy. In his letter Paul confronts these teachings and affirms the supremacy of Christ (Tyndale House Publishers, *Life Application Study Bible*, 2027).

³¹⁵ Martin, *Interpretation: Colossians*, 127; Martin Ernest, *Believers Church Bible Commentary: Colossians, Philemon* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1993), 181; Peter O'Brien, *Word Biblical Commentary: Colossians-Philemon* (Dallas: Word Books, 1982), 355; David Garland, *Colossians / Philemon: NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 241-242. There are other *Haustafeln* codes in the NT (Eph 5:21-6:9; 1 Pet 2:11-3:12; cf. 1 Tim 2:8-15; Titus 2:1-10) as well as the writings of the Apostolic Fathers (Did. 4:9-11; Barn. 19:5-7; 1 Clem. 21:6-9; Ign., Pol. 4:1-5:2; Pol., Phil. 4:2-3) (Nijay Gupta, *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary: Colossians*, (Macon: Smyth and Helwys Publishing Incorporated, 2013), 161; O'Brien, *Word Biblical Commentary: Colossians-Philemon*, 359).

³¹⁶ Martin, *Interpretation: Colossians*, 127; O'Brien, *Word Biblical Commentary: Colossians-Philemon*, 359.

³¹⁷ Todd Still, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: Ephesians, Philippians Colossians, Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 464; Peter Davids, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: Colossians, Philemon* (Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, 2008), 604.

³¹⁸ Gupta, *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary: Colossians* 162.

³¹⁹ Martin, *Interpretation: Colossians*, 128.

³²⁰ David Pao, *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Colossians and Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 384; Ernest, *Believers Church Bible Commentary: Colossians, Philemon*, 181; O'Brien, *Word Biblical Commentary: Colossians-Philemon*, 355; Gupta, *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary: Colossians*, 161).

- 4.1 outline how this statement is manifested in the household, ie. how love, thanksgiving and peace should transform relationships in the home³²¹. They espouse a Christocentric life view consonant with the thrust of this epistle: the believing community is to frame and fashion the whole of its existence around Christ Jesus the Lord³²².

1.7.2 What does the passage say about the roles of men and women?

1.7.2.1 Wives: Wives, be subject to your husbands (v.18a)³²³: Several aspects are to be noted in this directive: a) The wife is asked to submit (*hypotasso*), not to obey (*hypakouo*), as is the case for children and slaves. It has been discussed in previous passages how nothing harsh or demeaning is implied by submission (cf. 1 Cor 15:28; Eph 5:21)³²⁴; neither does it convey inferiority³²⁵, but a modest, cooperative and selfless demeanour. It is a virtue expected of all Christians regardless of rank or gender (Mark 10:41–45; 1 Cor. 16:16; Eph. 5:21, 24; Phil. 2:3–4; 1 Peter 5:5)³²⁶. Equality of men and women is not revoked; however, submission operates via a coexistence of mutuality and hierarchy. In other words, freedom and love exist within a framework of order³²⁷; b) The middle voice of the verb indicates that submission is to be performed willingly and voluntarily by the wife³²⁸. **1.7.2.2 Husbands:** Husbands, love your wives (v.19a): The responsibility of a husband to love his wife is first introduced in Col 3:19. This idea was non-existent in the Greco-Roman codes, which gave the male exclusive rights as head of the household. It is revolutionary; the husband's love provides the necessary counterpart to the wife's subordination³²⁹ and introduces reciprocity into the marriage relationship³³⁰. It is caring and sacrificial, it is loving service for the wife's entire well-being. In doing so, he imitates the love of Christ for the church. 'and never treat them harshly' (v.19b): Because the verb *pikrainesthe* is in the passive voice, most scholars interpret this

³²¹ Gupta, *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary: Colossians*, 163; Douglas Moo, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 258-259.

³²² Davids, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: Colossians, Philemon*, 607; Garland, *Colossians / Philemon: NIV Application Commentary*, 243; Still, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: Colossians*, 465; Pao, *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Colossians and Philemon*, 384-385; Dr Thomas L. Constable, *Dr Constable's notes on Colossians* (Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary, 2016), 58-59; Moo, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 263; Gupta, *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary: Colossians*, 164-165; Nicholas Wright, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Colossians and Philemon, An Introduction and Commentary* (Nottingham: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 167; Martin, *Interpretation: Colossians*, 127.

³²³ This same directive appears in Ephesians 5:22; Titus 2:5; and 1 Peter 3:1 (cf. 1Co 14:34).

³²⁴ Patzia, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series: Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, 105; Still, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: Colossians*, 466-467; Garland, *Colossians / Philemon: NIV Application Commentary*, 243.

³²⁵ O'Brien, *Word Biblical Commentary: Colossians-Philemon*, 365; Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 164.

³²⁶ Garland, *Colossians / Philemon: NIV Application Commentary*, 243.

³²⁷ O'Brien, *Word Biblical Commentary: Colossians-Philemon*, 366; Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 164; Wright, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Colossians and Philemon*, 168.

³²⁸ Gupta, *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary: Colossians*, 166; David Garland, *Colossians / Philemon: NIV Application Commentary*, 244; G.K Beale, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Colossians and Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 452; Ernest, *Believers Church Bible Commentary: Colossians, Philemon*, 183; Pao, *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Colossians and Philemon*, 391.

³²⁹ Peter O'Brien, *Word Biblical Commentary: Colossians – Philemon*, 367; Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 164.

³³⁰ Moo, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 267.

clause as meaning ‘do not be embittered by, or resentful towards, your wives.’³³¹ Husbands are not to be irritable or angry towards their wives, whether due to a stubborn sense of entitlement or privilege, or by allowing circumstances that produce bitterness or dissent in the marriage, or other factors. Ultimately, freedom from bitterness is considered the prime exemplification of the love that husbands are exhorted to enact.³³²

1.7.3 Are these roles universally applicable, or contextual?

The following verses suggest that the roles of men and women in this passage are to be taken as universal: *Wives, be subject to your husbands ‘as is fitting in the Lord’ (v.18b)*: The phrase has been interpreted as follows: a) submission is consistent with what God ordained at the creation of the human race³³³; b) it is to be in the manner demonstrated by Christ, the epitome of humility and submission³³⁴; c) the clause limits the sphere of a wife’s submission ie. only insofar as the husband’s will aligns with the Lord’s. A wife will have to disobey her husband, if he acts contrary to Christ³³⁵; d) it is not the prevalent social order that calls for a wife’s submission, but ultimately Christ, who establishes the criterion for what is proper. Propriety (custom) may or may not be aligned with the Lord’s will, whereby believers are to submit to Christ’s will over propriety³³⁶. *‘Husbands, love your wives’ (v.19a)*: Ephesians 5 provides a threefold validation³³⁷ of the universality of the instruction to husbands to love their wives, by which we also confirm the universality of that same instruction in v.19a. The husband’s love for his wife: a) parallels Christ’s love for the church; b) is governed by the marriage principle of Genesis 2, whereby through marriage husband and wife are made one flesh. The wife becomes the husband’s ‘body’, as it were. To care for his wife and seek her welfare, is to do the same for his own body; c) reflects the principle of Leviticus 19.18. If one is to love his neighbour as himself, then the husband is to consider his wife his exemplary neighbour.

³³¹ Garland, *Colossians / Philemon: NIV Application Commentary*, 245; Still, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: Colossians*, 468.

³³² James Dunn, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary, The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 249; Pao, *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Colossians and Philemon*, 399; Constable, *Dr Constable’s notes on Colossians*, 60; Still, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: Colossians*, 468; Eduard Lohse, *Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible: Colossians and Philemon* (Fortress Press: Philadelphia, 1971), 403; O’Brien, *Word Biblical Commentary: Colossians-Philemon*, 368; Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 164.

³³³ Constable, *Dr Constable’s notes on Colossians*, 59.

³³⁴ Pao, *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Colossians and Philemon*, 398; Beale, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Colossians and Philemon*, 453.

³³⁵ Garland, *Colossians / Philemon: NIV Application Commentary*, 244; Dunn, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary, The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 402; Pao, *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Colossians and Philemon*, 398; Moo, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 265; Beale, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Colossians and Philemon*, 454.

³³⁶ Pao, *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Colossians and Philemon*, 398; Still, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: Colossians*, 468; Garland, *Colossians / Philemon: NIV Application Commentary*, 244; O’Brien, *Word Biblical Commentary: Colossians-Philemon*, 367; Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 164; Martin, *Interpretation: Colossians*, 127; Moo, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 266.

³³⁷ ‘Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church’ (v.25); ‘In the same way, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies.’ (v.28); ‘Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself.’

1.7.4 Is there indication that the content of the passage is guided by the Holy Spirit?

From the section on Ephesians 5.21-33 (in which the commands in this passage are repeated almost identically), we saw that the presence of the Holy Spirit is considered essential in the performance of marital roles (see page 200).

1.8 1 Peter 3.1-7³³⁸ Husbands and wives; mixed marriage

1.8.1 What is the context of the passage?³³⁹

Peter's concern was for believers to know how to conduct themselves in a world opposed to Christian values,³⁴⁰ and to maintain confidence and unity in Christ. He issues 3 major exhortations to this effect: to uphold their salvation and hope for eternity in Christ (1.1-2.11); to be examples of Christ before men (2.12-4.6); and to live in anticipation of Jesus' return (4.7-5.14)³⁴¹. 1 Peter 3.1-7 belongs to the second exhortative group: Christians are to be exemplary in their social relations (highlighted by v.12). For Peter, the basic element required here was an attitude of submission and respect, particularly towards those in authority. Three settings are given to demonstrate this submission - citizens to the government (2.13); employees to employers (2.18); and wives to husbands (3.1)³⁴². Our focus is on the third. The subjective parties (citizens, employees and wives) are given a standard instruction to submit, or to 'accept the authority' of the objective parties.

Instructions for living in a hostile world

Salvation and hope for eternity
(1.1-2.11)

Be examples of Christ before men
(2.12-4.6)

Anticipate Jesus' return (4.7-5.4)

➡ Submissive attitude

↗ Citizens to government
(2.13-17)

➡ Employees to employers
(2.18-25)

↘ Wives to husbands (3.1-7)

The call to be submissive was crucial for the following reasons: a) Peter saw submission not only as the means by which Christians were to impact the culture and fulfil their evangelical mission; it was the means for their own good social standing / repute. Christians were not to consider themselves as having achieved some level of transcendence or impunity as a result

³³⁸ 1 Wives, in the same way, accept the authority of your husbands, so that, even if some of them do not obey the word, they may be won over without a word by their wives' conduct, 2 when they see the purity and reverence of their lives .3 Do not adorn yourselves outwardly by braiding your hair, and by wearing gold ornaments or fine clothing; 4 rather, let your adornment be the inner self with the lasting beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in God's sight. 5 It was in this way long ago that the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves by accepting the authority of their husbands. 6 Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham and called him lord. You have become her daughters as long as you do what is good and never let fears alarm you. 7 Husbands, in the same way, show consideration for your wives in your life together, paying honor to the woman as the weaker sex, since they too are also heirs of the gracious gift of life – so that nothing may hinder your prayers.

³³⁹ Peter wrote this letter at approximately AD 62-64, most likely from Rome. The persecution of Christians initiated by the emperor Nero (from 64 onwards), led to the scattering of the Jewish Christian church in Jerusalem, and the persecution of Christians across the Roman empire. The purpose of Peter's letter was to offer encouragement to Christians of the 'diaspora', in the midst of suffering and crisis (Tyndale House Publishers, *Life Application Study Bible*, 2126).

³⁴⁰ John MacArthur, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7: How to Win Your Unbelieving Spouse*, 2020, <http://www.gty.org>; Peter Davids, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle of Peter* (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), 155, 176-177.

³⁴¹ MacArthur, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*.

³⁴² Richard Vinson, et. al., *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary: 1 and 2 Peter, Jude* (Macon: Smyth and Helwys Publishing Incorporated, 2010; 139; MacArthur, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*.

of their salvation and allegiance to Christ. They were not to be rebellious or indifferent to social order, but were to submit to it, as model citizens³⁴³; b) How a husband and wife related to, and were perceived by, the wider society, was determined by how the one related to the other internally. There was an established belief in the natural inferiority of women amongst the Jews, the Greeks and the Romans at this time³⁴⁴. It is recognised however that ‘new woman’ ideals had taken root as far back as 44 BC³⁴⁵ so that by the mid first century, the plight of the ‘new woman’ would have pervaded the entire Mediterranean region³⁴⁶, standing in opposition to patriarchal authority. In this tense atmosphere, a pagan wife converting to Christianity (especially if done independently of her pagan husband), would be seen as resisting the cultural norm, in which wives were expected to follow the religion of the husband / male head of the household³⁴⁷. There would be further embarrassment and disapproval if the wife acted condescendingly toward her husband and began to forfeit her domestic responsibilities, for example, due to a perceived enlightenment, or sense of ‘freedom’ and ‘equality’, in Christ³⁴⁸. If on the other hand the husband became a Christian, the situation was considered less problematic, since the husband had control of the religious direction of the household at any rate. Thus, if the potential for difficulty in a marriage was greater where a Christian wife dissented against her non-Christian husband, then 1 Peter 3.1-7 must be understood in the context of a mixed marriage, specifically of a Christian wife to a non-Christian husband³⁴⁹. This view is justified by the disproportion in the attention given to wives and husbands respectively (six verses dedicated to the wife compared to one for the husband, v.7); and by the phrase ‘*even if some*’ that points directly to non-believing husbands.

1.8.2 What does the passage say about roles of men and women?

1.8.2.1 Women: *‘Wives, in the same way, accept the authority of your husbands’ (v.1a):* When the wife is asked in 3.1 to submit³⁵⁰ to her husband ‘*in the same way*’, it indicates: a) she is to submit as slaves and citizens were asked to submit to their respective authorities (2.13 and 2.18). All 3 groups would then be seen as meeting the overarching objective as highlighted in 2.12 and 2.17³⁵¹ ie. to be socially conscientious. They are to submit not because of the merit of those in authority, but for the sake of social order and stability. The same participle,

³⁴³ Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*.

³⁴⁴ Duane Watson, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: First and Second Peter* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 72; Paul Achtemeier, *Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible: First Peter* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 206.

³⁴⁵ Bruce Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities* (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 46.

³⁴⁶ Robbins, *1 Timothy 2:8-15: Paul and the “New Roman Women” at Ephesus*, 2.

³⁴⁷ Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*; Watson, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: First and Second Peter*, 72; Karen Jobes, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: 1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 254; Davids, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle of Peter*, 177; Vinson, et. al., *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary: 1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 143-144; Dr Thomas L. Constable, *Dr Constable’s notes on 1 Peter* (Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary, 2016), 43.

³⁴⁸ Davids, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle of Peter*, 177; Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*.

³⁴⁹ David Walls and Max Anders, *Holman New Testament Commentary: 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John, Jude* (Nashville: B and H Publishing Group, 2000), 70; Davids, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle of Peter*, 177-178; J. Daryl Charles, Tom Thatcher, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John, Jude* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 109; Achtemeier, *Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible: First Peter*, 208; Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*; Watson, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: First and Second Peter*, 72;

³⁵⁰ *hupotassomenai*, to place under rank, or under authority of

³⁵¹ Achtemeier, *Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible: First Peter*, 209.

hypotassomenoi, is used in all 3 settings³⁵²; b) the motive for submission - reverence, or fear of God – is likely the same in all three settings. In 2.18, slaves are told to ‘submit’ to their masters with all ‘deference’, or *phobo* (better translated as fear). The claim that *phobo* is reserved for God³⁵³, is justified by the fact that in the Greek word order of 2.18, ‘fear’ comes before the reference to masters³⁵⁴, and more importantly, ‘fear’ or ‘reverence’ in this epistle is always directed to God. The fear of God then motivates, and translates to, obedience and respect for masters³⁵⁵ and a healthy desire to avoid their displeasure. In 2.13, employees are asked to accept authority ‘for the Lord’s sake.’ The popular interpretation of this phrase is that by submitting, employees obey, acknowledge and honour God (or Christ). However, others feel that where submission to God is clearly depicted in the Bible as normatively accompanied by fear (Eph 5.21; Col 3.18), the submission of employees ‘for the Lord’s sake’ must also involve a behavioural response of fear³⁵⁶. In Romans 13.1-7, Paul warns those who are insubordinate, that they are to be rightly afraid of judgement as may be executed upon them by the authorities, as the authorities are servants of God and executors of his wrath³⁵⁷. Fear as a motive for submission extends to wives - they are to submit to their husbands and regard them with a healthy reverence (cf. Eph 5.21, 33). Furthermore, v.2 directly states that a wife’s submission is by way of her behaviour, which in turn must be characterised partly by fear, literally *phobo*. There are nuances in a marriage setting, however, that differentiate it from both the work setting and the master-slave setting: a) Only in the marriage setting are additional instructions given to the objective party (the husband), echoing the crucial responsibility of husbands to reciprocate the obligations of the wife, as reflected elsewhere in Scripture (eg. Eph 5.33; Col 3.19)³⁵⁸; b) As was Paul’s practice (cf. Tit 2.5; Eph 5.22), Peter’s use of *idiois* shows submission was not of one sex to another, but of wives to their *own* husbands. Furthermore, like Paul, Peter didn’t expect submission to be demanded by the latter, but to be offered voluntarily by the former. In a context where authorities didn’t usually address women, that Peter did (as also Paul did) is both revolutionary and transformative. Jobes recognises Peter’s call for a wife’s submission as ingenious. Peter is affirming the wife’s choice to leave paganism and become Christian; at the same time, he expects her to remain in marriage, submissive to her non-believing husband in accordance with social norms. The husband construes from this that not only is Peter instructing his wife (a role that should be the husband’s prerogative), but that his wife’s submission is no longer motivated by social expectations, but by the authority and example of Christ. However, the husband cannot protest; after all Peter is not denying or encroaching upon his authority as husband, but affirming it. It is a masterful move - Peter is both upholding and subverting the social order. Though the agenda is clearly evangelistic intent, Christianity cannot be regarded as a threat to

³⁵² Douglas Harink, *Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible: 1 and 2 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2009), 117.

³⁵³ The fear we have for God is partly based on an eschatological knowledge of his power and judgement, which will be made particularly manifest at his second coming. This prompts our obedience to his commands, and a fear of disobedience.

³⁵⁴ ‘*oi oiketai hypotassomenoi en panti phobo tois despotais...*’, literally, ‘The employees being subjected to all to fear to the employers...’

³⁵⁵ Jobes, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: 1 Peter*, 254; Wayne Grudem, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 Peter* (Nottingham: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 163; Watson, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: First and Second Peter*, 73; MacArthur, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*; Davids, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle of Peter*, 178; Aaron O’Kelley, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*, 2020, <http://www.cccjackson.org>

³⁵⁶ Grudem, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 Peter*, 163.

³⁵⁷ MacArthur, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*.

³⁵⁸ Jim Samra, *Teach the Text Commentary Series: James, 1 and 2 Peter, and Jude* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016), 185; Achtemeier, *Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible: First Peter*, 218.

the status quo, since it conforms to established social values³⁵⁹. Furthermore, Peter does not specify how a Christian wife is to express submission. He does not, for example, itemize how she is to worship as a Christian; that is to be discerned and worked out between her and the husband. Peter may have understood that proclivities, responses and circumstances were constantly changing, both within the marital relationship or within the society at large.³⁶⁰ All of this point to the fact that, behind the call to submission, Peter granted wives a measure of moral responsibility and choice that was unprecedented at the time. *'so that even if some of them do not obey the word, they may be won over without a word by their wives' conduct' (v.1b)* The objective of a Christian wife in submitting to her non-believing husband, is so that she might 'win him over.' The primary characteristic of an unbelieving husband is disobedience (*apeitheo*), ie. a pattern of life characterised by resistance to the word (the Gospel / Scripture, but also God's principles in other areas of life). It is suggested therefore that it is not just a non-believing husband's beliefs, but his behaviour, that are to be won over.³⁶¹ The manner in which the wife is to win over her husband is *'without a word'*; here, 'word' is not primarily a reference to the Gospel (as above) but to the act of speaking. Peter is not suggesting wives not speak, but that they counter the temptation to be argumentative, or manipulative toward their husbands³⁶². The husband will be won by the influence of a wife's behaviour. Peter's emphasis on how powerful and attractive a woman's lifestyle can be, affirms behaviour as a strong tool for evangelism, as Paul also felt (1 Cor 7.12-16).³⁶³ *'when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.'* (v.2): 'Purity' (*hagnon*), a general reference to sound ethical / moral behaviour³⁶⁴ would include chastity, cleanliness, uprightness and modesty.³⁶⁵ 'Reverence' is translated as fear, *phobo*. It was suggested above that fear is primarily reserved for God, which prompts a wife's obedience to God's commands, towards the building of her moral character and conduct. In the context of marriage, this obedience to God involves respect for her husband, and a desire to avoid his displeasure. Wives are not to 'fear' their husbands, certainly not in the sense of terror or dread (of harm). Peter disqualifies such a notion by his advice to wives in v.6³⁶⁶. There is therefore a correlation: purity (*hagnon*) leads to reverence (*phobo*)³⁶⁷. However, where a wife finds that

³⁵⁹ Jobes, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: 1 Peter*, 254-254.

³⁶⁰ Jobes, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: 1 Peter*, 254-255.

³⁶¹ Grudem, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 Peter*, 162; Watson, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: First and Second Peter*, 73; Samra, *Teach the Text Commentary Series: James, 1 and 2 Peter, and Jude*, 186. 'Win over' (*kerdaino*) is often used in a missionary context, and is equivalent to salvation (Cor 1 9.19-22; Matt 18.15) (Watson, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: First and Second Peter*, 73; Grudem, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 Peter*, 163.

³⁶² Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: New Testament*, 908; Charles, Thatcher, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: 1 Peter*, 110.

³⁶³ Grudem, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 Peter*, 163; Charles, Thatcher, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: 1 Peter*, 110; Watson, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: First and Second Peter*, 73; Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: New Testament*, 908. It is noted how silence, as a characteristic behaviour for wives and women in general, is acknowledged extensively both in Scripture as well as external Greco-Roman sources (Vinson, et. al., *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary: 1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 146-147.)

³⁶⁴ James Strong, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, 5; Walls, Anders, *Holman New Testament Commentary: 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John, Jude*, 71; Grudem, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 Peter*, 163; Davids, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle of Peter*, 178.

³⁶⁵ This rendering of purity is normal in the NT (Phil. 4:8; 1 Tim. 5:22; Jas. 3:17; 1 John 3:3), replacing the OT meaning of 'cultic' purity (Davids, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle of Peter*, 178).

³⁶⁶ Grudem, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 Peter*, 163.

³⁶⁷ Walls, Anders, *Holman New Testament Commentary: 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John, Jude*, 71; Watson, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: First and Second Peter*, 73; Norman Hillyer, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series: 1 and 2 Peter, Jude* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1992), 115; Samra, *Teach the Text*

she will have to stand with Christ against the unbelief or sinfulness of her husband, her reverence means that she can still have a spirit of submission, ie. a disposition to yield. She will show, by a gentle attitude, that she does not take to his behaviour nor does she like resisting it; that her desire is for him to set himself a right as a righteous, responsible and loving leader in the family, so that her disposition to honour him as leader, can again produce harmony. 'Do not adorn yourselves outwardly by braiding your hair, and by wearing gold ornaments or fine clothing' (v.3): Over time a picture of the habits of extravagance and excessive ornamentation by women, as well as the condemnation of them by authorities due to their disruptive social force, was accumulated by authors of Scripture (cf. Isaiah 3.18-24; 1 Tim 2.9), as well as by Greek, Roman and Jewish writers³⁶⁸. Peter now addresses the matter in the context of a Christian wife working to convert her unbelieving husband through her pure, reverent conduct. The scholarly interpretation of Peter's message in this verse is more or less unanimous: Peter is not prohibiting attention given to physical appearance or to the use of adornments, but he discourages incessant preoccupation therewith, to the disregard of the inward character³⁶⁹. 'rather, let your adornment be the inner self with the lasting beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit which is very precious in God's sight' (v.4): v.4 is the flipside of v.3. External adornments are of far less value and importance than the adornment of the 'inner self', or 'secret person', as the phrase is better translated.³⁷⁰ From here the discussion becomes tangled somewhat. For some scholars the emphasis of 'secret person' is not so much on any inner aspect, as on the faith that is visible directly only to God, and can only be visible to other people by way of external acts³⁷¹. For others, 'secret' is qualified by the term '*cardia*', the heart, pointing to qualities of judgement and commitment.³⁷² Some scholars then say that the terms 'gentle' and 'quiet' are defined collectively as having the same force or effect³⁷³, while others feel they must be differentiated, which then ensues a myriad of definitions for each term respectively³⁷⁴. It is possible that Peter anticipated this diversity in interpretation; and

Commentary Series: James, 1 and 2 Peter, and Jude, 186-187; Davids, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle of Peter*, 178.

³⁶⁸ Walls, Anders, *Holman New Testament Commentary: 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John, Jude*, 72; Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*; Vinson, et. al., *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary: 1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 148-149; Achtemeier, *Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible: First Peter*, 211-212; Watson, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: First and Second Peter*, 74; Davids, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle of Peter*, 179.

³⁶⁹ Watson, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: First and Second Peter*, 74; Hillyer, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series: 1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 115; Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: New Testament*, 909; Grudem, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 Peter*, 164; O'Kelley, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*; Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*; Dr Thomas L. Constable, *Dr Constable's notes on 1 Peter* (Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary, 2016), 46; Walls, Anders, *Holman New Testament Commentary: 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John, Jude*, 72; Achtemeier, *Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible: First Peter*, 212-213.

³⁷⁰ Scholars see here some resemblance to Paul's inner man-outer man distinction (Rom. 7:20-22; 2 Cor. 4:16) (herm; Watson, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: First and Second Peter*, 74; Vinson, et. al., *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary: 1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 150; Davids, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle of Peter*, 180-181), although 'secret' is a word exclusive to Peter.

³⁷¹ Achtemeier, *Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible: First Peter*, 213; Watson, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: First and Second Peter*, 74; Grudem, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 Peter*, 164-165.

³⁷² Achtemeier, *Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible: First Peter*, 213; Watson, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: First and Second Peter*, 74; Vinson, et. al., *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary: 1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 150). Peter may have been influenced by the belief that people thought and made decisions in their 'heart', considered the seat of thought, emotion, disposition and action.

³⁷³ Watson, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: First and Second Peter*, 74; O'Kelley, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*; Vinson, et. al., *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary: 1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 150).

³⁷⁴ Scholars assign the following definitions: a) Gentle: Mildness, composure, amiability, non-retaliation, meekness, unselfishness (Strong, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, 299; Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*;

though each of the aforementioned positions and definitions are warranted, Peter purposely earmarks ‘gentle’ and ‘quiet’ as his preferred descriptors for the ‘spirit’³⁷⁵. This is not only in the interest of clarity, but because these were the virtues best suited to his intent, and provided for him the most accurate representation of the ‘inner self.’ Faith, judgement and all the other qualities, would then apparently be marshalled and structured beneath these two, as the adjoining motif.³⁷⁶ The ‘spirit’ is so important to Peter that it seems to take precedence over the ‘inner self’ concept that it supplements, and is itself assigned two of its own features. This spirit is: a) imperishable (*aphtartos*)³⁷⁷ and it is b) very precious is God’s sight³⁷⁸. Both terms augment the contrast between eternal beauty, and the fleeting beauty of jewellery or clothing. *‘Husbands, in the same way, show consideration for your wives in your life together’*³⁷⁹ (7a): The popular view is that in v.7 both the husband and wife are Christian, indicated by the phrase ‘joint heirs.’³⁸⁰ The word *gynaikeios* (female) is used substantivally here (as opposed to the normal term for wife, *gynaikes*, used in 3.1 and 3.5), suggesting that Peter had in mind here all females of the household – wives, daughters and female slaves³⁸¹. In the Greek text, after the husbands are addressed, the instructive begins immediately with the participle ‘living’,³⁸² which is either imperatival (live with!), or circumstantial, dependent on another verb. The latter option is preferred. The premise for ‘living’ is the ‘submit’ verb used respectively for employees (2.13), slaves (2.18), and wives (3.1). *Homoios* (‘in the same way’) is simply a connective (cf. 3.1; 5.5) and doesn’t imply that the husband’s relation to the wife should be the same as the wife’s submission to the husband. Instead, v.7 outlines the specific manner of this relation³⁸³ which has been interpreted thus: ‘The husband isn’t required to submit to authority or leadership of the wife, but he is required to consider, to submit to the needs of the wife.’³⁸⁴ This is by ‘living’ (*sunoikeon*) with them according to knowledge (*gnosis*).’ The sense of *sunoikeon* seems to equate with that of the term *knowing* in the Old

Grudem, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 Peter*, 165; Samra, *Teach the Text Commentary Series: James, 1 and 2 Peter, and Jude*, 187; Quiet: Resoluteness, peace calm, control, humility, tranquillity (Strong, *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance*, 193; Watson, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: First and Second Peter*, 74; Walls, Anders, *Holman New Testament Commentary: 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John, Jude*, 72.)

³⁷⁵ ‘Spirit’ is not a reference to the Holy Spirit, but to the wife’s disposition (Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*; Achtemeier, *Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible: First Peter*, 213-214; Jobes, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: 1 Peter*, 255-256).

³⁷⁶ It is noted that both ‘gentle’ (*praeus*) and ‘quiet’ (*hesychiou*) are qualities ascribed to Jesus (gentle, Matt. 5:5; 11:29; 21:5; 2 Cor 10.1; quiet, Matt 5.5) (Samra, *Teach the Text Commentary Series: James, 1 and 2 Peter, and Jude*, 187; Grudem, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 Peter*, 165; Achtemeier, *Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible: First Peter*, 214).

³⁷⁷ This word was used previously to depict the inheritance of the saints (1.4) and the word of God (1.23) (Grudem, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 Peter*, 165; Watson, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: First and Second Peter*, 75; Charles, Thatcher, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: 1 Peter*, 110; Samra, *Teach the Text Commentary Series: James, 1 and 2 Peter, and Jude*, 187.)

³⁷⁸ ‘Precious’ (*polytelēs*) is used to criticise extravagance in dress (Musonius Rufus, Or. 40.17–20; Plutarch, Mor. 141E; 1 Tim. 2:9; cf. Mark 14:3), but here it is used to form a strong statement of what is truly valuable in God’s sight (Watson, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: First and Second Peter*, 75).

³⁷⁹ Truer to the Greek perhaps is the phrasing, ‘Husbands, in the same way, live with your wives according to the knowledge.’

³⁸⁰ Jobes, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: 1 Peter*, 259; Vinson, et. al., *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary: 1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 155.

³⁸¹ Jobes, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: 1 Peter*, 259; Vinson, et. al., *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary: 1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 155.

³⁸² ‘The husbands, in like manner, **living** with them according to knowledge...’

³⁸³ Jobes, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: 1 Peter*, 260; Vinson, et. al., *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary: 1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 155.

³⁸⁴ Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*.

Testament.³⁸⁵ It points to personal insight that leads to a respect of the full personhood of the wife³⁸⁶, as well as care and intimacy in all activities of marriage, including sexual intercourse³⁸⁷. *Gnosis* is knowledge particular to a Christian believer; an understanding of how God has designed marriage and what is required of a husband within marriage³⁸⁸. It is therefore knowledge of God's word³⁸⁹. The combined effect of *sunoikeon kata gnosis* is to lean conceptually towards the portrayal of authority-submission in Eph 5.21-33.

1.8.3 Are these roles universally applicable, or contextual?

vv.5,6 and v.7b,c, suggest that the roles of men and women in this passage are universal (the former pertaining to women, the latter to men). 1.8.3.1 *Wives: 'It was in this way long ago that the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves by accepting the authority of their husbands' (v.5):* A temporal sequence seems in place; it was the 'holy' women's³⁹⁰ hope in God³⁹¹ governing the direction of their lives, that enabled them to adorn themselves with the inner person, that in turn allowed them to submit to their husbands³⁹². From Grudem's observation that v.5 ties 'submission' back to vv.3,4³⁹³, where Peter saw 'gentle and quiet' spirit as a characteristic of the inner self, he has now added 'submission' as a second characteristic.³⁹⁴ *Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham and called him lord. You have become her daughters as long as you do what is good and never let fears alarm you (v.6):* 'Lord' is a reference to Genesis 18.12, when Sarah expressed disbelief at her pregnancy at her advanced age³⁹⁵. Though 'Lord' is recognised here as a culturally appropriated form of address³⁹⁶, the universal message is loving submission. In respecting and submitting to their husbands, wives imitate Sarah's attitude, thereby becoming her 'daughters'. Scholars make two important observations here: a) This is a contextualisation of Paul's teaching that believers are called children of Abraham by faith (Rom 4.11,12; Gal. 3). The model wife is to stand as a

³⁸⁵ (Adam) *knew* his wife Eve (Gen 4.1); Cain *knew* his wife (Gen 4.17). You only have I *known* of all the families of the earth (God's words to Israel in Amos 3.2).

³⁸⁶ Charles, Thatcher, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, 1 Peter*, 111.

³⁸⁷ Davids, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle of Peter*, 185.

³⁸⁸ Watson, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: First and Second Peter*, 76; O'Kelley, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*; Achtemeier, *Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible: First Peter*, 218;

³⁸⁹ Constable, *Dr Constable's notes on 1 Peter*, 48; Harink, *Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible: 1 and 2 Peter*, 120.

³⁹⁰ These women (OT matriarchs) were holy not because of their deeds, but because they were of God's people, as characterised particularly by their hope (Achtemeier, *Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible: First Peter*, 214).

³⁹¹ Davids sees the act of hoping in God as depicted best in Heb 11.13. The object of hope is a future redemption; it is unique in that has already been realised, but is still to be consummated. For this reason, Davids sees no discontinuity between the holy women of the OT and the NT, as both had the same perspective (Davids, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle of Peter*, 185.)

³⁹² O'Kelley, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*.

³⁹³ Grudem, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 Peter*, 166.

³⁹⁴ This would contrast the position that adorning with the humble quiet spirit is attendant to submission, whether circumstantially (Watson, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: First and Second Peter*, 75), or instrumentally (Achtemeier, *Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible: First Peter*, 215). Both these views, and others (O'Kelley, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*) take adorning with the humble, quiet spirit as a single consummate process). It is the adorning of the inner self that facilitates both the gentle, quiet spirit and the submissive attitude. This is clear for the latter (v.5). For the former, v.4 shows that Peter does not directly associate adornment with a gentle quiet spirit, but with the imperishable beauty of it, implying that the spirit and the adornment are not parallel; the one is a characteristic of the other.

³⁹⁵ Walls, Anders, *Holman New Testament Commentary: 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John, Jude*, 72; Charles, Thatcher, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: 1 Peter*, 111; O'Kelley, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*.

³⁹⁶ Constable, *Dr Constable's notes on 1 Peter*, 46-47; O'Kelley, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*.

counterpart to the model husband³⁹⁷; wives who respect and submit to their husbands (ie. who imitate Sarah), become *of Sarah* as well as *of Abraham*; children of submission as well as children of faith³⁹⁸; b) Having become Sarah's '*daughters*', Christian wives are now not just part of God's people, but a part of Israel. This is not to say that they have become Jewish, or akin to Israel at a special point (eg. conversion or baptism), but in the sense of doing good and especially by not being consternated or alarmed by 'fears'³⁹⁹ on account of their faith. 'Fears' may be by way of insult and disdain from the surrounding community, or the abuse, denigration and neglect experienced within the marital relationship. The wife is there encouraged to continue submitting, to do the right thing, and to not be alarmed. Peter urges the wife to submit to her non-Christian husband and his values (as far as is permitted by her Christian confession as this will dispel tension; this would in turn reduce potential for ruffling⁴⁰⁰ feathers within the community; most importantly, it could lead eventually to her husband's conversion⁴⁰¹. Taking the example of a non-Christian husband subjecting his wife to life-threatening abuse, it would be difficult for the wife in that scenario, to not be alarmed, or to consider submission the 'right thing.' From a purely human perspective, the prospect of a husband's conversion would seem a less-than-adequate compromise for the wife, especially if not only herself but her children or other family members were being similarly exposed to violence. Here it may be important to note the similarities between 1 Peter 3.1-7 and 1 Corinthians 7.12-16⁴⁰². Neither Paul nor Peter accepted divorce at any time as a viable alternative to a marriage; both held high expectations that the Christian example of the one would eventually lead to the conversion of the other (cf. 1 Cor 7.14; 1 Peter 3.1). However, Paul says that separation must not be hindered if the situation cannot be helped.⁴⁰³ This is not a separation for the purpose of remarrying another, as that would amount to adultery, which Jesus unequivocally prohibited. Either the separated husband and wife remained permanently unmarried, or they were to reconcile (1 Cor 7.10,11). Using the domestic violence setting again as an illustration, the time apart could be used for healing, self-evaluation⁴⁰⁴, rehabilitation, counselling, or any such measures required by the couple not only to ensure reconciliation, but to ensure that the family environment post-reconciliation would remain violence-free. Thus where marriage is considered untenable, temporary separation is considered by Scripture the viable alternative. However, it is at best a temporary solution. It was implied earlier that the scriptural authority-submission concept is the key by which genuine, biblical unity and stability is realised. This approach, however, must now be applied and observed on a long-term basis. It is likely to require a multi-sectoral approach, utilising various skill sets. This is due to the following reasons: a) in this current global socio-political climate where relativism is being systemically advanced, advocating for Christ-like, sacrificial headship for husbands, that claims to faithfully uphold the good of the wife and eliminate abusiveness and domineering on every level, will be viewed with suspicion regardless. It will

³⁹⁷ Charles, Thatcher, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, 1 Peter*, 111.

³⁹⁸ Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*.

³⁹⁹ Davids, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle of Peter*, 184.

⁴⁰⁰ Charles, Thatcher, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, 1 Peter*, 111; Watson, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: First and Second Peter*, 76; Achtemeier, *Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible: First Peter*, 216-217).

⁴⁰¹ Vinson, et. al., *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary: 1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 151-153; Achtemeier, *Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible: First Peter*, 216-217.

⁴⁰² Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*.

⁴⁰³ In 1 Cor 10.13, God promises not to test us beyond what we can endure, but provides a means of escape.

⁴⁰⁴ Paul's counsel for temporary separation seems to prompt the husband / wife towards self reflection, thinking not in terms of the failed marriage but his / her own personal failure as a husband / wife/ marriage partner (Jobes, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: 1 Peter*, 264-265).

require subjective reorientation of perspectives across all societal levels⁴⁰⁵, which will in turn rely on monumental investment across time – a daunting, but not insurmountable, endeavour for the church; b) abuse in the family has deep roots in the failure of parents to impart to their children the picture of Christ-like marriage and of true manhood and womanhood, and of the qualities, roles and responsibilities therein.⁴⁰⁶ This necessitates an approach that utilises a network of skills alongside pastoral care, such as village governance, child services, psychological welfare services, marriage counselling, family conferencing, mediation, rehabilitation etc. *1.8.3.2 Husbands: ‘paying honour to the woman as the weaker sex, since they too are also heirs of the gracious gift of life’ (v.7b,c):* The traditional Christian viewpoint of women as the ‘weaker vessel’ recognises that women are physically weaker on account of average size and muscle mass, and that historically women have also been at a societal disadvantage⁴⁰⁷. The assumption that women were all-round physically, intellectually, morally, and spiritually weaker than men⁴⁰⁸ as commonly believed by Greeks and Jews in the first century, is rejected. Our passage justifies this rejection as follows: a) Peter has just emphasised women’s spiritual and moral strength in vv.1,2⁴⁰⁹; b) Peter’s use of the word ‘vessel’ (*skeueo*) is believed by some to emphasise the equal status of both male and female as *creatures*.⁴¹⁰ The sense is merely that the female is weaker, and the male is weak⁴¹¹. So husbands demonstrate ‘living according to knowledge’ by honouring (*time*) their wives,⁴¹² via this unique consideration of their lesser physical and social capacity. That includes treating wives with courtesy, expulsion of any physical, verbal, sexual, emotional, or emotional domineering, or abuse by way of social power⁴¹³; c) any further hint of spiritual inferiority is snuffed out by Peter when he claims that, in Christ, men and women are co-heirs of his grace

⁴⁰⁵ Advancement beyond discussing submission as an ideal (ie. how the submission concept might be practiced in a modern, anti-marriage society) is surprisingly limited. Scholars seem resigned to the view that sin makes marriage a realm where complexities must be understandably downplayed, even ignored. (Constable, *Dr Constable’s notes on 1 Peter*, 45; Jobes, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: 1 Peter*, 254-255, 263-264). Another common justification for avoidance is that apostles dealt with the basic principles believers should observe, not all the possible situations that might arise, which may be true, but is not altogether helpful.

⁴⁰⁶ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 57-58. This has had explosive implications for the modern landscape on gender and sexual identity issues, and is correlative to the push for the minimizing of gender differences, and the devaluing of family and marriage ideals.

⁴⁰⁷ Walls, Anders, *Holman New Testament Commentary: 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John, Jude*, 73; Achtemeier, *Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible: First Peter*, 218; Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*; O’Kelley, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*; Samra, *Teach the Text Commentary Series: James, 1 and 2 Peter, and Jude*, 188).

⁴⁰⁸ Watson, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: First and Second Peter*, 72; Charles, Thatcher, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: 1 Peter*, 112; Vinson, et. al., *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary: 1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 156-157; Davids, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle of Peter*, 185).

⁴⁰⁹ Davids, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle of Peter*, 186; Watson, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: First and Second Peter*, 76; Achtemeier, *Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible: First Peter*, 217-218.

⁴¹⁰ Davids suggests that Peter was partly influenced by sources that: a) saw the body as the vessel of the spirit (Hermas, Man. 5.1; Barn. 7:3); b) saw the person as a creature, a meaning common in the OT and Judaism after the potter parable of Jer. 18:1-11 (Davids, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle of Peter*, 185-186).

⁴¹¹ Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*; Achtemeier, *Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible: First Peter*, 217.

⁴¹² *time* denotes value, esteem, deference (Strong, *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance*, 363).

⁴¹³ O’Kelley, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*; Watson, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: First and Second Peter*, 76; Charles, Thatcher, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, 1 Peter*, 111-112; Watson, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: First and Second Peter*, 76; Achtemeier, *Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible: First Peter*, 216-217; Davids, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle of Peter*, 186.

and spiritual blessings⁴¹⁴, which ties in with the teaching of Galatians 3.29.⁴¹⁵ It is important to note, however, that this blessing of joint heirship immediately follows the exhortation for wives to submit to their husbands (v.1), and for husbands to honour their wives as the weaker partner. It is likely that Peter deliberately made this connection, to emphasise that he saw no conflict between the principle of mutuality (as outlined in Eph 5.21, and in Galatians 3.29 and 28 where it is more broadly applied, ie. *'neither male nor female'*), and the authority-submission dynamic. In other words, mutuality does not disqualify the distinction in roles and responsibilities of men and women. The 'gracious gift of life' is viewed by Achtemeier as an epexegetic phrase ie. it is the grace that is present in life.⁴¹⁶ Macarthur interprets this 'grace in life' as 'the best of life,' concluding that this is a reference to marriage, as the best that life has to offer. Marriage then becomes the epicentre for the cultivation of love, fellowship, commitment etc⁴¹⁷. *'so that nothing may hinder your prayers' (v.7):* Some scholars feel that God's hindrance of prayer would be the result of a husbands' failure in the elements as specifically outlined in v.7⁴¹⁸, whereas others say it is because of a husbands' general attitude of domineering, abusiveness and disrespect⁴¹⁹. Some important insights are registered: a) A more practical application of *'hinder'* is a deterioration of the husband's prayer life, ie. the rendering of a husband unfit or unable to pray, or becoming less and less inclined to pray. Therefore, the husband's spiritual health, ie. the state of his relationship with God will be determined by the state of his closest human relationship, with his wife⁴²⁰. b) God's refusal of prayer because of one's relational volatility with other people, is echoed in various sections of Scripture (Matt. 5:23; 6:12, 14-15; 1 Cor. 11:33-34; and Jas. 4:3)⁴²¹

1.8.4 Is there indication that the content of the passage is guided by the Holy Spirit?

Peter's immediate readers are the displaced Christians of the diaspora, suffering adversity on account of their faith. Peter encourages them in the first 2 chapters to seek the Spirit's gifting and the empowerment, that will allow them to set themselves apart in a hostile, polytheistic Greco Roman world, to live as holy people, and to endure the pressures therewith. It is this alignment with the Spirit that Peter contextualises in our passage, via the act of submission that the subjective parties of all 3 groups are to carry out.

⁴¹⁴ Charles, Thatcher, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, 1 Peter*, 112; Jobes, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: 1 Peter*, 260; O'Kelley, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*; Walls, Anders, *Holman New Testament Commentary: 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John, Jude*, 74; Davids, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle of Peter*, 186; Constable, *Dr Constable's notes on 1 Peter*, 49.

⁴¹⁵ 'And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.'

⁴¹⁶ Achtemeier, *Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible: First Peter*, 218.

⁴¹⁷ Macarthur, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*.

⁴¹⁸ Achtemeier, *Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible: First Peter*, 218; O'Kelley, *Homily on 1 Peter 3.1-7*; Constable, *Dr Constable's notes on 1 Peter*, 49; Charles, Thatcher, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: 1 Peter*, 112

⁴¹⁹ Walls, Anders, *Holman New Testament Commentary: 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John, Jude*, 74; Constable, *Dr Constable's notes on 1 Peter*, 48; Harink, *Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible: 1 and 2 Peter*, 121; Vinson, et. al., *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary: 1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 158; Davids, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle of Peter*, 186.

⁴²⁰ Davids, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle of Peter*, 186-187; Walls, Anders, *Holman New Testament Commentary: 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John, Jude*, 74.

⁴²¹ Davids, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle of Peter*, 186.