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Persuasive Strategies in a Chauvinistic Religious Discourse: The Case of Women's Ordination

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Abstract

Currently one of the most divisive issues in some Christian communities centers on women's ordination. This study critically analyzes a religious discourse which defends and justifies the Southern Baptist Convention's opposition to women's ordination by using a sociocognitive approach as an underlying theoretical framework. The analysis aims to illustrate how a religious text both assumes and tries to formulate unified mental models to control the beliefs of the audience and promulgate dominance by assigning sovereign values to certain interpretations so that readers will understand certain texts as they see them. In doing so, the current study also hopes to demonstrate usefulness of employing Critical Discourse Analysis in understanding the process of doctrinal formation and reproduction of dominance in religious discourse.

Key words: Critical Discourse Analysis; Religious Discourse; Sociocognitive Approach to Critical Discourse Analysis; Biblical Hermeneutics; Women's Ordination

1. Introduction

Religion is one of the central driving forces in human existence, but so far, religious discourse has received relatively little attention in Critical Discourse Studies (Chilton 2004; Garner 2007). Wijsen (2013) noted the potential usefulness of using discourse analysis in bridging the gap between theoretical and scientific approaches to religious studies and urged religious scholars to take a multidisciplinary approach by incorporating discourse analysis into their studies.

This study examines the process of interpreting biblical texts by a religious scholar, focusing on how he legitimizes his view that women should be excluded from the positions of leadership. The study analyzes an article entitled 'Women pastors: What does the Bible teach?' currently posted on the official denominational website of the Southern Baptist Convention, to examine how the text establishes and maintains asymmetrical gender relations by using van Dijk's sociocognitive approach as an underlying theoretical framework. The analysis aims to illustrate how a religious text both assumes and tries to formulate unified mental models to control the beliefs of the audience and promulgate dominance by assigning sovereign values to certain interpretations

so that readers will understand certain texts as they see them. In doing so, the current study also hopes to demonstrate the usefulness of analyzing a religious text from a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective. Before proceeding to the analysis, I provide a brief background of the women's ordination issue in Christian churches, followed by a review of existing discourse studies in a religious context and an overview of theories and concepts underlying this study.

2. Background

Currently one of the most divisive issues in some Christian communities centers on women's ordination. Traditionally, Christian churches have been dominated by male leadership, while women have mostly been assigned to the lesser roles of service. However, a number of Christian denominations currently ordain women pastors while others oppose it.

The timeline of women's ordination differs from denomination to denomination. Also, differing perspectives have been offered by religious scholars concerning the history. For instance, Raab (2000) reported that in the Episcopal Church, it was not until 1977 that women were officially ordained. According to Ward (1991), there were a number of women preachers in the U.S. in the nineteenth century in Roman Catholic Church as well as Protestant and Eastern Orthodox churches, and some of them were ordained (e.g., Olympia Brown, a universalist being the ordained in 1863). Diagler (2012), however, tracing the history of women's ordination in the U.S. Roman Catholic Church, stated that the earliest record of the women's ordination movement in the U.S. comes from the beginning of 20th century when the international St. Joan's Alliance, founded in 1911, advocated women's ordination in the Catholic Church. In his book, *The Hidden History of Women's Ordination: Female Clergy in the Medieval West*, Macy (2007) offered yet another view; he claimed that the widespread notion that women were never ordained in the early centuries of Christianity is false. He maintained that women were removed from the ordained ministry during the eleventh and twelfth centuries when the definition of ordination drastically changed to signify the bestowal of power.

Delineating an accurate, complete history of women's ordination is a study of its own and is beyond the purview of this article. Nonetheless, one thing we can draw from these differing accounts is that the history of women's ordination movement does not necessarily coincide with that of the feminist movement. In addition, despite the lack of an official status, women played active leadership roles in various denominations in the past. A prominent example can be found in the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church, which was established in the nineteenth century based on the leadership of Ellen G. White, whose writings and teachings continue to be highly regarded by traditional members of the church. Ironically, however, the recent General Conference of SDA church, held in San Antonio, TX, voted against women's ordination.

Chaves (1977) observed that two groups of denominations are particularly resistant to women's ordination: denominations practicing sacramental ritual and denominations endorsing biblical inerrancy. The notion of inerrancy in particular tends to act as a background premise to deeply divisive issues such

as gay marriage and women's ordination. The Conservative Baptist Association states that 'Old and New Testaments are regarded as the divinely inspired Word of God and are therefore infallible and of supreme authority' (Jacquet 1988: 54) and draw from specific texts written by St. Paul, such as 1 Timothy 2:12, in which Paul states, 'I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man,' thus demanding male headship in the Church.

The Southern Baptist convention (SBC), a major protestant denomination in the United States, is one of the few Christian churches, along with the Roman Catholic Church and SDA, which has remained firm in its opposition to ordaining women. The SBC's position recently became the center of public attention when former U.S. president Jimmy Carter criticized the denomination's stance on the issue and announced his decision to sever the ties with the denomination, expressing a strong disagreement regarding its policy on women's ordination. In his autobiography, *A Call to Action: Women, Religion, Violence, and Power*, Carter (2014: 1-2) lamented unjust treatments of women and girls within religious communities and criticized the practices of religious entities that violate basic principles of human rights and equality based on the 'distorted interpretations of religious texts,' perpetuating the notion that women are 'unqualified to serve God on equal terms.'

3. Religion and Discourse Analysis

Not all forms of religious discourse are overtly persuasive in nature (e.g., stories, poems, liturgies, prayers, etc.) and multimodality is central in some religious discourse (e.g. music, olfactory devices, costume, spatial arrangements etc.). What this study refers to as religious discourse specifically concerns the type of religious discourse that purports to serve didactic purposes, aiming to admonish, inculcate, and invoke changed attitudes and behaviors of members of the group. I believe this type of discourse is particularly important for CDA in that it is similar to political discourse, as it often legitimizes certain actions and views through the process of manufacturing consent without overt coercing (Chomsky 1988). As Chilton and Schäffner (1997: 212) noted, determining whether a certain text or talk is political depends on the standpoint and interpretation of the commentator, and a discourse often serves multiple purposes. When religious polices and decisions are based on fundamental religious beliefs and harm the social equilibrium, perpetuating the dominance of more privileged groups, understanding how these religious groups justify their beliefs and how discourse mediates in the process is an important task that confronts interdisciplinary discourse analysts. Rigid religious beliefs, often manifested in the form of dogmatic teaching, control the views of believers to the extent that no alternative view is tolerated. Human history is punctuated by tragic outcomes caused by extreme religious ideologies, which led to extreme or unfair measures taken against certain groups of people. The persuasive nature of religious discourse not only warrants, but also necessitates the incorporation of principles of CDA into its studies in coming to understand

discursive processes in which certain religious beliefs are formed and promulgated.

The fact that religious discourse has remained outside the purview of mainstream critical discourse analysts could be partly explained by the fact that religion typically assumes followers' beliefs in the infallibility and sacredness of a particular religious scripture that forms the basis of the belief system, which is usually considered to exist outside the realm of scientific reasoning and verifiable truth. Various scholars of biblical hermeneutics, however, have noted the importance of acknowledging the subjective nature of interpretation as the meaning does not reside solely in the text but arises from the readers' interaction with the text (Kim 2013: 29). For instance, the Bible consists of ancient texts translated and copied by multiple individuals at multiple times and are read by readers with variant perspectives, experiences, and cultural upbringing; therefore, diverse interpretations should be expected and acknowledged. Bultmann (1960) noted that achieving neutral objectivity and total impartiality is unrealistic in interpreting biblical texts, and Kaiser and Silva (2007: 286) also observed subjectivity and relativity of interpretation as an underlying element in contemporary hermeneutics. In the same vein, Jensen (2007: 207) argued that 'there is no such thing as a natural or God-given way of understanding' and that 'critical reflection on one's own hermeneutical presuppositions is not only necessary, but essential for the intellectual integrity of the theologian' (3). In this light, principles and methods of CDA can provide scholars of biblical hermeneutics with a tool to aid in the close examination of the process of the interpretation and the emergence of a doctrinal belief from a non-theological perspective, thereby providing triangulation to scientific studies of metaphysical subjects. In addition, since one of the goals of critical discourse analysts is to discover presuppositions and the underlying process in creating a unified mental model of interlocutors, CDA could become a useful tool in examining how a particular religious discourse produces and reinforces certain beliefs.

4. Existing Studies

While there has been relatively little focus on religious discourse within CDA in the last two decades, there has been an ongoing interest in the periphery in studying how religious ideologies are shaped and reflected by discourse, what discursive strategies characterize sermons and other religious discourse, and what discursive choices preachers make to persuade the audience. The following review focuses mainly on existing studies of sermons and similar types of discourse whose purpose is to teach/admonish.

Neuman et al. (2001) examined Rabbi Yitzchak's speech as an example of Jewish fundamental rhetoric, in which the speaker urged non-orthodox Jews to adhere to an ultra-orthodox Jewish lifestyle. They identified the use of a metaphor, repetition, humor, irony, and a rhetorical device of *pro ommaton poe* (a type of visualization technique) in his speech. By demonstrating practical choices the speaker made in his rhetoric and language, Neuman et al. (2001) sought to debunk the notion that fundamentalist rhetoric is irrational.

Muchnick's (2005) study is similar to Neuman et al.'s (2001), in that it also focused on a Jewish preacher's speeches. However, unlike Rabbi Yitzchak, who used a 'before your eyes' technique for a dramatic effect, Muchnick observed that the Jewish revivalist preacher, Rabbi Amnon Itzhak, used prosodic devices

(e.g., special intonation, lengthening of the syllable, metatheses, and rhyme), dialogue creations, and narratives of personal experiences to achieve a similar effect. Muchnick also found that the speaker used quasi-scientific arguments and word plays in his speeches, resorting to personal success stories and humorous images, rather than logic.

Cipriani (2002) analyzed two written sermons—one in English and one in Portuguese-- by a single preacher to find out how a preacher tries to create power when instructing others how to conduct their lives. He found that some of the strategies that the preacher used included assuming a higher position than the audience, issuing commands, and motivating through fear.

Garner (2007: 66) recognized the heuristic potential of discourse analysis in sermons, echoing the common belief many critical discourse analysts share, as he stated that 'step-by-step' examination of the language [used in sermons] draws attention to features that have traditionally been either unnoticed or simply taken for granted, but which with a closer look can prove to be highly informative to scholars.' He illustrated this point by examining the relationship between the preacher's linguistic forms and the communicative function manifested in the eighteen posthumously published sermons of a late-sixteenth century Scottish theologian, Robert Rollock. Garner observed that Rollock's sermons had a distinctive organizational structure and his linguistic choices, such as use of questions, restatements, repetition of an identical syntactic structure, and embedded conversational markers served persuasive purposes.

Singh and Thuraisingam's (2011) study examined the role of language in the formation of religious meaning systems by analyzing six religious sermons from three major faiths in Malaysia—Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism. They mapped the clergy-language-congregation and clergy-language-meaning system based on the principle of contradiction from Engestrom's (1999) triangular activity system. Their analysis, focusing on how the religious discourses reconcile the changing needs of the congregation in the postmodern society, showed that the sermons used questioning technique to enhance persuasion and employed first person narratives as well as quotations from other texts to form rich intertextuality. They also found that the sermons contained numerous words that were related to entertainment and popular culture. Szudrowicz-Garstka (2012) identified seven markers such as situationality, emotions, recent history, remote history, general knowledge, juxtaposition and direct intertextuality in Pope John Paul II's speech addressed to young people presented during his last celebration of world youth days.

Some scholars have studied persuasive strategies in televangelists' speeches. For example, Schmidt and Kess (1986) observed that some of the features seen in television advertisements, such as coining new terms, violating syntactic and semantic norms, and issuing direct commands, were also used in the Christian televangelists' promotional materials. In a similar vein, El Naggar (2012), using the Discourse Historical Approach (Wodak and Meyer 2009), analyzed processes of persuasion in a Muslim televangelist by looking at how the preacher created interdiscursivity and intertexuallity by linking to other discourses.

Among those religious studies from various disciplines centering on gendered discourse, Sered (1999: 201) argued that 'in the context of religious

fundamentalism, women not only have little or no power to generate and manipulate symbols, but actually are themselves reduced to being symbols' from a philosophical and theoretical perspective. The term 'religious discourse' in Von Braun's (2006) book, '*Holy War' and gender. Violence in religious discourse,* encompasses symbolic constructions of gender relations embedded in the religious cannons of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as the author recognizes gender as a useful tool in understanding historical, cultural, and socio-economical subtexts in a given era. Rajtar (2012), in 'Gender in the discursive practices of the Jehovah's witnesses in the former East Germany,' examined how the egalitarian stance of the official state ideologies influences the Witnesses' perspectives and practices on gender relations drawing form interviews and field work.

5. Text

To date, few critical discourse studies on religion and women have scrutinized actual text or talk to examine how a specific discourse contributes to creating power, power abuse, and domination. To fill this gap, the present study examines the process of meaning creation and power reproduction by analyzing one religious scholar's discursive strategies reflected in an exegetical discourse which perpetuates a patriarchal ideology. The text was written by Dr. Richard Melick, a New Testament scholar at Golden Gate Theological Seminary. The endnote indicates that Melick wrote the article at the request of the SBC. It first appeared in the 1998 issue of *SBC LIFE*, the official journal of the Southern Baptist Convention, and currently, the article has been placed on the official website of the denomination in the FAQ section under the question, 'Can women be pastors or deacons in the SBC?' representing the current stance of the church on this issue. The SBC states that the article is intended to serve a heuristic purpose as a guide for those within the denomination since it 'should prove helpful in studying the topic.' The fact that Melick wrote this article at the request of SBC LIFE and it is now posted on the official denominational website as the authoritative answer could be interpreted to indicate that this text reflects the church's impetus to defend and justify its position against women's ordination for both internal and external audiences, who may not be at ease with the church's position on the issue.

An additional reason this particular text was chosen is that the points of arguments are somewhat typical of those found in other text and talk that oppose women's ordination. Also, since the text is a scholarly article written to defend and justify the religious denomination's position against women's ordination, its rich persuasive elements render the analysis particularly rewarding. Also, CDA in religious discourse have not yet tapped into the institutionalized genre of online church-sponsored articles promoting the church's view with unique authority and power. I recognize that a corpus-based analysis would potentially yield much richer and more substantial outcome in holistically dealing with the issue of women's ordination from CDA perspective. It is certainly my hope to move in that direction in the future. For now, I hope this study serves the purpose of inspiring other researchers in the field of CDA to consider engaging in a similar line of inquiry.

As Wilson (2001: 399) rightly noted, it is difficult to conduct a completely objective and nonpolitical CDA. To make my own position clear from the outset, my approach may inevitably reflect my own religious perspective and stance on this issue. As a member of a protestant denomination, I relate most with the progressive Christian view, which embraces deity of Jesus and sacredness of the Bible and yet rejects literal, fixed interpretations. Second, along the wide-ranging spectrum of perspectives represented by various groups of feminist theologians, I resonate most with evangelical feminists who uphold the value of the Scripture but reject the notion of predestined hierarchy based on gender, several of whom are mentioned later in the article.

6. Theoretical Framework

The cognitive science of religion is a relatively new approach to the scientific study of religion. Scholars in this interdisciplinary field treat religious beliefs and thinking mostly as a cognitive phenomenon and examine how explanatory endeavors are justified in various religions (see Atran 2002; Barrett 2004; Boyer 2001; Chilton and Kopytowska forthcoming; Downes 2011; McNamara 2009; Slone 2004, 2006). Since religious thinking and beliefs are explored and disseminated through text and talk, a cognitively grounded approach would be particularly pertinent to critical discourse studies in religion.

In the field of CDA, a socio-cognitive approach provides a useful tool as it examines 'subsystems, such as knowledge, attitudes and ideologies, norms and values, and the ways these are affected and brought to bear in discourse and other social practices' (van Dijk 2003: 89). Van Dijk (2009: 63) stated that critical discourse analysts are problem-oriented and 'socio-politically committed to social equality and justice' and aim to discover how discourse produces or reproduces domination, power, and power abuse by integrating detailed analyses of cognition and society.

In this framework, discourse and society are mediated by context models in order for the speaker to produce a text or talk that is socially appropriate for the particular communicative event. This appropriateness is not absolute as it reflects how the speaker/writer intersubjectively interprets various categories underlying a schema, such as spatiotemporal settings, goals, participants' knowledge and ideologies, as well as roles and relationships of interlocutors. Context models are shaped in the episodic memory based on the speaker's/writer's mental definition of the situation and define the genre, register, as well as the style of text and talk. It is, therefore, important for a Critical Discourse Analysis to make these context models explicit as they control the discourse structures, mediating between communicative event, society, and discourse.

In this approach, coherence is understood to be subjective as well since it is achieved when language users are able to construct a unified, coherent mental model. The theory also posits that discourse meaning is incomplete because 'only some of the propositions needed to understand a discourse are actually expressed' and 'most other propositions remain implicit, and must be inferred from the explicit propositions' (van Dijk 2009: 77). Therefore, one of the aims of the discourse analysts is to identify macropropositions and uncover these

missing propositions which are not asserted by the discourse, since they may reveal how speakers/writers utilize or control the underlying, socially shared representations to achieve their persuasive goals. Macropropositions are often expressed in the form of presupposition, a type of implicit information which is not asserted but presented as given and is presumed to be shared by members of an epistemic community (van Dijk 2005). The K-device, according to van Dijk (2005), manages knowledge for interlocutors to decide which piece of information should be asserted or presupposed. Presupposition both as a linguistic and a pragmatic phenomenon has been studied mainly in the context of news media by various scholars (e.g., Bekalu 2006; Bonyadi 2011; Sperber and Wilson 2004; van Dijk 2005). Presupposition is an important parameter to examine particularly in the study of religious discourse because by upholding certain beliefs as unquestionable, speakers/writers may justify their manipulation and unfair actions.

7. Analysis

7.1 Context Models

In this article, context models are signified through several elements embodying both the writer's and the denomination's interpretations of the context and the notion of appropriateness and relevance of the discourse.

First, the text presupposes readers' existent general knowledge about the debated issue and the traditional views of women as the lesser counterpart of men. It also presumes that the audience shares a sense of urgency as it begins by pointing to the epistemic needs to reduce uncertainty and to resolve the current conflict in the church. The following opening statements rationalize the production of this text.

> 'The debate about whether a woman is permitted to be a pastor continues to intensify.'

> 'There is a need for clear thinking about what the Bible says.'

The text not only opens with a sense of urgency, but it also ends on a critical note as it ends by predicting a dismal outcome in case one does not take the correct stance. The author claims:

> 'There is more at stake than initially meets the eye!'

Second, since the topic is a deeply polarizing one, the SBC has deemed it appropriate to place the article on its official website, thereby granting the text formal imprimatur of the denomination. Furthermore, because the venue is a closed space where neither comments nor open discussions are allowed, the genre contributes to creating an implicit power structure for dealing with a controversial issue as it precludes possibilities of challenging the position promoted in the article.

Third, the fact that a sanctioned theologian addresses to a general, muted audience reflects the denomination's interpretation of appropriateness in terms of the choice of speaker and the setting. It is presumed that the audience may have differing views on the issue of women's ordination, so the denomination

has chosen a Distinguished Professor of New Testament Studies at one of the church-affiliated institutions to provide so-called the most authoritative and hence credible arguments to the issue, thereby seeking to silence critics.

Fourth, the article employs biblical exegesis and a predominantly didactic tone, as the author assumes that the readers will agree that the Bible should be the only source of reference as it provides specific answers to various issues humans confronts. Furthermore, he presumes that average readers are in need of guidance of an erudite biblical scholar like himself in order to reach the correct answer.

These subjectively construed context models remain operative throughout the text, controlling other aspects of the discourse such as macropropositions, lexico semantics, and local meanings discussed below.

7.2 Macropropositions (M)

For CD analysts of religious discourse, it is crucial to identify those macropropositions that are assumed to be true but in fact may either be untrue or debatable. The text presents several macropropositions, which support the overarching position that women cannot become pastors. Intentional and consciously controlled macropropositions express the overall content of mental models of both the target audience as well as the author, although not present in the semantic representation as these are implied but not asserted by the discourse.

In this text, they are implied in the form of some basic tenets of fundamental Christian beliefs, such as:

M1   Every word of the Bible represents an infallible word of God.

M2   The answer to this question should be drawn solely from the Bible.

By framing the issue in the form of a question, 'Women Pastors: What Does the Bible Teach?' Melick prescribes that readers who read this text or ponder on this issue should all agree that the answer to this question should be drawn from the Bible, which is the word of God. By asking 'What does the Bible teach?' rather than 'Can women become pastors?' the text purposefully limits possible range of discussion to the confines of biblical exegesis. Rather than framing the text as an attempt provide 'an' answer, the author strives to present his own view as the only correct one, eliminating any chances of recognizing differing views and interpretations[1], such as

M1.2   Bible is an extant record of history and literature of the ancient Israelites. It provides us with a lens through which we can understand God.

M2.2   Not every word of the Bible can be taken literally.

Melick achieves this goal by using a common persuasive technique of including counter-arguments and providing rebuttals. The counter-arguments and his subsequent rebuttals are used to strengthen the position that male headship is not only what St. Paul demanded, but a God-ordained principle, not subject to cultural or situational conditions. However, this is in fact pseudo-argumentation, as it pretends to air both sides of the argument but represents the debate in selected terms.

While the first two macropropositions may be part of the mental models of those Christians who believe in the inerrancy of the Bible, the third proposition is far-fetched, although he presents it as a key principle in approaching the issue. The particular macroproposition states that

> M3   Differing role assignments in the Godhead (based on the Trinity doctrine) necessitate differing role assignments for men and women within the family and church.

This last macroproposition may not be part of the mental model of critical readers, but Melick promotes it as if it were a prescribed view of the entire Christianity, and therefore should be accepted as unshakable truth. He prescribes trinity of Godhead as a proper model to guide our understanding of human family and church structure. He asserts his belief in the divinely established hierarchical structure between males and females, emphasizing that St. Paul was a revolutionary, not a closed-minded leader, but still demanded male headship. Melick further denounces the possibility that Paul's position might have been influenced by the lower educational level of women or the male-dominated cultural milieu at the time of his writing. He claims the fundamentality of the hierarchical order by placing women at the lower level than men, who are to submit to Jesus, who in turn submits to the authority of God. In doing so, he equates the denial of male headship with the denial of an important theological principle that governs the entire Christendom.

> 'The Bible intentionally interrelates church and family for both husbands and wives. The God-ordained leadership structure in the church is reflected in the family, and vice versa…Proper family relationships are a prerequisite to ministry in the church. Proper relationships require the husband to function as the head and the wife to willingly submit to his leadership. In the church, wives, submissive to their husbands, are not to 'have authority or be the teacher' over men… These principles tell us about God, for in the Godhead we see both equality and submission! Thus in the activities of God there is a division of labor and focus…'

By establishing a direct linkage between the models of trinity, family, and church and portraying it as invincible truth, Melick assigns an absolute value to his and the church's view. He also warns the readers of serious outcome in case women's ordination is allowed, although readers are left to wonder what the serious outcome would entail as no specific details are mentioned.

7.3 Modality and Lexico-Semantics

Critical discourse analysts have long noted the role of modality in persuasive and manipulative discourse and have identified various categories. Fowler (1985: 73), in particular, noted how modality can be signified through adjectives (e.g., 'certain' and 'necessary'), adverbs (e.g., 'certainly,' 'regrettable'), verbs (e.g., 'prove'), and nominalization (e.g., 'obligation' and 'desirability') as well as modal auxiliary verbs.

Melick's choice of words is a case in point as the text is replete with such examples. Throughout the text, various emphatic adjectives, adverbs—also called boosters (Homes 1990; Hyland 2000) —, and nouns convey the author's strong attitude toward various propositions. For example, words such as 'careful,' 'clear,' 'sensitive,' and 'care' are repeatedly used, qualifying the

author's arguments as well as solidifying his credibility as a knowledgeable New Testament scholar with clear thinking abilities and sensitivity. By portraying those who agree with women's ordination as lacking prudence, and those who oppose as being able to think clearly and carefully, Melick seems to treat average readers as lacking clear thinking, sensitivity, and care and in need of expert guidance. The following statements exemplify this point (underline added for highlighting purposes):

'The question requires <u>careful analysis</u>.'

'In the current discussions of gender roles, there is a need for <u>clear thinking</u> about what the Bible says.'

'Biblical exegesis requires <u>sensitivity</u> to the context of a passage.'

'Readers must exercise <u>great care</u>, therefore, to determine the nature of the issue under discussion in order to understand and apply the message relevantly today.'

'These matters call for <u>careful</u> and prayerful analysis, for there is more at stake than initially meets the eye!'

These types of boosters are also used in describing St. Paul and the level of assurance in his statements:

'In a <u>carefully reasoned</u> argument, Paul expressed a theological conviction.'

'Both 1 Timothy and Titus provide <u>clearly</u> for a hierarchical approach to church order in which men rather than women were to occupy that role.'

'While Paul <u>clearly</u> affirms the equality of men and women in salvation, he <u>equally and just as clearly</u> affirms the priority of men in church leadership.'

'Again, Paul's conclusion is <u>clear and forceful</u>.'

'Paul <u>clearly</u> tied the two together in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.'

By using the same type of boosters for himself and Paul as well as Paul's forceful teaching, the author seems to place himself and those who oppose women's ordination at the same mental and spiritual level as St. Paul. An embedded claim made throughout the article is that the contents of the Bible are to be accepted as instruction about all sorts of issues. In particular, he expects readers to agree with him that Paul has supreme authority over church organization and that his position should be automatically obeyed and should never be challenged. In doing so, Melick assumes his own authority—i.e., that he can speak for Paul as he knows what Paul's intention was.

Other instances where similar types of bolstering are used include when he refers to his own interpretations of certain biblical texts. While talking about the hierarchical model of the Trinity as representing the hierarchical relationship between men and women in family and society, Melick validates his own interpretation through the use of 'pseudo-logical markers' (Muchnik 2005) such as 'confirmed' and 'obvious,' adding supreme value to his own interpretation without providing convincing evidence. By assigning supremacy to his view, he presents his subjective interpretation as infallible as the biblical texts he is interpreting:

'This interpretation is <u>confirmed.</u>'

'It is <u>obvious</u> that this [St. Paul's seemingly contradictory statement] is a soteriological statement: it speaks to the doctrine of salvation.'

He also uses an emphatic adverb, 'indeed,' to indicate a high degree of certainty as he tries to support Macroproposition #3:

'<u>Indeed</u> the instructions for one often interrelate with instructions for the other.'

Absoluteness of his interpretation of this macroproposition is also explicitly expressed in the following statement, in which he precludes any possibility of his interpretation being wrong:

'The Godhead provides the <u>unchanging</u> model for the family and the church.'

It is interesting that when referring to the inherent value of women, Melick once again utilizes the same type of boosters he used for describing himself and St. Paul:

'This [women's dignity and value] is <u>readily</u> seen in the Acts of the Apostles.'

'Further, women <u>clearly</u> played a significant role in the work of the Apostle Paul.'

'And of course, women made a <u>significant</u> contribution to Jesus' ministry.'

'While the Bible does not support the practice of women serving as pastors, numerous passages speak <u>clearly and forcibly</u> to the inherent worth and value of women.'

While these boosters highlight the inherent value of women, they could very well be taken by critical readers as a case in point to illustrate the need for allowing gender equality within the church. However, these terms seem to have been specifically chosen to serve a palliative function by reducing negative effects and increasing positive effects of the church's stance on women, aiming to increase women's satisfaction with the status quo within the church. This is seen as an attempt to console the less privileged counterpart by saying, 'You cannot be pastors, but you are just as significant as men!', distracting readers from focusing on the real issue by presenting a pretense of equality.

The text also employs repetition of these words as a means to establish the definiteness of Paul's words:

'Paul's words are <u>forceful</u>.'

'Again, Paul's conclusion is <u>clear and forceful</u>.'

Referring to Ephesians 5:22-23, in which Paul urges, 'Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior,' Melick repeats his idea of the importance of preserving the hierarchical order in the church and the family several times. In doing so, he presupposes that all should embrace a conservative ideology in which a proper familial order prescribes a strict authoritarian model of family (Lakoff and Johnson 1999), repeating the word 'proper':

'As before, <u>proper</u> family order is a prerequisite to pastoral leadership.'

'Here <u>proper</u> family order is a prerequisite to a woman's participation in the church.'

'<u>Proper</u> family relationships are a prerequisite to ministry in the church.'

'<u>Proper</u> relationships require the husband to function as the head and the wife to willingly submit to his leadership.'

Melick's assertion is further reinforced by deontic modality in the following statements as the modal auxiliary *cannot* conveys a strong sense of prohibition:

'He [St. Paul] states that they cannot teach or have authority over men.'

'Thus, they cannot have a pastoral position, or perform the pastoral function, for that puts them in authority over men.'

Another notable case of modality is reflected in multiple examples of what von Wright (1951) called existential modality. When describing women's proper place and duties, Melick uses a 'be' verb with a *to*-infinitive, assigning an existential and ontological value to the order prescribed:

'The wife <u>is to submit</u> to her husband (Eph. 5:22)'

'In the church, wives, submissive to their husbands, <u>are not to 'have authority or be the teacher'</u> over men'

'Explicit teaching of the passage is that wives <u>are to submit</u>; husbands <u>are to love</u>.'

'A woman's spiritual service <u>is to be</u> in those roles assigned her by God.'

7.4 Local Meanings

Melick's argument against women's ordination is also enhanced through various local meanings. For instance, while quoting Paul, who said women should be silent in church, Melick defines silence as 'being possessed by a calmness of spirit and peaceful disposition' in the following:

'This verse is introduced by a statement that women should learn 'in silence,' and it is followed by the statement that 'she must be silent.' The word silence means being possessed by a calmness of spirit and peaceful disposition. It is set as the opposite to 'teaching' and 'having authority over a man".

To the word 'silent,' which typically means 'not having a voice,' Melick assigns emotive and temperamental qualities, stretching the semantic boundaries of the word to solidify his view. He then presents 'silence' as the opposite of 'teaching' and 'having authority over a man,' thereby further adding a relational and hierarchical value to the term. By formulating a semantically anomalous antithesis between 'silence' and 'teaching/having authority over men' in this way, Melick attempts to alter the readers' mental model of being silent (what Paul said) as being synonymous with not being able to take pastoral duties (what Melick wishes his readers to draw from the statement). Furthermore, by shifting the semantic designation from 'having no voice,' which has a strongly oppressive connotation, to having 'calmness of spirit' and 'peaceful disposition,' Melick tries to present what is actually unpleasant and undesirable (having no voice and authority in the church) as a lofty aim to pursue for women. He distorts the ordinary English meaning of 'silent' and tries to reformulate the semantic representation of the word 'silent' in the readers' mental models by altering readers' perceptions of the term. In this process, however, he neglects to make reference to the meaning of the Greek term in the original context.

Melick's attempt to rebuild the schema of semantic ranges of a word also extends to other key words, such as 'equality' and 'submission.' Melick defines equality between men and women in three aspects. He states,

> 'First, they [men and women] have equal value as persons. Next, men and women have equal responsibility to communicate intimately in marriage relationship. . . Finally, the Bible affirms the equal responsibility of men and women in propagating life.'

By focusing on narrowly selected situation scenarios for being 'equal', he implies that gender equality is limited only to the bedroom and does not apply to the boardroom. He tries to deter the reader from asking why this equality in marriage does not transfer to church organization by juxtaposing equality and its antithetical notions such as hierarchy and submission as harmonious concepts. Melick does so by making a perceptual reduction to the word 'submission' and 'subordination' in order to remove negative connotations by resemanticizing them as illustrated in the following statement:

> 'In a beautiful tension, he [Paul] affirms both value and order, both equality and subordination.'

Submission is essential for maintaining proper order, he argues. Therefore, Melick demands that women should voluntarily submit to men. He employs a common tactic of using etymology to support a claim as he mentions the Greek term 'hypotasso.' He suggests that the Greek term implies a voluntary submission, adding a subjective interpretation to the translation of the word which, according to Vine's Expository Dictionary, is a primarily a military term, translated as 'to rank under.' Melick further states, 'We have seen that the explicit texts of Scripture *forbid* women to serve as pastors,' putting semantically incongruent terms such as 'prohibited' and 'forbid,' and 'voluntary' together to recreate the mental model of readers to those that would embrace the following incongruous propositions:

> Submission is part of equality.

> Voluntary submission should demanded because it is desirable and beautiful.

What is demanded is coercive in nature and cannot be beautiful or desirable in the mental models of average readers, and submission and equality cannot go hand in hand. However, Melick presents these antitheses as being complementary in nature based on the trinity doctrine:

> 'The Godhead provides the unchanging model for the family and the church. There exists in each both essential equality and economic subordination. Equality is based on 'who each is,' a relational, interpersonal matter. Subordination is based on 'what each does,' a task oriented, functional matter. Both elements are present and are to be acknowledged in practice. Organizational subordination requires the recognition and appreciation of essential equality.'

For readers who do not believe in biblical inerrancy, Melick's following statement can be particularly problematic as he suggests that Paul's word should be taken as the literal word of God in the following statement.

'A woman's spiritual service is to be in those roles assigned her by God. These do not include the role of pastor.'

He affirms that St. Paul's words carry God's message and that St. Paul did not allow women to take the role of pastors because God did not allow it.

Despite Melick's repeated efforts to strengthen his arguments through various linguistic and rhetorical ploys, the text suffers from logical incongruence as it sets out to answer the question, 'is it permissible for a woman to serve as senior pastors?' but ends with an answer to a broader question, 'women cannot be pastors' in general. The initial question presumes that the question at hand is not whether or not women can be pastors, but whether they can be *senior* pastors, but it ends with a general restrictions that prohibit women from performing pastoral roles at all levels of pastoral duties. In addition, by applying a forced triad—Trinity, Family, Church—as an absolute theological model and by failing to acknowledge other viable views, Melick renders his interpretation dogmatic.

8. Conclusion

In this study, I have examined the process in which a patriarchal religious ideology is reproduced, by closely examining discursive strategies employed by a religious scholar as he legitimizes the church's policy to exclude women from pastoral positions. The study demonstrated how implicit presuppositions, presented as unchanging, unchallengeable truths, guide the formation of certain religious arguments, indicating that religious beliefs and doctrines often hinge on debatable, subjective interpretations of biblical texts based on the assumed mental models.

Radical feminist theologians view Christianity and feminism as fundamentally incompatible (e.g., Daly 1978; Hampton 1990). However, I argue that traditional patriarchal orientation of Christianity results from narrow interpretations of biblical texts. In fact, many evangelical feminists who believe that the Bible is an inspired, authoritative word of God consider gender equality to be in line with biblical principles (see Pierce and Groothuis 2005). They draw support for the egalitarian position from the holistic view of the biblical text including the Genesis passages on the origins, destiny and roles of humanity (Hess 2005), various women leaders in the Bible (Belleville 2005), and Jesus' affirmation of women (Spencer 2005). These scholars conclude that carefully examining biblical texts concerning the gifts and callings of both women and men justifies no God-ordained hierarchy based on gender. Chaves (1977: 101) noted that 'a century of stalemate on the issue strongly suggests that there is no compelling reason internal to the Bible to grant interpretive primacy either to the texts opposing gender equality or to the texts supporting gender equality.' He argue that 'the strong empirical connection between inerrancy and resistance to women's ordination requires sociological interpretation.'

I believe that by using all available means in the multidisciplinary endeavors, we can help restore justice in religious communities. I also believe that insights gained from such undertakings will help us better understand the truth, allowing all God's children free to serve God on equal terms. As Carter (2014) asserted, a fundamental, male-supremacist point of view stemming from

misinterpretation of religious scriptures legitimizes sexual discrimination in every realm of the society, and as Melick stated at the end of his paper, clearly 'there is more at stake than initially meets the eye!'

Notes

¹ ¹   In 2011, Gallup reported that only 30% of Americans believe that the Bible is the actual word of God, and the most common view, held by 49% of Americans, is that the Bible is the inspired word of God but should not be taken literally. Another 17% consider the Bible an ancient book of stories recorded by man (source: http://www.gallup.com/poll/148427/say-bible-literally.aspx).

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Appendix

Women Pastors: What Does the Bible Teach *(Excerpt)*

by Richard R. Melick, Jr., Ph.D.

The debate about whether a woman is permitted to be a pastor continues to intensify. Although there is scant historical precedent for it, many today claim that either men or women may be pastors. Throughout the centuries, Christian theologians have reflected on this issue, and the preponderance of them have concluded that the pastoral role is exclusively assigned to men. This has been the position of the Southern Baptist Convention since its earliest days, though a few Southern Baptist

churches have disagreed and installed women pastors. In the current discussions of gender roles, there is a need for clear thinking about what the Bible says.

The question requires careful analysis. Southern Baptists have claimed that their doctrinal positions were either taught in the Bible or were, at the least, not contrary to the explicit teachings of Scripture. And so it is here. This article addresses some of the larger concerns revolving about the issue of women serving as pastors. The exegesis of specific texts is a necessary starting point for the discussion, but the issue goes beyond isolated texts. There is a consistent pattern of biblical teaching on the subject. Our approach will be to identify these patterns and deal with the greater issues they raise. This discussion, which is necessarily brief, should be complemented by a serious and detailed exegesis of the relevant texts.

Biblical Texts

While the Bible does not support the practice of women serving as pastors, numerous passages speak clearly and forcibly to the inherent worth and value of women. Women in the New Testament engaged in significant ministry, performing valuable service in sometimes-difficult situations. This is readily seen in the Acts of the Apostles. Both Priscilla and Aquila spoke privately to Apollos at Ephesus (Acts 18:24-26), correcting his incomplete and flawed theology. Further, women clearly played a significant role in the work of the Apostle Paul. In his letter to the Romans, Paul identified sixteen significant helpers in ministry (16:1-16), and at least ten of them were women. Who knows what the health of the church at Philippi would have been were it not for Lydia (Acts 16:13-15), apparently a benefactor to the church, and others such as Euodia and Syntyche (Phil. 4:2-3)? And of course, women made a significant contribution to Jesus' ministry. Luke recalled with appreciation their financial support and company with Him (Luke 8:1-3).

The question at hand is not whether women are of equal value to men, nor is it whether they can minister effectively. It is, rather, the nature of their ministry in the church. More specifically, it is permissible for a woman to serve as senior pastor?

The place to begin in this, as in other biblical questions, is to ask, 'What does the Bible say?' Even a cursory reading of the pertinent texts reveals three important observations: 1) there were no known women pastors in New Testament times; 2) none of the instructions regarding church order include instructions for women pastors; and 3) some texts on church order explicitly forbid women to occupy that role. Paul, in 1 Tim. 2:12, states, 'I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man' (NIV) . This verse is introduced by a statement that women should learn 'in silence,' and it is followed by the statement that 'she must be silent.' The word silence means being possessed by a calmness of spirit and peaceful disposition. It is set as the opposite to 'teaching' and 'having authority over a man.' Paul does not expect that women will not or can not learn or teach (compare with Titus 2:3-5 and 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14,15). He states that they cannot teach or have authority over men. Thus, they cannot have a pastoral position, or perform the pastoral function, for that puts them in authority over men.

It is logical to conclude, therefore, that the issue would not be raised today if discussion of the parameters for pastoral leadership were confined to the biblical record.

Biblical Contexts

Biblical exegesis requires sensitivity to the context of a passage. When Scripture is taken out of its context, faulty conclusions and blurred perspectives result. Two matters impact this discussion significantly - the issues of literary context and cultural context. Let us first examine literary context. Each biblical writer directed his word to specific issues. The task of the biblical expositor is to determine the precise nature of those issues.

An example of the importance of correct contextual analysis occurs in Galatians 3:28. In explaining the meaning of justification, Paul said that in Christ there is 'neither Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female.' The outstanding social characteristic of Christianity is that ethnic ('Jew nor Greek'), economic ('bond nor free'), and gender ('male nor female') distinctions have no bearing on salvation, nor upon equal standing among all Christians. It is obvious that the context of the statement is its explanation of the impact of justification. This is a soteriological statement: it speaks to the doctrine of salvation. The teaching is that all believers, without regard to social distinctions, have equal access to God through Christ, and, consequently, are to be unified in the Body of Christ.

Near the end of his life, ten to fifteen years after the writing of the Epistle to the Galatians, Paul wrote to both Timothy and Titus, giving them pastoral instructions about how the church is to be organized. Both 1 Timothy and Titus provide clearly for a hierarchical approach to church order in which men rather than women were to occupy that role.

Some have pointed to Galatians 3:28 as justification for women serving as pastors. However, it is a misuse of Scripture to produce ecclesiastical patterns from soteriological passages! While Paul clearly affirms the equality of men and women in salvation, he equally and just as clearly affirms the priority of men in church leadership. There is no conflict. The contextual issue is crucial for an accurate exposition in this, as in all areas. Readers must exercise great care, therefore, to determine the nature of the issue under discussion in order to understand and apply the message relevantly today.

Organizational Patterns

Biblical teaching regarding church order goes hand in hand with its teaching regarding family order. Indeed the instructions for one often interrelate with instructions for the other.

One finds a similar tension in biblical teachings on family order that occurs in the doctrines of salvation and the church. Passages teaching the equality of women, reveal an important principle: in their standing before God and with each other, men and women are equal in several ways. First, they have equal value as persons (Gal. 3:28). Next, men and women have equal responsibility to communicate intimately in marriage relationships. This is seen in God's plan that marriage is to be a companionship of equals (Gen. 2:24). It is never biblically warranted for either the man or the woman

to depreciate the social, intellectual, physical, or spiritual companionship of a spouse. Finally, the Bible affirms the equal responsibility of men and women in propagating life (Gen. 1:28).

On the other hand, the Scriptures teach a hierarchy of responsibilities. The wife is to submit to her husband (Eph. 5:22). Some insist the introductory words 'submitting yourselves to one another' (Eph. 5:21) somehow tempers the command for wives to submit, but the explicit teaching of the passage is that wives are to submit; husbands are to love. This interpretation is confirmed by the clear parallel passage in Colossians (3:18), and the teaching of Peter (1 Peter 3:1), where submission is specifically commanded of the wife. The Greek term used for submission (hypotasso) suggests a voluntary submission based on a commitment to proper order. It does not imply an organization based on inability or inferiority. Indeed, this term seems to have been chosen by Paul to honor the unique value of the wife. In a beautiful tension, he affirms both value and order, both equality and subordination.

Blended Patterns

The models for family and church interrelate. They do so for two reasons. First, these are the two God-ordained institutions in which we find the spiritual resources for full Christian maturity. Second, these two institutions have unique ability to reveal God to a world blinded by sin. Family and church share the central place in God's economy.

The Scriptures frequently interrelate the family and the church. Paul clearly tied the two together in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. He addressed a disruption caused by some of the women in the church over hairstyles (often understood as 'head covering'). In a carefully reasoned argument, Paul expressed a theological conviction. If a married woman will not proudly wear a symbol of her right relationship to her husband, her familial 'head,' she forfeits her privileges of praying and prophesying in church fellowships. Her ministry in the church is directly linked to her submission to her husband. Paul's words are forceful. Married women have no right to participate in the church service if they wish to assume the prerogative of family headship and/or if they wish to act as though they were single rather than married. Here proper family order is a prerequisite to a woman's participation in the church.

Paul addressed men similarly in the pastoral epistles. He argued that no man has the privilege of leading the church as bishop (pastor) unless he meets certain qualifications. At least one relates to family order: the pastor must 'rule his family well' (1 Tim. 3:4; Tit. 1:6). Again, Paul's conclusion is clear and forceful. If a married man does not relate to his family properly, he forfeits his right to be pastor of the church. As before, proper family order is a prerequisite to pastoral leadership. The Bible intentionally interrelates church and family for both husbands and wives. The God-ordained leadership structure in the church is reflected in the family, and vice versa.

This understanding has implications that bear directly on the question of women pastors. Proper family relationships are a prerequisite to ministry in the church. Proper relationships require the husband to function as the head and the wife to willingly submit to his leadership. In the church, wives, submissive to their husbands, are not to 'have authority or be the teacher' over men (1

Timothy 2:12). This precludes a woman serving as pastor, for to do so would be to take the place of headship.

Theological Model

Let us move the discussion to another level. The complementary principles of equality and submission are built into human structures for good reason. These principles tell us about God, for in the Godhead we see both equality and submission!

The equality element derives from God's unity. The Old Testament affirms that there is one God, and He is to be worshiped (Ex. 20:3; Dt.6:4). Yet in both the Old and the New Testaments that unity expresses itself in a consistent plurality. Historically, orthodox Christianity has referred to this plurality as 'personalities.' We refer to the interrelationships within the Godhead as the doctrine of the Trinity. Each member ('personality') of the Godhead is equal. God the Father is not greater than God the Son or God the Holy Spirit. The same is true of each of the others. God the Son (Jesus) and God the Holy Spirit are not greater than the others. Equality in the Godhead is similar to the equality present among humans. Each shares the same value, the capacity for companionship, and cooperation in specific tasks. The three persons of the Godhead share deity. In that shared deity they find perfect companionship (communication and love). They also share a common mission, that of redemption. Each of the personalities is equal in essence.

Yet, reading the Bible one is confronted by a hierarchy existing among the three. Jesus acknowledged this when He declared in John 20: 21 'As the Father hath sent me, so send I you.' The Bible reveals a consistent pattern in its discussion of the tasks God undertakes. There are two primary tasks: creation and redemption. Regarding creation, God the Father planned it. Jesus spoke creation into existence and he maintains it. The Holy Spirit 'hovered upon the waters' (Gen. 1:2) to complete creation's process. In redemption the pattern continues. God the Father planned it and He elected to salvation. Jesus accomplished redemption by His death. The Holy Spirit applies the work of Jesus. Thus in the activities of God there is a division of labor and focus - what one writer called economic subordination.

The Godhead provides the unchanging model for the family and the church. There exists in each both essential equality and economic subordination. Equality is based on 'who each is,' a relational, interpersonal matter. Subordination is based on 'what each does,' a task oriented, functional matter. Both elements are present and are to be acknowledged in practice. Organizational subordination requires the recognition and appreciation of essential equality. Each is to value the worth of other. Communication and love is to characterize internal relationships, and each person must focus jointly on the task. When this occurs, there will be no jealousy, strife, contention, or claims of superiority or inferiority.

Summary: Should Women Be Pastors?

We have seen that the explicit texts of Scripture forbid women to serve as pastors. The biblical model for family roles supports that stance as well. It is not a matter of inferiority or worth, for all persons

are of equal worth in their persons, reflecting the essential equality of the Godhead. It is a matter of function. There is no compelling reason to encourage women as pastors, and there are many reasons not to do so.

Common Objections to this Teaching

Some object to these conclusions, suggesting the following:

1. The Apostle Paul did not really take Gal. 3:28 seriously.

Some reason that if he had, he would have allowed all persons to have the same functions in the church. Although this is a complex issue, some observations are in order. The most obvious is that Paul frequently addressed the issue of gender in the church. Sometimes his discussion was occasioned by specific problems that arose, and there is always a pattern of consistency in his solutions: they all involve the issue of women's subordination. The pattern is found in each of the passages that deal with church order.

There is further evidence that Paul treated the gender issue uniquely among relationships in the church. In the culturally complex mix of first century churches, there was constant vying for power and leadership. For example, the church at Rome was divided at least in part over the questions of Jew/Gentile prerogatives. The emperor Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome in a.d. 49. They were allowed to return in a.d. 52, slightly before Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans. Officially, the Romans disliked Jews, and racial tensions were most pronounced. These issues threatened the church. Paul, therefore, appealed to their equality in Christ. Another example is the explosive issue of slavery. Paul appealed to Philemon to forgive his runaway slave Onesimus as a brother in Christ. In his letter, he consistently carried out the soteriological implications of justification by faith.

On the other hand, when the problems involved church organization, Paul took a hierarchical approach. In the above examples, Paul never addressed the issue of whether Jews or Gentiles, or slaves or masters, could be pastors. Racial and economic circumstances did not matter. However, male/female relationships did have significance in organizational hierarchy. When Paul addressed them, he appealed to the model of the Godhead and expected that the church would apply both the dimensions of essential equality and economic subordination.

2. This is purely a cultural matter: Paul lived in a culture where women were expected to be subordinate.

This issue also has many dimensions. Most agree that Rabbinic Jews had a higher regard for men than for women, though it is possible to cite evidences to the contrary. While some elements of Paul's' teaching on this subject are consistent with his Rabbinic background, on other occasions he set aside unnecessary Jewish traditions for the sake of the growth of an indigenous church. For example, he was the champion of grace rather than law, and at his initiative, the Jerusalem council confirmed that Jewish traditions were not necessarily biblical sanctions (Acts 15:8-11). Paul defended the right of Gentiles to develop Gentile church patterns. Though he was able to see beyond his Rabbinic

background, yet he taught a functional hierarchy in the church. Why? Because his convictions were grounded in Scripture, and not simply inherited from his Jewish background.

A case illustrating this is found in 1 Corinthians 11. Some women in the church were imitating the religious leadership of the Greek women in the community. These Greek women seduced men for 'religious' sexual acts in the name of their gods. In their 'religious' service, these women disregarded marriage relationships. Some women at Corinth also took initiative in the worship services, disregarding their relationships with their husbands. In addressing that church problem, Paul had the perfect opportunity to commend a form of church order that allowed for women in pastoral leadership. It certainly would have been relevant to the issue. Paul's argument was instructive. Rather than arguing Jewish culture against Greek culture, he tied his organizational instructions to his understanding of the hierarchy of the Godhead. As the relationships among the Trinity are supra cultural, so are those in the Christian family and the Church of Jesus Christ.

3. The biblical prohibitions against women pastors are given because women were not as well educated as men.

In the passages already surveyed, two principles are evident. First, Paul did not choose to argue for men pastors based on education. Education never entered the discussion either as a problem or a solution. Women may have been less educated, but surely there were uneducated men in the churches of the first century as well. Yet, Paul did not explicitly forbid them to lead. It is extremely difficult to argue that education was at the heart of Paul's ecclesiastical instruction.

Further, in the problem of the women in 1 Corinthians 11, Paul linked his argument for church order on proper family relationships, not on education. He allowed women to pray and speak, but only if their relationships with their husbands were proper. There is little discussion in Scripture of the educational qualifications of the pastor.

4. It is easy for the man to hold to a hierarchical position since men are not required to submit.

This objection betrays a shallow perspective on submission. In fact, *everyone* is required to voluntarily submit to someone else, thus everyone is capable of understanding subordination. In 1 Corinthians 11 Paul assumed this principle as a starting point (1 Cor. 11:2). The wife submits to her husband. The husband submits to the Lord Jesus. Jesus submits to God. In His submission to God the Father, Jesus identified with both man and woman. In submission to the Lordship of Christ, men identify with the submissive role of women. Additionally, because each is called to submit to someone else, each should treat those who submit to them with the respect that allows for their complete fulfillment. These two principles combine to perfect community and understanding. Personal fulfillment is achieved in and through submission, and everyone is equal in the requirement for obedience.

5. The hierarchical organizational patterns are only necessary because of sin; that is, if people had never sinned, there would be perfect functional equality.

A corollary idea is that since Christians are to reverse the sinful order, the church ought to practice functional equality between the sexes, without regard to the culture of the world.

This argument fails to account adequately for Paul's treatment of the issue. It also fails to understand the theological model. True, Paul appealed to the sinful 'order' (condition) in a parallel discussion (1 Tim. 2: 14, although 2:13 refers to the creation order as well). Yet, he did not always do so. In 1 Cor. 11:3 he appealed to the order of creation, not to the condition of sin. He clearly associates the need for such hierarchy to creation, time, and our humanness; not to sin.

Again, Paul understood economic subordination to exist in the Godhead (1 Cor. 11:3). Since none of the personalities of God ever sinned, this order could not be because of sin. It was a task subordination appropriate for time - for the human perspective. In accepting the organizational hierarchy, the church is actually operating consistently with the Godhead. This is confirmed in that Paul appeals, not to sin, but to a 'pre-sin' order, the 'order of creation.' Thus, his argument is based on a situation that existed prior to creation, and the model prescribed in the Scripture is not the result of the sinful human condition.

Conclusion

Someday neither the church nor the family will operate with such economic subordination. Marriage is only an earthly economy (Matt. 22:30). The church is the bride of Christ and will have a corporate beauty in the image of God (Eph. 4:11-16; Eph. 5:25-27). Perhaps this, too, is analogous to the Godhead since someday 'God will be all in all' (1 Cor. 15:28). Prior to the eternal state, however, there is a demand for functional organization. The organization prescribed for churches pictures God's functional organization in the Godhead. Therefore, based upon these texts and models, a woman's spiritual service is to be in those roles assigned her by God. These do not include the role of pastor.

Of all people, Christians should accept God's will in the most Christian of all institutions: the church and the family. These matters call for careful and prayerful analysis, for there is more at stake than initially meets the eye!