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Women are not to be Pastors or serve as Elders of the Local Churches

The Word of God strongly opposes female leadership in spiritual things (1 Timothy 2:11, 1 Corinthians 11:3) for three reasons:

- The pattern for this Biblical prohibition of female leadership originates in the Garden of Eden, with the historical trend of the weak controlling the strong. The Bible calls the woman the “weaker vessel,” not because she lacks courage, but because she is dependent on the man (1 Peter 3:7).
- The woman sinned first, and became weak, while Adam had not yet sinned, and therefore was still strong. In the moment when Adam looked on the first sinner, she was weak, and he was still in a state of perfection.
- From the very beginning of man’s failure on planet earth, he was the victim of the weak controlling the strong.
- Women are always having the tendency to mislead the men. This pattern was set when the man took the fruit from the hand of the woman. Adam did not take the forbidden fruit from the tree. He took it from the hand of the woman.
- God did not call or appoint female pastors.

What does the Bible say?

Just a brief reading of pertinent texts in the New Testament reveals three important observations:

- There were no known women pastors in New Testament times.
- None of the instructions regarding church order include instructions for women pastors.
- Some texts on church order explicitly forbid women to occupy that role.
- The Apostles and the early church leaders did not assign women pastors.
- The primary requirement for pastors can not be fulfilled by women (that is being a husband to one wife).

Some Arguments

Passive consideration: The Apostle Paul did not really take Galatians 3:28 seriously and that is why he did not leave clear cut instructions. 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 or 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 implication in church 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.

Cultural Issue: This is purely a cultural matter in ancient time but no longer applicable today. 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 biblical hierarchy in the church because his convictions were grounded in the Scripture and not 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.

Educational Background: 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 very little discussion in Scripture of the educational qualifications of the pastor.

Submission Issue: 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.

The Issue of Sin: 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 Corinthians 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.

It was job 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.

Inferiority Issue: The only male Church leadership belittles women and considered them inferior. God is a God of order and balance. He has established order within the family (Gen. 3:16; 1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22-33; Col. 3:18-21) and the church (1 Tim. 2:11-14; 1 Cor. 11:8-9). Even within the Trinity there is an order, a hierarchy. The Father sent the Son (John 6:38) and both the Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 15:26). Jesus said, "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me," (John 6:38). It is clear that God is a God of order and structure.

In creation, God made Adam first and then Eve to be his helper. This is the order of creation. It is this order that Paul mentions in 1 Timothy 2:11-14 when speaking of authority. Being a pastor or an elder is to be in the place of authority. Therefore, within

the church, for a woman to be a pastor or elder, she would be in authority of men in the church which contradicts what Paul says in 1 Timothy 2:11-14.

Women are not considered inferior because they are not allowed to lead. Male leadership does not belittle women. Jesus was given his authority by God the Father (Matthew 28:18). He was sent by God (John 6:38). He said the Father was greater than He (John 14:28). Did this belittle the Lord Jesus? Women are of great value in the church and need to be used more and more according to the gifts given them.

Does the wife's submission to the husband mean that she is less than the husband? Does the woman's submission belittle her? Not having a place of leadership in the church does not mean a woman is less of a person, less important to God, or inferior. All are equal before God whether it is Jew, Gentile, free, slave, male, or female. But in the church, God has set up an order the same way he set one up in the family. The chain of command is Jesus, the man, the wife, and the children.

Divine Calling Issue: They argue that God also called women to the ministry. There are women pastors in the world who love their congregations and have stated that they are called by God to be pastors. Of course, I cannot agree with this considering the previous analysis of the biblical position. Instead, I believe they have usurped the position of men and gone against the norm of scriptural revelation. Additionally, those who state that they are called by God because of the great job they are doing and the gifts they have received are based on their *theology of experience* and not on biblical doctrine.

The issue is simple: are they submitting to the word of God or are they making the word of God submit to their desires? What about a Missionary Woman Who Establishes a Church? Scripture establishes the norm. As Christians we apply what we learn from the Word, to the situations at hand. So, what about the situation where a woman missionary has converted a group of people, say in the jungle somewhere, and she has established a church? In that church, she is then functioning as a pastor and teacher having authority over men in the church. Should she not do this?

First of all, she should not be out there alone. She should be with her husband or, at the very least, under the oversight of a church body in the presence of other women and men. Missionary work is not a lone endeavor to be handled by single women. Second, if in some highly unusual set of circumstances there is a woman in a lone situation, it is far more important that the word of God be preached and the gospel of salvation go forth to the lost than not. Whether it is male or female, let the gospel be spoken. However, I would say that as soon as there is/are males mature enough to handle eldership that she should then establish the proper order of the church as revealed in scripture and thereby, show her submission to it.

In a social climate of complete equality in all things, the biblical teaching of only allowing men to be pastors and elders is not traditional. Many feminist organizations condemn this position as old-fashioned and prejudiced. In addition, many Christian churches have adopted the "politically correct" social standard and have allowed women pastors and elders in the church.

Paul, in 1 Timothy 2:12, states, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man". 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 Timothy 1:5; 3:14, 15). He states that they cannot teach nor 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.

Discourse Summary:

- The lack of instructions for female pastors in the New Testament does not mean that the Apostle Paul treatment of issue is passive. It simply implies that women are not to be pastor.
- The issue of women subordination to their husbands is never obsolete.
- The issue of education as prerequisite for pastoral ministry was never an issue.
- The issue of cultural status was never an issue in the calling of the pastors.
- The issue of sin is never an issue in salvation, in heaven, in condemnation to hell and in pastoral ministry since the Lord Jesus Christ settles it once and for all.
- The issue of inferiority as results of submission under the divine establishment is a mark of those rebellious women who wanted to dominate their husband.
- The issue that God also called women is true but not to lead or pastor a church.

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 nor 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 speaking about the doctrine of salvation. The teaching is that all believers, without regard to social distinctions, have equal access to God through Christ and therefore, are to be unified in the Body of Christ.

Fifteen years after the writing of the Epistle to the Galatians, Apostle 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 undoubtedly for a hierarchical approach to church order in which men rather than women were to occupy that role.

Galatians 3:28 There is no Jew nor Greek, there is no slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:28 cannot establish and justify women to serve as pastors because it is misuse of the Scripture to produce ecclesiastical patterns from passages dealing with salvation. 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.

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). Both 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.

First of all, women are under-appreciated and under-utilized in the church. There are many gifted women who might very well do a better job at preaching and teaching than many men. However, it isn't gifting that is the issue, but God's order and calling. What does the Bible say? We cannot come to God's word with a social agenda and make it fit our wants. Instead, we must change and adapt to what it says.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, the Garden of Eden, and Adam and Eve. He put Adam in the garden and gave him the authority to name all the animals. Afterwards, God made Eve as a helper to Adam. This is an important concept because Paul refers to the order of creation in his epistle to Timothy when he discusses the relationship between men and women in the church context.

[1 Timothy 2:12-14](#) But I do not permit a woman to be teaching, nor to be exerting dominance over a man, but to be in quietness. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman, having been deceived, has come to be in transgression.

[1 Timothy 2:12-14](#) I don't allow a woman to teach or to have authority over a man. Instead, she should be quiet. After all, Adam was formed first, then Eve. Besides that, Adam was not deceived. It was the woman who was deceived and sinned.

This passage has several interesting areas of discussion, but for our purpose we will focus on authority. God initiated, established the authority structure for the church. The woman is not to have authority over the man in the church context. But this does not extend to the political-economic world. In the Old Testament Deborah was a judge in Israel over men. Also, in the New Testament, Phoebe played an important role in the church at Cenchrea (Romans 16). There is no doubt that women supported Paul in many areas and were great helpers in the church (Act 2:17; 18:24; 21:8). But what Paul is speaking of in 1 Timothy 2 is the relationship between men and women in the church structure, not in a social or political context.

When we look further at Paul's teachings we see that the pastor-overseer is to be the husband of one wife (1 Timothy 3:2) who manages his household well and has a good reputation (1 Timothy 3:4-5, 7). Deacons must be "men of dignity"(1 Timothy 3:8). Paul then speaks of women in verse 11 and their obligation to receive instruction. Then in verse 12, Paul says "Let deacons be husbands of one wife..." Again, in Titus 1:5-7, Paul says, "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, namely, if any man be above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward..." Notice that Paul interchanges the word 'elder' and 'overseer'.

In each case, the one who is an elder, deacon, bishop, or overseer is instructed to be male. He is the husband of one wife, responsible, able to "exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict" (Titus 1:9). We see no command for the overseers to be women. On the contrary, women are told to be "dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things" (1 Timothy 3:11). Why is it that it is the men who are singled out as the overseers? It is because of the created order of God that Paul references (Genesis 1-2; 1 Timothy 2:12-14). This is not merely a social custom that fell away with ancient Israel.

Additionally, in the Old Testament in over 700 mentions of priests, every single one was a male. There is not one instance of a female priest. This is significant because priests were ordained by God to hold a very important office of ministering the sacrifices. This was not the job of women.

Therefore, from what I see in Genesis 1-2, 1 Timothy 2, and Titus 1, the normal and proper person to hold the office of elder/pastor is to be a man. What about Galatians 3:28?

Galatians 3:28 There are neither Jews nor Greeks, slaves nor free people, males nor females. You are all the same in Christ Jesus.

This verse is often used to support the idea that women can hold the offices of elder and pastor because there is neither male nor female in Christ. The argument states that if we are all equal, then women can be pastors.

Unfortunately, those who use this verse this way have failed to read the context. Verse 23 talks about being under the Law "before faith came" and how we are brought closer to Jesus and have become sons of God by faith. We are no longer under law, but grace and we are "Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise," (v. 29). The point of this passage is that we are all saved by God's grace according to the promise of God

and that it doesn't matter who you are, Jew, Greek, slave, free, male, or female. All are saved the same way, by grace. In that, there is neither male nor female.

This verse is not talking about church structure or church leadership. It is talking about salvation "in Christ." It cannot be used to support women as pastors because that isn't what it is talking about.

1 Timothy 2:9-12 In the same manner also *[I want]* the women to be adorning themselves in sensible apparel *[or, behavior]*, with modesty and decency *[or, self-control]*, not with braided hair *[or, elaborate hairstyles]* or gold or pearls or very costly clothing, but_ with good works, which is fitting *[or, proper]* for women professing godliness. Let a woman be learning in quietness with all submission. But I do not permit a woman to be teaching, nor to be exerting dominance over a man, but to be in quietness.

Some argue that if we are to forbid women to be elders then the context of 1 Tim. 2:9-13 demands that we require women to not have braided hair, wear gold, or have costly garments. Since no one wants to put that sort of a demand on a woman (since it is cultural), then why should we also demand that they not be elders since it would logically follow that it was also a culturally based admonition?

The problem here is that multifaceted. First, the objection ignore what the scriptures plainly teach about the elder being the husband of one wife. Second, it fails to address the real issue of biblical headship residing in the male. Third, it fails to properly exegete the scripture in question.

In 1 Tim. 2:9-13 Paul tells us that women should be modestly dressed. He uses the example of then present day adornment as an example of what not to do, definitely culturally based assessment by Paul. Notice that Paul emphasizes good works and godliness as a criterion (1 Peter 3:2). This is not a doctrinal statement tied to anything other than being a godly woman in appearance as well as attitude.

In verse 11, Paul says that a woman should quietly receive instruction. Please note that "The word, *hepsychia*, translated "quietness" in 1 Timothy 2:11 and silent in verse 12, does not mean complete silence or no talking. It is clearly used elsewhere (Acts 22:2; 2 Thess. 3:12) to mean "settled down, undisturbed, not unruly. A different word (*sigmaom*) means "to be silent, to say nothing" (Luke 18:39; 1 Cor. 14:34)." Paul is advocating orderliness in this verse.

Then in verse 12-13, Paul says, "But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. For it were Adam who was first created, and then Eve." Notice that Paul directly relates the authority issue with the created order. He does not do this with the woman's dress code. Therefore, the dress code can be seen as cultural and the authority issue as doctrinal since the later is tied to the creation order and the dress code and authority issue are not, especially since they are separated by the conjunction "but" which is showing contrast, where two different things are going to two different direction.

God's word clearly tells us that the elder is to be the husband of one wife. A woman cannot qualify for this position by being female. Whether anyone likes it or not is irrelevant to the fact that this is what the Bible teaches. 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. 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. The correct approaches will result to proper identification of 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.

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.

In 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 Paul addressed a disruption caused by some of the women in the church over hairstyles ("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 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 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 and argued that no man has the privilege of leading the church as pastor unless he meets certain qualifications. At least one relates to family order: the pastor must "rule his family well" (1 Timothy 3:4; Titus 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 purposely correlates church and family for both husbands and wives.

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. 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 (Exodus 20:3; Deuteronomy 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. They also share a common mission, that of redemption of men. Each of the personalities is equal in essence.

The Lord Jesus 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. 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.

The Godhead provides the unchanging model for the family and the church. There exists in each both essential equality (without superiority or inferiority) and 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.

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.

Someday neither the church nor the family will operate with such subordination. Marriage is only an earthly affairs (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 women pastor. Whenever Christians insist on what they thought is right against the established truth of God, they are following the footstep of Lucifer in angelic rebellion.

Of all people, Christians should accept God's will in all areas of their lives in all divine established institutions of volition, marriage, family, church and government. These matters call for careful and prayerful analysis, for there is more at stake than your intellectual arrogance and selfish ambition.