Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:

https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology

https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb

PayPal https://paypal.me/robbradshaw

A table of contents for *The Evangelical Quarterly* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_evangelical_quarterly.php

Kevin Giles, "Women in the Church: a Rejoinder to Andreas Kostenberger," The Evangelical Quarterly 73.3 (July-Sept. 2001): 225-245.

EQ 73:3 (2001), 225–245

Kevin Giles

Women in the Church: A Rejoinder to Andreas Köstenberger

Kevin Giles, author of the article to which Professor Köstenberger has responded, is Rector of St Michael's Anglican Church, North Carlton, Australia.

Key words: New Testament; 1 Timothy; women; ministry.

Dear Professor Köstenberger,

Thank you for your very detailed response to my article. Rather than respond line by line to you I must be content to pick up and expound on key issues. Please be assured that I am not pursuing a 'Gospel subverting agenda' (215), nor am I endorsing without criticism the values of our age (212f.). I am a convinced evangelical Christian trying to live faithfully to the values the Gospel enshrines in a culture very different to biblical times. We differ on how this is to be done. Also be assured that I *do* think, 'good evidence' should be the basis for any claims made (207). Special pleading is 'not a substitute for proper engagement'. I write back because I am not convinced that you and other hierarchical-complementarians consistently adhere to these scholarly norms, as I will again seek to show.

First, let me take up your repeated charge that my doctrine of the Bible is defective (212, 215, 223). I would have thought we could have entered this debate accepting that we both held a high view of Scripture as fellow evangelicals and then concentrated on the actual issues that divide us. On many details we differ but most of these come back to one of three issues: 1. The interpretation of the key texts in the case for the permanent subordination of women; 2. whether or not some teaching in Scripture is 'time-bound' or 'culturally-limited'; and 3. how evangelical theology is *done*.

Surely in differing from you on the *interpretation* of the key texts in dispute, particularly 1 Timothy 2:9-15, I am not undermining the authority of Scripture. This would only be so if you identified *your interpretation* of any text with the authority that belongs to God's Word alone. If this is what you are arguing, then your position would be a

classic example of what the evangelical theologian Kevin Vanhoozer calls 'a fundamentalist hermeneutic'[1] – the claim that a human interpretation is what God himself is actually saying. In differing from you on the interpretation of the texts in contention I am not walking alone. Most evangelicals today, it would seem, have another interpretation of 1 Timothy 2[2] and of the few texts you quote in support of it, that they maintain is far more convincing. In regard to my claiming that some teaching in Scripture is 'time bound' or 'culturally limited' this is surely a principle on whih we are in agreement. In our culture Christians do not have to literally obey Jesus' command to wash one another's feet, or Paul's command that women should cover their heads in worship. In arguing that the exhortations to women to be subordinate are also 'culturally limited' teaching, not applicable in our age, I simply add another *possible* example of such teaching that we should be able to rationally debate without your accusing me of denying the authority of the Bible.

It seems to me that for you *doing* evangelical theology involves carefully selecting what you consider to be the key texts addressing the question before you and then interpreting these texts 'correctly'. This approach implies that the Bible is a compendium of texts saying much the same thing on any chosen topic that give definitive answers to the same questions in every age and culture. On this view (systematic) theology is nothing more or less than what the Bible is teaches on any matter. Thus you argue that the problem at issue can be resolved solely by 'careful exegesis' (210) and 'a sound reading of Scripture'(215), *i.e.* by asking 'what does the biblical text actually say?' (216f.). In contrast I do not believe exegesis of one or more texts can settle any theological dispute or question. The theological enterprise is far more complicated than you presume. The teaching of Scripture on any important matter is often diverse and not readily harmonised. Texts not only have to be interpreted: they must also be related to what else is in Scripture and 'weighed'. Thus exegeting James 2:18-26 in isolation, with ever-finer attention to the meaning of words and syntax, could never produce a full-orbed Christian doctrine of salvation by grace alone. Paul's teaching on justification by faith must be given precedence because of its 'theological weight'. But not only do evangelical theologians have to determine what is theologically primary and what is secondary in the diversity of bibli-

1 *Is There a Meaning in this Text? The Bible, the Reader and the Morality of Literary Knowledge*, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1998, 425.

2 The most convincing alternative interpretation, worked out in dialogue with the book you helped edit, is given by I. H. Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1999, 436-472.

cal revelation; they also have to ask, how what is said in the text might apply in their very different cultural context. This is an important question when dealing with social realities related directly to changing human culture: less so when the issue is essentially doctrinal. Exegesis makes it clear that Jesus commanded his disciples to wash one another's feet (Jn 13:14), but the evangelical theologian may rightly conclude that this command is not literally binding today. Thus my primary concern in *doing* theology is not the 'correctness' of the exegesis of one or more texts, but the adequacy of the hermeneutic. Am I grasping rightly what is central in the biblical revelation on the question before me, and am I rightly applying what the biblical writers said in their historical and cultural context in my very different historical and cultural context?

My review of *Women in the Church*

In answer to your criticisms of my review of *Women in the Church* I take up first your support of David Gordon's hermeneutical rule, 'When and if the particular instructions or exhortations are grounded in some theological or ethical norm or rationale, as opposed to some practical and local exigency, such as Paul's need for a cloak from Troas, then the norm continues to inform other situations'.[3] When we read on we discover that what Gordon is trying to establish is that virtually all the apostolic commands, directives or exhortations relating to the behaviour of Christians are binding on all believers at all times. In reply I point out that most of the examples he quotes from 1 Timothy are not directly applicable in our culture and we do not obey these commands. I cite the special care of widows and 'lifting hands' when praying to make my point. Most evangelicals do not seek to enforce these specific directives in our culture. Some in fact oppose lifting hands in prayer! You reply by saying, 'this is a curious argument indeed. For the contemporary church's disobedience toward one biblical command can hardly be used as the argument against the validity of another' (208). This reply side steps the issues I raise while conceding that most contemporary Christians do not obey these commands. Of course we are still to pray and care for those in need but the precise directives are not obeyed because in our culture they do not 'fit'. Next you dismiss my claim that most of the practical commands in 1 Timothy are not literally obeyed today by saying, 'Giles either does not understand Gordon's (and

3 *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15*, Grand Rapids, Baker, 1995,56

Schreiner's) distinction between normative principles and particular commands in Scripture or... he refuses to accept it' (210). 'Rightly applied', you add, 'this device enables the interpreter to discern Paul's underlying concern which is in each case of permanent validity'. I agree that behind most of the particular commands in Scripture lies a general norm or abiding principle, but to transpose this insight into a interpretative 'device' (your term) that allows one to claim that the command is being obeyed when it is not is to play with words. Furthermore, the postulating of the normative principle behind a command, when the biblical author does not give one, encourages Christians to move from interpretation of what is given in revelation to creative theologising. The choice of the normative principle is largely subjective. Given enough time and enough clever people you could find an underlying 'biblical principle', consistent with your own theology, that would allow you to claim obedience to Scripture on all things while rejecting 'the literal practice' (to quote your words). Assuming this 'device' is to be used I could see it as helping my case. I could argue that the 'normative principle' behind the 'particular commands' to women (and slaves) to be subordinate is that Christians should not cause offence to those outside the church by their behaviour in church (Col 4:5, 1 Tim 5:14, 6:1; Tit 2:5, 8, etc), in this case by subordinating women, when the culture we live in has emancipated them. In my context, I could then claim, I am obeying the 'normative principle' when I reject the 'literal practice' these commands envisage, arguing that today we are obeying the apostles when we subordinate ourselves to one another as Christians (cf Eph 5:21).[4] (I will take up the crucial matter of slavery later.)

I still think Gordon's claim that women's permanent subordination is based on 'the entire created and fallen order' is rather startling and theologically problematic, especially the second part of this assertion. In regard to women's subordination being grounded on the created order I note that Paul bases his command that women cover their heads when leading in prayer and prophecy (1 Cor 11:2-16) on an appeal to the creation stories, and yet virtually no one demands women cover their heads today. You reply that this proves nothing for in this passage Paul also bases his command on an appeal to 'the nature of things'. This is not a counter argument but an observation that actually supports my case. Paul can appeal to the creation

4 For a detailed critique of the 'literal command, normative principle' hermeneutic see the excellent article by Alan Johnson in E. D. Radamacher and R. D. Preus (Eds), *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy and the Bible*, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1984, 255-282. See also G. Fee and D. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1993, chapter 4.

stories as well as other *ad hoc* arguments to support commands no longer applicable in our age. In regard to the second part of Gordon's assertion, women's permanent subordination is based on the entire fallen order, you tell me that 'Paul is not advocating *following* the fallen order'. You then give your own contemporary hierarchical-complementarian interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:14. I take it you are seeking to distance yourself from Gordon's claim while not admitting it? Do you agree with what Gordon actually says, namely that women's subordination is based not only on the creation order but also on the entire fallen order? I thought Christ came to redeem us from the consequences of the fall.

I do not wish to enter into debate about the evangelical theologian, Joel B. Green's, guidelines for establishing what in Scripture is normative and binding in all cultures and what is not. I continue to think his suggestions are far more persuasive than those made by Gordon, and supported by you, but I agree they are not without their problems.

I do not have to say much in defence of my treatment of Schreiner's article for you say you are not prepared to defend his 'interpretations of 1 Tim 2:14 and 15. I do not deny Paul forbids women teaching (v. 12) or that he says women were created second (v. 13). I simply deny the prohibition is timeless, transcultural law and that women are permanently subordinated to men. I will, however, comment on your criticism of my point that harmonising 1 Cor 11:2-16, where Paul commends women leading in prayer and prophecy in the congregation, with 1 Tim 2:11-12, where Paul forbids women teaching in the congregation is not as easy as Schreiner suggests. You reply with the standard hierarchical-complementarian thesis that a sharp and clear distinction between prophecy and teaching must be made and the assertion that 'the basic principle underlying 1 Cor.11:2-6 is much the same as 1 Tim 2:9-15: the necessity of women's submission to men's ultimate leadership in the church'(210).

Let me begin with your second claim. Surely the one thing that is absolutely clear in this very difficult text in 1 Corinthians is that Paul endorses the verbal ministries of men and women in the congregation. They both may lead in prayer and prophecy when the church is assembled so long as women cover their heads and men do not. In contrast, in 1 Timothy 2 Paul forbids women from teaching in church, which you tell us means that they are not to preach in church. Paul's *main concern* in 1 Corinthians 11 is that when men and women lead in public worship they be clearly differentiated by their head coverings. Whether or not the apostle subordinates women to men in giving reasons for his primary concern is much debated and irresolvable because both the language and the logic of this passage

are unclear. Thus Paul says man is the ***kephale*** (source/origin of, or head over) the woman but then endorses the public ministry of men and women on an equal footing; next he says woman is the glory of man but then adds she has 'authority over her head' (11:10);[5] next he speaks of woman having her origin in man (Adam) 'nevertheless,' he adds now, 'woman is not independent of man or man of woman. For just as man came from woman so now man comes through woman' (11:11-12). What the apostle says in each case that could be taken to infer he believed women were subordinated to men he seems to counter by what he adds. On the basis of this evidence I think you very much overstate your case when you claim that like 1 Timothy 2:9-15 the 'basic principle underlying 1 Cor 11:2-16' is 'the necessity of women's submission to men's ultimate leadership in the church'.[6]

With prophecy you rightly correct me by pointing out that even if Luke makes teaching and prophecy one ministry (Acts 13:1) this does not define Paul's usage. I nevertheless stand by my main point that making a sharp distinction between prophecy and teaching is not possible.[7] It is true that Paul mentions a separate group called 'teachers' but it is also true that the ministry of the prophet and the teacher cannot always be clearly distinguished in practice. In 1 Corinthians chapter 14 Paul stresses that prophecy is a public verbal ministry addressing the mind. When comparing tongues and prophecy the apostle says that he would rather 'speak five words with my mind to *instruct* others than ten thousand words in a tongue' (14:18). A little later he says people 'learn' from prophecy (1 Cor 14:31). In Acts the term prophecy seems to cover all forms of authoritative preaching.[8] Luke even speaks of a group who are designated 'prophets and teachers' (Acts 13:1). In Rev 2:19 Jezebel the prophetess is condemned for *teaching* false doctrine. To give the standard reply, prophecy is not an authoritative ministry as it needs to be

5 In this verse Paul unambiguously speaks of an authority exercised by woman. See G. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1997, 518-524. T. Schreiner in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 135-136 gives seven reasons why what Paul actually says in this verse must mean just the opposite.

6 I am aware that 1 Cor 14:34-35 might be used to counter my interpretation of 1 Cor 11. However, if this passage is not an interpolation, as many believe, in any case it only forbids women asking questions in church, presumably because this was disrupting worship.

7 I argue these points in more detail in my, *Patterns of Ministry Among the First Christians*, Melbourne, Collins-Dove, 1989, chapters 5 and 6. See also my article 'Prophecy, Prophets, False Prophets', in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and its Development*, Illinois, IVP, 1997, 970-977.

8 See on this, 'Prophecy, Prophets', *ibid.*

'judged', whereas teaching is authoritative, does not convince. Should not teaching also be judged? In 1 Timothy Paul judges some teaching given at Ephesus to be erroneous. In Paul's list of charismatic ministries he mentions apostles and prophets before teachers (1 Cor 12:28, Eph 4:11). If apostles are 'first', prophets 'second' and teachers 'third' it is hard to believe that teachers are more authoritative in the church than prophets. The commonly heard hierarchical-complementarian argument that prophecy is less authoritative than teaching is surely a novel and dubious interpretation of biblical revelation. Before those opposed to women's emancipation corrupted the exegetical process theologians followed the logic of Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians chapter 14 and attributed to prophecy the highest status. For example, Charles Hodge concludes that leading in prayer and prophecy in church 'were the *two principal exercises in the public worship* of the early Christians.[9] For the reasons I have just set out I therefore stand by my claim that 1 Cor 11:2-16 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12 cannot be facilely reconciled. 1 Cor 11 endorses the public verbal ministry of men and women on an equal footing: 1 Tim 2 forbids the public verbal ministry of women, except for possibly praying.

This point reveals a fundamental difference we have in how we read the New Testament on women's ministry. While I give priority to Paul's clearly enunciated theology of ministry, you give priority to 1 Tim 2:9-16 which I take to be correcting a specific problem. Paul's theology of ministry is predicated on the idea that all ministry in the congregation is Spirit-given and the Spirit gives these ministries to 'all', men and women (1 Cor 12:4-11, Rom 12:4-8, Eph 4:11-12). His theology is matched by his practice. He endorses the ministry of a woman apostle (Rom 16:7);[10] women prophets (1 Cor 11:5); women co-workers (Phil 4:2-3, Rom 16:6,12); women house-church leaders (Col 4:15), and women teaching in church at least in Ephesus for some years until he brought it to a stop for some reason. On this reading 1 Cor 11:2-16, 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12 are regulative rulings dealing with women creating particular problems for some reason: not covering their heads when leading in prayer and prophesying; asking disruptive questions, and possibly giving false teaching authoritatively. If it is allowed that within Scripture some comments

9 *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, London, Banner of Truth, 1958, 208. Emphasis added.

10 I am pleased to note that Douglas Moo in his very fine commentary, *The Epistle to the Romans*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1996, 921-924, accepts that Junia, a woman, was an apostle. I smiled, however, when he goes on to say that because she was a woman she did not exercise 'authoritative leadership.' Does not Paul say that apostles are 'first' in the church and that Junia and her husband were 'prominent among the apostles.'

are weightier theologically than others then surely texts that give Paul's theological understanding of ministry should be taken as normative not his regulative rulings that speak to specific abuses? In my view your exegesis of 1 Tim 2:11-14 makes what is secondary in Paul primary.

I also stand by my criticisms of Yarbrough's essay. He tells us that the 'major impediment to applying what 1 'Timothy 2 says '(is) Western culture's views on women, the putative meaning of Galatians 3:28 and an alleged tie between women's subordination and slavery'.[11] I still find it problematic that in a book supposedly giving the exegetical basis for the permanent subordination of women, and in an essay specifically contesting egalitarian interpretations of Gal 3:28 and the connecting of the apostolic exhortations to women and slaves to be subordinate that not one line is given to exegesis. I do not even concede your claim that I 'seriously misrepresent Yarbrough's position' (213), even though I admit I added the pronoun 'which' to my quote without indicating this by putting it in brackets. True, immediately after saying 'disaster has overtaken women' Yarbrough goes on to speak about the increase in divorce that we all regret but he continues for four pages with a whole catalogue of negative social evils all of which he attributes to women's lib.[12] I do not ignore the 'negative social consequences entirely' of the modern women's movement as you charge. I do say, 'women's emancipation has not been without its problems' but I do not think like Yarbrough that it has brought unmitigated 'woe to women and children'.[13] As far as I am concerned I think that all the authors of *Women in the Church* are far too jaundiced about the modern western world and in particular about the consequences of women's lib. Every age and every culture has its strengths and weaknesses.

I also stand by my comments on Brown's essay. It is a polemical attack on fictitious opponents, not a work of serious scholarship. I think to suggest that those who advocate the emancipation of women are 'gnostics' is both inaccurate and unhelpful.[14] His connecting of 'egalitarianism and evolutionism'[15] made me smile. Must 'Bible believing Christians' not only hold to the permanent subordination of women but also to creation in seven literal days about seven thousand years ago? Doriani's essay raises the issue of the historical nature of the contemporary hierarchical-complementarian case for the per-

11 *Women*, 159.
12 *Ibid*, 162-166.
13 *Ibid*, 171.
14 *Ibid*, 201.
15 *Ibid*, 205.

manent subordination of women, which I will now deal with as you do separately.

'Historic' or not

It seems to me that as I read *Women in the Church* one of the central arguments of this book is the claim that it represents the 'historic position' on the Bible's teaching on women. You contrast yourselves with 'progressives' who give 'novel' interpretations of key texts. The longest chapter in the book by Doriani is given over to establishing this claim. Yarbrough calls the interpretation given of 1 Tim 2:9-15 in your book, 'historic exegesis'.[16] Brown castigates 'progressives' for abandoning about a quarter century ago the 'self evident' interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:12 and 1 Cor 14:34 held for about eighteen centuries.[17] In your own epilogue you appeal to 'the virtually universal agreement on the role of women in the church by Christian believers from a variety of communions in the nineteen centuries of the Christian era'[18] as support for the exegesis given of the Timothy passage. Doriani says the aim of the book is 'to confirm and defend the straightforward and grammatical-historical reading' of 1 Timothy 2.[19] In reply to me you do two things. You first assert that the editors of the book only 'claim that their position is *generally* in line with the historic view' (205 and similarly 216 and 224) and then categorically dismiss my reading of the history of interpretation by saying it is 'repeatedly and demonstrably inaccurate' (217).

On the first matter I do not think you can claim your position is 'generally in line with the historic view' when you contradict it on almost every detail. This historic view speaks of the 'superiority' of men and the 'inferiority' of women; insists that women not be allowed to exercise authority or speak in *any* public setting (not just the church); subordinates women to men firstly on the basis of the chronological order in which they were created and secondly on the basis that women are more prone to sin and deception. My view is that both the competing contemporary theologies of women seen among evangelicals today 'have both evolved and been refined in the last thirty years'.[20] The impact of the post 60s women's movement has been so profound that most western Christians have felt led to abandon the historic position. In the last quarter of the twentieth century

16 *Ibid*, 191.
17 *Ibid*, 197.
18 *Ibid*, 209.
19 *Ibid*, 257.
20 *EQ*, 72/3, 215.

two new theologies of the sexes have slowly emerged among evangelicals and are now clearly delineated in our opposing integrated viewpoints. I can openly and honestly admit that my egalitarian-complementarian position is 'novel' and 'progressive'. However, your side seems unable to admit that your position is novel. Not only do you reject the basic tenets of the historic position but also you utilised role theory to interpret all your key texts, introduce a theology of a constitutive and prescriptive *social order* given in creation to undergird the permanent subordination of women, argue that women are subordinated only in the home and the church and imply that sexual differentiation necessitates the subordination of women, four things that are entirely 'novel'.

You cite two examples to show that my history of interpretation is 'repeatedly and demonstrably inaccurate'. You dispute my claim that Chrysostom and Calvin interpret 1 Tim 2:9 to be allowing that women lead in prayer in church. Although this issue is not central to my argument that the essential elements of your position are in opposition to historic exegesis, I will defend my point. I see from your note 32 that we are agreed Chrysostom and Calvin both interpret Paul to be giving women advice on how to dress *when they pray* in v 9, having just told men how to behave *when they pray* in v 8. Your criticism is that I inaccurately claim that Calvin and Chrysostom interpret Paul's words as advice to women on how to dress *when they lead in prayer in church.* It is possible to read Calvin's comment on v 9 as simply directing women on how to dress when praying silently and privately but when Calvin's words are set in context this is extremely unlikely. At the beginning of his remarks on 1 Timothy chapter 2 the great reformer says that here Paul 'deals with public prayer';[21] in commenting on Paul's directive that men are to lift up 'holy hands' Calvin says 'this custom has been practiced *in worship* in all ages';[22] in explaining why Paul commands men to pray without 'anger or argument' Calvin says the apostle wants men of all races 'to pray *together* with one heart';[23] and having concluded his comments on what women should wear when in prayer Calvin says 'having dealt with dress, he (Paul) now goes onto speak of the modesty women ought to show *in the public assembly.*'[24] On the basis of this evidence I think my claim can stand. I also think my reading of Chrysostom can be defended. He may have thought that Paul was only advising women

21 *The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians and the Epistles of Timothy, Titus and Philemon*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1964, 205 and also 206 lines one and two.
22 *Ibid*, 214.
23 *Ibid*, 215.
24 *Ibid*, 216.

on what to wear when praying privately and silently, whereas on other matters in this chapter he has a church setting in mind, but it seems most unlikely. I note that I. H. Marshall in his recent commentary, *The Pastorals Epistles*,[25] also argues that Paul in v 9 is speaking of women praying aloud in church. He notes that this interpretation has strong historical support and among those he quotes he mentions Chrysostom and Calvin. Marshall commends Spicq's view that women were 'being called to pray in contrast to Talmudic Judaism'.[26] Quinn and Wacker in their large and erudite 1999 commentary, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, likewise think a contrast is being made with the synagogue where women were forbidden to lead in prayer and the church were they were encouraged to do so.[27]

Arguing about the interpretation of 1 Tim 2:9 is in any case irrelevant. In 1 Cor 11:4 Paul explicitly speaks of women leading in prophecy and prayer in the congregation. I notice on other points in my brief history of exegesis, the ones of most weight and importance, you seem to concede my case. What you are at pains to do in fact is to *distance* your position from the truly historic position that unanimously argued that men were 'superior', women 'inferior'. In other words you want to take a novel path and at the same time claim that it is historic.

Novel or not?

Next you take up the three matters that I argue are completely novel in the contemporary hierarchical-complementarian case for the permanent subordination of women: orders of creation theology, role theory and obfuscating language. I argue that the use of these three things to interpret Scripture distorts and corrupts the exegetical process. In using these human constructs as a filter through which Scripture is read exegesis becomes eisegesis. In reply to me you do not dispute the evidence I cite to show that these three things are novel to your case for the permanent subordination of women. You simply side step direct engagement with the facts. Thus in responding to my claim that the 'orders of creation theology' is a modern theological construct without biblical support you do not engage at all with my well-substantiated arguments. Instead in a few lines you dismiss all that I say by claiming that I am rejecting not the theology of hierarchical-complementarians but Paul's own theology. This is patently not the case. I am in part seeking to assert Paul's own theol-

25 *Op cit.*, 437, 446-447.
26 *Ibid*, 417.
27 *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 215-216.

ogy of the new creation in Christ in opposition to a socially conservative theology of a fixed and unchanging social order given in creation that I argue has no biblical support. In my essay I outline the development of this theology of creation orders that has its roots in Lutheranism. I point out that after a flowering of this theology of the orders in the 1930s it is now largely rejected because it contradicts the Bible's eschatological perspective, (this suggests the ideal lies in the future not the past), and because whenever it has been used it has been utilised to support the domination of one group of people by another. In your case you have another problem. By definition a theology of constitutive and prescriptive social order established in creation envisages each order as embracing the whole of creation. *Orders of creation* are to be contrasted with the *orders of redemption* that apply only to Christians in the home and the church. In the post 70s novel hierarchical-complementarian case you want to have the constitutive social order given in creation apply only to the home and the church. This means your appeal to creation order theology proves too much. In truth it subordinates women to men in every sphere of life. It implies the historic position that women are excluded from exercising authority in the home and in any public setting. You simply fail to interact with this argument at all. I suggest in my *EQ* article that this observation leaves hierarchical-complementarians with only two options. The first is to abandon constitutive orders of creation theology altogether. I recommend this because the whole idea of a fixed social order given in creation is contrary to biblical teaching and when introduced subverts the exegetical enterprise. The other alternative is to follow the logic of your own chosen orders of creation theology and argue that women should be subordinate to men in the home, the church *and in all of society.* You would need to be brave indeed to follow this path.

I also point out that the expression, 'the order of creation', can be used in two very different ways: *chronologically* and *constitutively.* In the past exegetes and theologians argued that God made women 'inferior' to men, this being indicated by the fact that they were created chronologically second. They reasoned that the one who was created first, man, is pre-eminent, the one who was created second is 'inferior'. This idea can be inferred – it is not stated explicitly – in just one verse in the Bible, 1 Tim 2:13. You condemn me for saying this argument has no logical force (219) but you fail to remind your readers that I am only following Calvin in drawing this conclusion. In your book virtually nothing is made of the chronological order-in-creation argument. Doriani even says that 'for complementarians' the expression the order of creation 'refers beyond chronological order to

God's sovereign decree'.[28] You and your fellow hierarchical-complementarians base your whole case for the permanent subordination of women on the idea that in creation God *constituted in perpetuity* an hierarchical social order in which man is set over woman. Your rejection of my argument that the first Eden does not give the ideal but the future Garden of Eden, the new heaven and earth, is unworthy of such a good scholar. To believe this does not imply as you assert that I think, 'the devil and sin are not active today' (219). Nor does it imply that I embrace 'an over-realised eschatology, not uncommon with those holding the egalitarian position' (219). In claiming that the Bible is orientated to the future, not the past, I am assuming what the best contemporary New Testament scholars teach.[29] One of the unifying themes of Scripture is its eschatological perspective. Your point about marriage actually proves my point not undermines it. Yes, God instituted marriage in creation yet Jesus, as you point out, says in heaven there will be no marriage. The ideal, the perfect fellowship of all people together, will do away with the need for marriage. Perfection lies in the age to come, not in the past in the first Eden.

In regard to role theory I argue that before the 70s no one ever suggested men and women were differentiated on the basis of God-given roles. The word 'role' is a sociological term that when used as an interpretative device undermines the Bible's own view that men and women are differentiated by their God-given natures. What is more, the term is not used in hierarchical-complementarian literature as it is in sociology to speak of functions people perform but rather of the allocation of power. The only 'role' that constitutes a man is 'headship' and the only role that constitutes a women is subordination. If women must *always* take the subordinate role this implies that they lack something given only to men, in someway they are inferior to men. Differing roles do not imply inferiority but once the note of permanency is introduced and competency is excluded this implication cannot be avoided. One's sex determines what one can do. My quote from Neuer that role theory should be given up 'in the cause of truth' simply sums up my opinion based on the evidence I give. In any case he does not object to the 'shallow use of the term role' as you say. He correctly sees that when role theory as such is used it subverts what the Bible is actually saying. He rightly rejects it entirely. I found particularly interesting your claim that 'the concept role is not

28 *Women*, 262.

29 I give a short list of those who argue this case in my *EQ* article, part 2, 199, n 21. I list Calvin as an older commentator who says this clearly. See also my *Created Woman*, Canberra, Acorn, 1985, 23-26.

integral to the non-egalitarian understanding of 1 Tim.2:9-15'. If this is so why then does every contributor to your book interpret the passage in terms of differing roles? It seems to me that role theory is integral to the contemporary and novel hierarchical position. It is by this means that you can argue that men and women are true equals being differentiated solely by the roles allocated to them by God? The only alternative I can see is to return to the historic position and argue that women are differentiated from men because God made them 'inferior'.

In regard to language again you make no attempt to refute what I say. Yours is a case rightly or wrongly whose effect is to uphold male hegemony and its corollary women's permanent subordination. You and other hierarchical-complementarians avoid saying this. When words and turns of phrase are carefully crafted to further a social ideal, in this case male hegemony, and make what is being claimed sound acceptable this is language used in the service of ideology. When ideology governs any debate communication breaks down.

It is obvious that a predetermined agenda is controlling the use and meaning of words when we reflect on the use of the word 'difference'. In the hierarchical-complementarian literature the claim is repeatedly made that egalitarians deny the differences between the sexes. Your reply to me that 'no one accuses egalitarians of denying all differences between the sexes' does not bear scrutiny. Robert Yarbrough charges evangelical 'progressives' of seeking to 'obliterate our God-given gender distinctions'.[30] Harold Brown accuses egalitarian evangelicals of a 'desire to establish total sexual equivalence' (whatever that might be?).[31] Doriani says, 'evangelical egalitarianism rests on an overrealised eschatology that leaps from Acts 2 to the *perfect equality* and freedom the saints will enjoy in heaven'.[32] And in your own epilogue you say your main concern is to affirm 'functional gender distinctions in church and home', in the face of a '*gender-blind*, discrimination-free society',[33] that you believe most other evangelicals now accept. Why do you and other hierarchical-complementarians make these unfounded charges? I never heard or read in over thirty years in this debate an egalitarian-complementarian ever question, let alone deny, our God-given differences. 'Progressives' are united in affirming God-given differentiation, God has made us men and women.

It seems that in the hierarchical-complementarian case the word

30 *Women*, 193.
31 *Ibid*, twice, on p 200 and p 199.
32 *Ibid*, 257.
33 *Ibid*, 211.

'difference', like the word 'role', is carefully chosen to establish male hegemony and make the permanent subordination of women sound acceptable to modern ears. Who could object to the suggestion that women and men are different and have complementary roles? It is only when we analyse what is actually being argued that we see the problems. The defining 'roles' and the defining 'difference' between men and women is 'headship' for men and subordination for women. For the hierarchical-complementarian the differences between the sexes can only be maintained when it is agreed men are to exercise authority, women are to obey. In this literature the word 'difference' becomes a code word with a meaning found in no dictionary. Every time a hierarchical-complementarian says men and women are 'different' he actually means men are to lead, women are to be subordinate. Thus when he hears an egalitarian-complementarian rejecting the permanent subordination of women his decoder gives him the message, 'the difference between the sexes is being rejected'.

I am sorry, I do not feel any need to resile from my charge that the language and the terminology that hierarchical-complementarians have developed over thirty years for what is in all truth the case for the permanent subordination of women is ideological in nature. It is carefully constructed to make the position sound fair and equitable and mask what is really being demanded of women by appeal to the Bible.

Proof-texting

Yes, I think your position is proof-texting. You major on one text, 1 Timothy 2:11-14, drawing in two or three disparate texts in support, and ignore or minimise everything else in Scripture that would count against your case. Your proof-text and the other apostolic texts you quote you insist are timeless truth whereas most other evangelicals see them simply as advice to first century women living in a patriarchal culture. Not surprisingly therefore the path you prescribe for women in the late twentieth and early twenty first century does not seem to 'fit' the cultural realities of the world in which God has placed us. Good theology is always characterised by its ability to give meaning and direction to Christians in the social and cultural context in which they find themselves. Your 'theology' does not do this. The evangelical theologian's charter today is to speak to a culture where women are communal leaders, do not need male superintendence and enjoy egalitarian marriages. This involves far more than the reiteration of what the Bible may or may not be saying in a few texts.

In appealing to the Bible the evangelical theologian, I have already argued, must determine what is theologically primary and secondary in Scripture. In making 1 Tim 2:9-16 'the central biblical text'[34] that discloses the mind of God by implication you make secondary the canonical introductory affirmation about the sexes in Gen 1:27-28, which undelines their equality of dignity and authority, the teaching and example of Jesus in regard to women and Paul's theology of non-gender specific ministry set out in 1 Cor 12-14, Rom 12:3-8 and Eph 4:11-12 and his general practice that endorses women apostles, prophets and house-church leaders. In doing this one proof text is made to silence what for me is theologically primary in Scripture.

An important test of the validity of what may be rightly called theology, especially when it seeks to define social obligations or relations, is whether or not what is stated corresponds to a Christian ethic firmly based on Scripture. Endorsement of your position cannot be given because your conclusions based so heavily on 1 Timothy 2:9-15 demean women. Subordinating women simply because they are women suggests they lack something given only to men, the ability to be leaders and teachers. In our age any attempt to subordinate women is rightly judged to be sex-based discrimination that is unjustifiable and unjust. In recent times as evangelicals have begun to read liberation theology, albeit critically, concerns about your theology have heightened. These writers tell us that when the Bible is quoted to preserve privilege and power, as appears to be done in your case, 'a hermeneutic of suspicion' is needed.[35] Once this hermeneutic is utilised your transcultural and forever binding interpretation of the Timothy passage becomes even more questionable.

Evangelical theology, deeply rooted in the whole breadth of biblical revelation, invariably makes sense of the world in which we find ourselves. Your view of women based on your interpretation of the Timothy passage simply does not make sense of present day social life. Most of us have discovered that affirming equality of dignity and equality of opportunity for women has enhanced life. Overall it has made things better for men and women, despite any problems this monumental social change has created. Many have found that the more equal a marriage is, the more rewarding it is for both parties. Regarding one another as full human beings, equally responsible for the marriage and the family and major decisions as challenges to be worked on together until a common mind is reached builds better marriages than the male 'head-over' model you advocate. In the life

34 *Women*, 209.

35 See on this the evangelical theologian, Kevin Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning*, 162-182.

of the church many have also discovered a new depth of spiritual and emotional communal health when men and women, affirming their God-given gender differences, share equally in leading and teaching in the congregation. Mature and well-adjusted husbands seem to enjoy having their wives giving a lead. It is only the immature who get jealous and worried that they are not getting all the limelight. The male ego is very delicate.

In concluding your rejection of my claim that your case is built on one proof text you say 'most importantly Giles does not deal with the question of why Jesus appointed twelve *men* as his apostles' (221). You seem to have missed footnote 48 in my second article, p, 208. In my very brief comments on Jesus' attitude to women I thought this brief comment would be sufficient. I wrote, 'Appeal to the mute historical detail that the twelve apostles were all male proves nothing as has been pointed out *ad nauseam.*' In Jesus' day men were almost invariably communal leaders so we would expect he would follow custom on this as he did on many other things that are no longer normative in our age. For example, he usually traveled by foot. The point is that he did not build anything on his choice of men as his apostles and nor should we unless we do not want to impose our views on Scripture. Furthermore and more importantly, first century Jews generally thought the witness of women was valueless.[36] Possibly this is why Paul does not mention the women witnesses of the resurrection in 1 Cor 15:3-10, although all the Gospels make them the first witness of the resurrection. It is Luke who develops a theology of the twelve apostles and for Luke the twelve are pre-eminently 'witnesses' of the life, ministry, death and especially the resurrection of Christ (Acts 1:2-22; 2:32; 3:15; etc). If this was their primary work then we see at least one other practical reason as to why Jesus chose twelve men to be the first apostles.

To insist that 1 Timothy 2 should be read simply in terms of what 'is stated in the text' (223) seems to me to undermine the most basic rule of good exegetical method, consider first the context. The most important context for theological interpretation being of course the whole Bible. You may claim that my contextual reading of the passage negates what Paul is commanding in this one text, but I would say in reply that I am only trying to make sense of this exceptional text in the light of the whole drift of Scripture. I am seeking to read it in terms of a biblical theology of the sexes predicated on the primary biblical affirmation that men and women alike are made in the image and likeness of God and to both is given authority to be God's vice

36 Josephus states this explicitly (*Ant.* 4:219) as does Rabbi Akiba (M.Yeb.15:1).

regents on earth, an affirmation Jesus seems to have embraced and on which Paul basis his clearly enunciated theology and practice of ministry, unless unusual circumstances dictated otherwise.

Now to slavery

You raise the matter of slavery several times thereby implying rightly, I believe, that this issue takes us right to the heart of where we differ. You and your fellow hierarchical-complementarians want us to believe that 1. the Bible views slavery as doubtful at best and sinful at worst and that most Christians in the past have believed this; 2. the exhortations to women and slaves to be subordinate are of a differing nature: the first give God's ideal and are permanently binding, but the second only regulate a sinful human practice; and 3. The slave-master relationship and the employer-employee relationship are analogous.

In contrast I claim that:

1. Virtually all theologians until the late eighteenth century believed the Bible endorsed and legitimated slavery. The apostolic fathers, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Whitfield, Jonathon Edwards, Dabney, Thornwell and Hodge all argue that the Bible allows slavery and so they supported the institution. As late as 1957 Professor John Murray of Westminster Theological Seminary was still insisting that the Bible 'recognises not only the fact of slavery but its legitimacy'.[37] Modern critical studies of slavery in the Bible are agreed that the Bible speaks positively about slavery, not once suggesting it is an evil. They, however, assume this biblical material on slavery is not prescriptive for our age but descriptive of another age.

2. The situation with the parallel apostolic exhortations to slaves and women to be subordinate is much the same. Until the twentieth century virtually all theologians and exegetes thought that these instructions were equally binding being of the same nature. Again modern critical studies of the 'household codes', the passages where the parallel exhortations to women and slaves are found, are agree that they are of the same nature. However, today they are not thought to be prescriptive. They are understood simply as advice to those living in a culture where slavery and women's subordination were cultural norms.

3. Ancient slavery and modern day working for a wage, no matter how demanding, are to be contrasted rather than compared. The essence of slavery was that the slave was owned by the master. A slave by definition was human 'property'. This made possible the abuse of

37 *Principles of Conduct*, London, IVP, 102.

slaves in every way imaginable. No modern day worker, no matter how poorly they are treated, is the equivalent of the slave. They are not owned as property. An employee cannot be sold like one would sell a calf and a woman worker cannot be sexually used at her employer's discretion.

Why is it that we come to opposite conclusions about slavery when we are looking at the same body of evidence? It is not that you or any other hierarchical-complementarian have carefully assessed the evidence using a critical and scholarly methodology and shown what I say is wrong. Neither you nor Yarbrough in *Women in the Church* contest the evidence as such. You simply assert that your doctrine of Scripture cannot allow what I claim and condemn me for what I suggest. It is patently clear that you are bound to read the slavery material in your way to preserve your doctrine of Scripture and your case for the permanent subordination of women. In allowing this agenda to determine how you interpret the Bible you once again abandon all the strictures of a scholarly critical methodology. In fact it would seem you fall headlong into the 'Cartesian' error, the very error you claim is my sin. If you contest what I say about slavery then please concentrate on the facts in dispute not on what you think are the inadequacies of my doctrine of Scripture.

On the separate question, whether this understanding of slavery (and women) can be reconciled with an evangelical doctrine of Scripture, I would say I think they can. That the biblical writers accepted the social and scientific presuppositions of their age raises no problems for me. Indeed it is what I would expect, as I believe God's revelation is given in historical form. I thus come to Scripture assuming that the biblical writers thought that slavery and the subordination of women were acceptable to God, as did every one else in that age. There were no movements for the abolition of slavery in antiquity. Slavery in the ancient world served a positive social purpose. At that time it was morally preferable to make slaves of those defeated in war rather than killing them. There were no prisoner of war camps. It was also better that destitute people sell themselves into slavery rather than starve to death. The subordination of women also served a positive social purpose. Women needed male protection and material support. In that cultural setting slavery and the subordination of women were simply part and parcel of everyday life. Whether or not this social ordering was moral or just was never raised.

It was only in the late eighteenth century as cultural values changed that for the first time in human history people came to think that slavery was evil and only in the twentieth[38] century that people began

38 This issue I know first came into debate in the 19th century.

to think that subordinating women as a class demeaned them. God's work in history changed how people perceived their brothers and sisters. In this new social context Christians began reading the Bible with new 'glasses'. They saw in Scripture what had hitherto been hidden to them. Alongside the many texts that could, and were for long centuries, read to endorse slavery and the subordination of women there were other texts which called into question all forms of human domination that presumed that God had appointed in perpetuity one group of people to rule and another to serve. The most important liberating text is found in the first chapter of the Bible as a canonical prologue to all that follows. Here we are told that every man and women alike is made in the image and likeness of God and given authority (Gen 1:27-28). In the New Testament Jesus' teaching that God loves all people alike (Jn 3:16) and his insistence that he had come to set captives free and lift up the lowly (Lk 1:52; 4:18; Jn 8:36) also sound the note of liberation. I, like most Christians, now take these texts in my cultural context to have theological primacy.

It is therefore simply not fair to accuse me of 'content criticism' as if I freely selected what I accept in Scripture and what I do not. In regard to slavery and women my position is entirely directed by what I believe is theologically primary in Scripture, and by a mainstream evangelical hermeneutic.[39] I do not deny that there are texts that subordinate women to men but I see these simply as practical advice to women living in a patriarchal culture: texts of exactly the same nature as those once read to endorse slavery. Where we differ is in our hermeneutic. You sidestep the fact that the Bible can be, and has been for long centuries, read to endorse slavery, never once condemning the institution, by 'careful exegesis'. This involves giving an interpretation to the Biblical teaching on slavery unknown for eighteen centuries, and rejected by critical scholars today. In contrast I come to Scripture totally open to hear what is in this historical text and when I have concluded to the best of my ability what that is, I then ask the question, how does this now speak to in my very different cultural context? I will leave our readers to conclude which approach is most respectful of the biblical text.

I must finish. I hope this rejoinder makes even clearer where we actually differ and the factual questions raised by your position that need answering.

Your brother in dissent, Kevin Giles

---

39 See again Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning?*

Abstract

The article is a reply to Professor Köstenberger's rejoinder to the original article; it takes up in particular the question whether the view of the contributors to *Women in the Church* is 'historic' or 'novel', the problem of hermeneutics, and the relevance or otherwise of the problem of the church's changing attitudes to slavery.

THE GOLDSWORTHY TRILOGY

Graeme Goldsworthy

Gospel and Kingdom

In an engaging and straightforward style, Goldsworthy explains the nature and contents of the Old Testament as seen within the Bible as a whole, and sets out clear principles for interpreting it accurately for today.

Gospel and Wisdom

Neglected in today's climate, wisdom is a significant concept in both the Old and New Testaments. Applying the method of biblical theology, the author aims to place wisdom literature in its Christian context, firm in his conviction that wisdom is a key dimension of the Christian life and finds its centre in the person of Christ.

The Gospel in Revelation

In his characteristically pithy and lucid style, Goldsworthy offers here a fresh understanding of the purpose and contemporary relevance of Revelation, arguing that the gospel is the key to unlocking its meaning. This exemplary study is further informed by the author's knowledge of Old Testament literary idiom and structure

Graeme Goldsworthy, formerly Lecturer in O.T.Studies at Moore Theological College Sydney, is now Associate Minister of St Stephen's, Coorparoo, Brisbane

ISBN 84227-036-2 / 197x130mm / p/b / £7.99

Paternoster Press

PO Box 300, Carlisle, Cumbria CA3 0QS, UK