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He concludes on the same triumphant note:

‘Now to him who is able to establish you by my Gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all [p. 274](#) nations might believe and obey him—to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen!’

For further reading:

Besides introductions to the standard commentaries on Romans, one may find information about Paul’s context, as well as full bibliographies, in the following works:

1. F. F. Bruce, *New Testament History*, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1972.
2. C. N. Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, Oxford, 1939.
3. *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, Oxford, 1970.

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The Human Couple A Biblical Perspective

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To speak of the human couple is to speak of a fundamental factor in every interpersonal relationship: sexual duality. Sexuality (in its masculine and feminine forms) is part of the very essence of the human being and inevitably conditions the way in which we relate to each other. God did not create asexual human beings; he created the man and the woman. And he designed each one in such a way that in their mutual relationship they would discover the meaning of their own sexuality. The human couple provides the necessary context in which man will understand the meaning of his masculinity and woman her femininity.

In this study I will attempt to define that man-woman relationship from a biblical perspective. In the first part, we will see the couple in the context of creation; in the second, in that of sin; and in the third, in that of redemption.

I. THE HUMAN COUPLE IN CREATION

The Image of God

The whole creation account in the first chapter of Genesis is characterized by an admirable sobriety. Without elaboration or embellishment it lists the acts of creation through which, step by step, God prepares the scenario for human life. All that God does

is 'good' because it is perfectly adapted to the divine purpose. And everything points to a climax that gives sense to each act that precedes it: the creation of Man on the sixth day.

The animals also (with the exception of fish and birds) are created on the sixth day, which underlines the solidarity of Man with the animal kingdom. But that does not mean that the creation of Man ceases to be a special act of God, which is obvious in the contrast between verse 24 ('*let the land produce living creatures*') and verse 26 ('Let us make man in our image, in our likeness'). God plans the creation of Man in terms of his own image. And this places mankind in a category apart from all other created beings; it gives us our distinctively human character. The human being is by definition the image of God.

In the history of biblical interpretation, much has been discussed about the significance of the expression 'in our image, in our likeness'. p. 276 The traditional exegesis, especially in Roman Catholic circles, in the past attempted to construct a whole anthropology based on the distinction between *tselem* ('image') and *demuth* ('likeness'). According to this view, on the one hand Man was created with an innate conformity with God, which was a natural gift. On the other hand, Man was created with the capacity to grow and become like God, which was a supernatural gift.¹ However, the way these two words are used in Genesis² does not support this interpretation. Today it is believed that the two terms point out the same truth. Thus the translation of 1:26 in the Popular Version: 'Now let us make man. He will be like us ...'³ At any rate, the text does not state explicitly of what the likeness consists.⁴ This is something one must deduce from the context.

Karl Barth⁵ maintains that one can arrive at the content of the image by way of exegesis. For him the likeness is found in sexual duality, which involves the relationship as well as the difference between men and women. Human beings are like God because, thanks to their sexual duality, in him they reproduce the relationship between the 'I' and the 'you' that is present in God (as is clearly suggested by the plural 'let us make' in verse 1:26). So the image is an *analogía relationis* (an analogy of relationship), not an *analogía entis* (an analogy of being). G. C. Berkouwer⁶ has objected to the ambiguity that Barth is guilty of when he uses the human couple as the model of the relationship between man and his fellow (the relationship between 'I' and 'you') and, at the same time, emphasizes the difference between man and woman (the duality of the human being) as the very content of the image. Even though we cannot deny that there is a connection between the image of God and the capacity of human beings to relate to one another, the text does not support the interpretation according to which the 'analogy of relationship' exhausts the meaning of the image.

A study of the meaning which the images had many years ago in the p. 277 Middle East helps shed light on the interpretation of the biblical text. The conclusion is that in the

¹ For a brief account of the history of interpretation of the image of God in the early centuries of our era, see the work by M. Flik and Z. Aslzeghy, *Antropología Teológica*, Ediciones Sígueme, Salamanca, 1970, pp.100ff.

² In 1:26 *tselem* and *demuth* are used together, while in 1:27 and 9:6 only *tselem* is used, and in 5:1 only *demuth*. In 5:3 both terms are used again, referring to Seth, of whom it is said that Adam 'had a son in his own likeness, in his own image.'

³ *Así comenzó: Libro del Genesis* (Popular Version), United Bible Societies, 1970.

⁴ According to the *Jerusalem Bible*, the purpose of 'likeness' is to limit the sense of 'image', indicating that the resemblance of man and his God is not equality.

⁵ *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, III, 1, pp.182–220.

⁶ *Man: the Image of God*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, 1972, p.93.

ancient world, especially in Egypt, the use of the image was associated with the government: image of a particular god, the king was his representative; and the image of the king represented that god in the lands that had been conquered.⁷ This concept is not unlike that of [Genesis 1:26, 27](#): Man is the image of God because he represents him in the world. The figure of the image is even stronger when we realize that the expression appears in the context in which the transcendence of God is emphasized. This God who created the universe and all living beings by his word makes an image of himself and places him in the world as his representative. The essential significance of the description of Man as the image of God is the representative character than Man plays in the world with reference to God. And this interpretation of the image based on the historical context is ratified by the connection between the announcement of the intention of the divine will in respect to the creation of the human being in [1:26](#) ('Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule ...') and the creation account itself in [1:27, 28](#) ('So God created man in his own image ... and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule ...'). To Man, as his image—his representative—God commends the stewardship of the world. His task is to govern the creation, representing God and under his authority. This is the 'cultural mandate,' in the fulfilment of which human beings manifest that they are, in effect, the image of God. The *complete* Man—Man as an organic and spiritual being—resembles God because to him has been entrusted the dominion of the world. And that is where we find the basis for the responsibility of humankind in the use of natural resources and in scientific and technological development.

In relation to our theme it should be pointed out, however, that [Genesis 1](#) does not leave room for doubts about the equality of men and women in respect to their calling in the world. According to verse [27](#), when God created Man in his image, 'male and female he created them.' According to verse [28](#), he told both of them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule ...' The same thought is confirmed again in [Genesis 5:1, 2](#): both share the same humanity, both are variations of the being that God created in his image and likeness, and to which he gave the name Adam (Man). Man [p. 278](#) and woman equally are the image of God. Consequently, man and woman equally are responsible before him for governing the creation.

It is hardly possible to exaggerate the importance that this recognition of the *woman* (and not just the man) as the image of God has for the integration of the human couple. Even today society is organized according to guidelines set down by a 'machismo' that results in a complete negation of the human calling. There is the idea that the woman's place is to fulfill the mandate of being fruitful and multiplying, because she is made to be wife and mother, while the cultural mandate is reserved for the man. This is a twisting of the biblical teaching. Out of it comes the relegation of the woman to an inferior state in relation to the man, including in the church. In Latin America the problem takes on the dimensions of a tragedy. It is not taken into account that, in the case of the woman as well as the man, over and above their sex is their humanity and that their fulfilment as human beings does not depend on the opposite sex but on the fulfilment of their calling as the image of God.

Woman cannot be defined biblically on the basis of marriage and childbearing. She can be defined only on the basis of the mandate of God—the mandate to have dominion over nature, under the lordship of God and in close collaboration with man. More important than the femininity of the woman is her humanity. So the primary concern of the woman cannot be to be married and have children. If it is sometimes, that is due to the fact that

⁷ Cf. D. J. A. Clines, 'The Image of God in Man,' *Tyndale Bulletin* 19 (1968), pp.80fs.

the women through the years has 'internalized' a self-image that has been imposed on her by man. The most important task of the woman is derived directly from the fact of having been created in the image of God. Her place in the world does not depend on her feminine sex, but on her calling. This is matter of calling, not biology.

This does not deny, however, the sexual differentiation between the man and the woman. The man that God created in his image is portrayed in history necessarily as man or woman. The masculine sex and the feminine sex were created by God, and the sexual duality of Man and the mutual dependence of the sexes form part of the very structure of human history. Neither the man nor the woman can fulfil the calling p. 279 of Man without the help of each other. It is a mistake, then, to think that to fight for the vindication of the women it is necessary to deny her differences in relation to the man. The struggle to eliminate the differences can only lead to an artificial situation, with the danger that the woman will conceive of her liberation in terms of the image of the 'liberated woman' that (once again) man imposes on her.¹⁰ The road to the liberation of women is not found in the denial of the feminine attributes, but in their integration in a lifestyle that gives expression to their human calling.

To Man as the image of God has been entrusted the stewardship of the world. Men and women equally are self-fulfilled as human beings to the extent that they practice their vocation in obedience to God and in close mutual collaboration.

II. 'ONE FLESH'

In the first chapter of Genesis emphasis is put on the origins of the cosmos and the place the Man occupies in it as the image of God. In chapter two, on the other hand, the emphasis shifts from the cosmos to mankind. The rich symbolism of the account communicates forcefully the ties between human beings and nature (man is formed from the dust of the ground) and with God, from whom he receives the breath of life (v.7).

Thus chapter two reiterates the basic declarations that appear in chapter one about Man: that he is part of the continuing creation (created the sixth day) and that he maintains a special relationship with God (in his image).

In chapter one Man is presented as the culmination of all the creative work of God, in the second chapter we get an insight into the nature of the relationship between the two components of the human couple. But here I can barely touch on the emphases that are found through an analysis of the text.

The first that should be pointed out is that the creation of the woman in this context responds to the need that the man has for companionship. p. 280 At the end of chapter one we read that 'God saw all that he had made, and it was very good' (v.31). In contrast, in chapter two it is affirmed that, after having created the man and put him in the Garden of Eden, God said 'It is not good for the man to be alone' (v.8). The inference is clear: the man was not created for solitude, but for communion, for communication with the other. Living alone is dismissed in the very beginning of history. But the companionship that the man needs cannot be provided by the animals that he names and that are essentially different from him, as a human being. For that reason God created the woman.

¹⁰ Here is the root of the problem with many who wish to defend the rights of women in the feminist movement. According to Enrique E. Fabbri, 'it is the whole infrastructure of the society of consumption and material well-being that is implicitly interested in denying that the complete development of the woman should come about through her maternal realization, whether physical or purely spiritual, but always human ... This society fears the true woman who is fully realized through her maternal spirit, so it cheapens her, it makes fun of her, it despises her as one for whom there is no room in this world of the 'new morality.' ('La mujer joven: presente y futuro,' *Revista Criterio*, Vol. XLII, No. 1569, April 10, 1969, p.209.)

It would be arbitrary to deduce from that affirmation—that the woman was created to alleviate the man’s solitude—the inferiority of the feminine sex and the superiority of the masculine. The relationship between the man and the woman is not resolved in terms of a *hierarchical* differentiation, but a *functional* differentiation. In contrast with animals, among which ‘no suitable helper was found’ for the man, the woman is created expressly for him. So he recognized her as bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh. And he gave her, not whatever name that came to his mind (as in the case of the animals, over which he has dominion), but his own name: ‘she shall be called *Ishshah* (woman) for she was taken out of *Ish* (man)’ (v.23). Only she can liberate him from his solitude, for a double reason: (1) because she shares his humanity—she is the same as he¹¹ and (2) because she is a woman, and, as such, is made his ezer, his ‘suitable helper’¹²—she is different than he.

The equality and the difference of the woman with reference to the man are basic to marriage. They are the factors which make possible the mutual complementarity from which the human couple finds its meaning. Sexual duality does not find its justification in reproduction, but in the union of two beings whose functions are complemented by each other. This explains how it is possible that [Genesis 2](#) refers to the human couple and the sexual act without even alluding to procreation. In the context of matrimony the woman has worth because [p. 281](#) as a human being of the feminine sex only she can be the suitable helper for the man. The mutual complementarity of the man and the woman is enough in itself to explain the existence of sexual duality. As Otto Piper has written, ‘By giving to the man a woman, and not another man, to accompany him, God shows that sexual differentiation has meaning apart from procreation, and that the companionship between the husband and the wife should be considered the greatest blessing of life.’¹³

According to biblical teaching, God’s primary intention in the creation of the human couple was that between the man and the woman an intimate companionship should be established, a mutual dependence based on the complementary nature of each other. The complementarity of the sexes in itself cannot be reduced to the biological. It includes the whole person, both the man as well as the woman, and communicates to all its mutual relationships a sexual dimension.

Within the framework of biblical interpretation of human sexuality the real meaning of the sex act can be understood. If sexuality is rooted in the creation itself as something that, above all, orients the mutual complementation of man and woman, the bodily union has to be understood as an act in which the husband and wife give expression to the fact of having been created for each other and experience that intimate communion that defines the reason for their sexuality. In other words, the essential function of the sex act is *uniting*. Through it the man and the woman gain the physical and psychological unity referred to in the most basic of all the biblical affirmations concerning sex: ‘the two shall become one flesh’ (v.24; [Matt. 19:5](#); [Mark 10:8](#); [1 Cor. 6:16](#); [Eph. 5:31](#)). ‘In the providence of God, the physical act becomes the expression of sentiments that are so deep they cannot be expressed with words: the external, visible sign of a grace that is so spiritual,

¹¹ ‘The first thing that the superficial observer notices is that women are not the same as men ... But what is fundamental is that women are more like men than any other thing in the world. They are human beings.’ (Dorothy Sayers, *Are Women Human?*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1971, p.37).

¹² It is easy to prove that this expression does not imply the idea of inferiority. In the Old Testament it is applied to God in his function of ‘help’ for his people. Cf. [Exodus 18:4](#), [Deuteronomy 33:26](#), [Psalm 27:7-9](#), [33:20](#), [94:17](#), [115:9](#), 11. Well understood, the description of the woman as *ezer* of the man places her in the honourable position of being the one who provides man with the help he needs.

¹³ *The Biblical Views of Sex and Marriage*, Charles Scribners & Sons, New York, 1960, p.30.

emotional, deep and moving that both participants are committed in the totality of their beings.’¹⁴

This does not deny the relationship between the sex act and procreation. It simply affirms that according to the Bible, sexual desire is not oriented around *the fruit* of the conjugal union, but around *the union itself*, that mutual ‘knowing’ that makes the man and the woman ‘one flesh.’ The significance of sexuality should not be defined in terms of the consequences (children) but in terms of its cause (the man and the p. 282 woman were created with the capacity to mutually complement each other). Before the ‘be fruitful and multiply’ of [Genesis 1:28](#) is the ‘man and woman he created them’ of [Genesis 1:27](#). The first responsibility of the husband and wife is not the transmission of life, but the mutual surrender in love, the joyful acceptance of one’s own sexuality and that of the other.

To limit sexuality to the biological function of reproduction, or to give this priority over the relationship between husband and wife, is to take from it its personal meaning and to place the human couple on the same level as animals. It was precisely the loss of the biblical perspective of sex as something that is part of the very essence of Man, made in the image of God, that led some early Christian thinkers to define human sexuality exclusively in terms of reproduction. According to Saint Augustine, for example, the conjugal act is a ‘bestial’ and shameful act, which can only be justified as a ‘necessary evil’ by the need to preserve the race. According to Thomas of Aquinas, sexual relations belong in the generic order—in that which Man has in common with animals—and conforms, therefore, to the appropriate laws of one’s biological nature. The basis for such ideas is not found in biblical revelation, but in the concepts imported from paganism, particularly from the Stoic and Neo-Pythagorean philosophy. Sadly, this focus, favoured for centuries by the Roman Catholic Church,¹⁶ has so influenced our culture that, for many people among us, the sex act within marriage always needs to be justified by the need to reproduce life. We urgently need to rediscover the unifying reason for human sexuality. The sex act between man and woman is the consummation of a *personal* union that leaves a mark on the couple that cannot be removed. For the human being, in contrast with what it is for animals, the sex act establishes between husband and wife a link characterized by a mutual dependence that marks the two permanently. In the words of Piper, ‘a sexual experience is not only existential, related to the ego of the individual, but also results in a critical connection with the partner.’¹⁷ It cannot be a casual experience, the effects of which the participants can rid themselves at will. In the plan of God, it fulfills the function of uniting them as *one flesh*. p. 283

From this unifying purpose of human sexuality is derived the affirmation of monogamy as a fundamental part of marriage. From the Christian perspective, given the nature of the sexual union, this only can be consummated within the framework of the promise by the husband and wife to be faithful. Outside of this framework, sex loses its human dimension—it ‘animalizes’ itself—since it does not recognize the real reason for human sexuality. In the final analysis, facing the question of ‘exclusivity’ and the durability of marriage, there are only two alternatives: either consider the sex act as an experience that involves the whole person and, therefore, unites the partners permanently in a ‘homogenous’ marriage, or consider it as an incidental, genital experience that does not

¹⁴ Stuart Barton Babbage, *Dios creó el sexo*, Ediciones Certeza, Buenos Aires, p.23.

¹⁶ This focus is the presupposition of much of Roman Catholic teaching concerning the Lord. For example, what is taught in the dogma of the immaculate conception, the virginity of Mary after the birth of Jesus, celibacy and birth control.

¹⁷ Otto Piper, op. cit., p.29.

imply any lasting obligation for the participants. Jesus ratified the first alternative when he condemned divorce, referring to the exclusive nature of the union established through the sexual act ([Matt. 19:3-9](#)).

When marriage conforms to the unifying purpose of sexuality, the worth of the woman does not depend on her ability to be a mother—to ‘give children to her husband.’ It depends, rather, on her being a woman and, as such, not a possession of her husband, but a ‘suitable helper,’ the only person with whom he can experience the relationship of the first couple: ‘The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame’ ([Gen. 2:25](#)).

III. THE HUMAN COUPLE IN SIN

More fundamental than the function of the woman in the matrimonial relationship is the vocation that she has as the image of God. However, function and vocation are not antithetical ideas. It’s obvious that for the married woman, her whole life in which she fulfills her vocation of the image of God has to be translated (at least in part) into her responsibilities as the suitable helper for her husband. Being married is not the unavoidable state through which the woman finds self-realization as a human being. But if the woman marries with a *sense of vocation*, in her marriage she will find the *means* of service for God and her own self-fulfilment.

Why, then, does the woman experience so frequently an absolute disassociation between human vocation and the function that she is called to fulfil in the context of marriage?

Many answers have been explored. Most often the discussion polarizes around the defenders of a feminism that would like to throw overboard every trace of femininity characteristic of women, in order to prove their equality with men, and the sponsors of a machismo that [p. 284](#) proclaims the indisputable superiority of men. The root of the problem is in the division introduced between the man and the woman as a consequence of the fall, according to [Genesis 3](#).

Chapters [2](#) and [3](#) show that the man/woman relationship, according to God’s plan, would be harmonious but not symmetrical, complementary but not egalitarian, reciprocal but not identical for both sexes. Vocation does not depend on biology, but neither does it disown it: ‘As long as only women and not men have babies and nurse them, the dominion of women will be essentially different from that of men.’¹⁸ But sin has taken this sexual difference—precisely what makes possible the mutual complementarity of the man and the woman—and in its place has created a distance between the sexes that manifests itself in the disassociation between vocation and function that the women experiences. For the man she ceases to be *Ishshah*, bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh, and become *Eva* (living). Now he sees her, not as his ‘suitable helper’ (a companion who shares all of his life), but as the ‘mother of all the living’ ([Gen. 3:20](#)), a means of reaching a goal strictly linked with feminine biology. From now on that classification of the woman by the man will be characteristic of his attitude toward her. The woman, on the other hand, is torn between her desire to give herself to her husband, and the fear of losing her liberty. The words of God’s judgment on her point that out: ‘Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you’ ([Gen. 3:16](#)). The effects of the fall are seen in the marriage with the load of tragedy that sin brings. As Piper says, ‘by means of her very femininity the woman

¹⁸ Emil Brunner, *Love and Marriage*, Collins, London, 1970, p.223.

is brought from the state of freedom to that of bondage, and the facts show that her hope of enjoying independence with her husband has been only a dream.’¹⁹

The division between man and woman is one of the consequences of sin. As Beatriz Melano Couch says, ‘the first division of mankind was not between master and slave, oligarchy and proletariat, but between the man and the woman.’²⁰

All of history is full of a litany of mutual accusations and rationalizations that prolong the initial rupture expressed in the words of [Genesis 3:12](#): ‘The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.’ Human beings will always have the tendency to project their own problems on others. And in no place are the consequences of this tendency more harmful than in the human couple. [p. 285](#)

IV. THE HUMAN COUPLE IN REDEMPTION

‘There is Neither Male nor Female’

The incarnation marks the advent of a new era. This is the era of the kingdom of God, manifested in the person of Jesus Christ. This is the era of the New Man, the second Adam, through whom God will restore the initial purpose of creation.

The work of Jesus Christ, fulfilled in his death and resurrection, applies to the totality of human existence. It does not have to do exclusively with the salvation of the soul in the distant future, nor is it limited to the religious aspect of life.

It reaches to the very centre of man’s personality and transforms all his relationships. It is oriented to the restoring of the image of God in Man.²¹ It is because of this conviction that the Apostle Paul proclaims the disappearance of divisions between human beings in the context of the new era: ‘There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus’ ([Gal. 3:28](#)).

It is not possible to exaggerate how revolutionary this affirmation is in a world fragmented by differences in race, class and sex. In respect to the human couple, it proposes an equality of the sexes that contrasts notably with the disparity between men and women that was in fashion in the first century. Seen in the light of the creation narration of [Genesis 1](#), the message in Galatians shows that in Jesus Christ a new humanity has broken into history—a ‘corporate personality.’ To use the traditional expression by H. W. Robinson—in which the image of God is restored. In the man that God created in his image, according to [Genesis 1:27](#), there was no separation between the man and the woman: ‘God created man in his own them.’ In the New Man, according to [Galatians 3:28](#), God reconstructs that essential unity of the sexes: ‘There is neither male nor female.’ The basis of unity in Christ: is *in him*—in virtue of their incorporation in the second Adam—that believers form a unified personality in which divisions disappear.

Today, twenty centuries after Paul wrote those words, the unification of the sexes through Jesus Christ is still to be realized in history. In spite of ‘women’s liberation,’ which Jacques Leclercq calls ‘the most important event of our century,’²² in many parts of the world (including Latin America) the woman is still considered to be inferior to man. And the church itself has become a hindrance in the struggle to [p. 286](#) achieve equal rights for

¹⁹ Op. cit., p.99.

²⁰ *La mujer y la iglesia*, Editorial E. Escudo, Buenos Aires, 1972, p.22.

²¹ Cf. Jorge A. León, *La comunicación del evangelio en el mundo actual*, ediciones Pleroma, Buenos Aires, 1974, capítulo II, pp.31 ff.

²² *La mujer hoy y mañana*, Ediciones Sigueme, Salamanca, 1968, p.14.

woman. On the basis of the unifying work of Jesus Christ, we Christians should be the first to understand that building the society of the future cannot be exclusively man's work. It requires the equal support of both members of the human couple. Nor can we be content with mere equality of rights in social, economic and political fields. We have to go beyond that, to the goal of a world in which the affairs of history are totally shared by men and women. 'The winning of rights is the first step and is very necessary. But it's only the first step. We have to take the second, that of mutual openness by both sides, of the authentic, liberating action of encounter and of human approach to each other, that of being just in the *reflection-feeling-and-action* of agreement with the purpose of God in the creation and in the redemptive action of Christ.'²³

V. HUSBAND AND WIFE 'IN THE LORD'

If [Galatians 3:28](#) relates to chapter [1](#) of Genesis, [Ephesians 5:22-23](#)²⁴ relates to the change in chapter [2](#). The same saving work that made possible the unifying to man and woman as the image of God also makes possible the restoring of the initial purpose for the marriage.

The dignity of the sexes underlies the entire passage. It is taken for granted that the man and the woman share the same humanity and can relate to each other as two persons of equal value. They are *Ish* and *Ishshah*, created as beings who are able to mutually complement each other. That is indicated by the reference to an essential part of the matrimonial unit, according to [Genesis 2:24](#): 'They will become one flesh.' Far from negating the sexual differentiation, however, the unity of the couple is accentuated. Those that become 'one flesh' are not merely two human beings (and as such equals), but a man and a woman. The restoring of God's purpose goes far beyond the simple recognition of the equality of the sexes. It affirms that in Christ the man and the woman establish a relationship that recovers the unity that was part of God's plan from the beginning. Redemption does not eliminate [p.287](#) the sexual difference, nor does it annul the functions that correspond to each sex within marriage. On the contrary, it brings the man and the woman to the discovery Of their own sexuality and of the meaning that it has as a unifying element in the human couple.

However, the sexual differentiation between the man and the woman is not limited to the function that each one fulfills in the sexual act. It extends to the function that corresponds to each one in everything they do in their married life. It is not necessary to resort to stereo-types²⁵ to admit with Brunner²⁶ that the physical differences between the man and the woman reflect differences 'in the soul and spirit,' even if these are not as uniform and as complete as the physical differences. The exhortation to the married

²³ Beatriz Melano Couch, op. cit., p.32.

²⁴ For lack of space I limit myself here to a brief discussion of this passage, the richest in the whole New Testament concerning the Christian view of marriage. A more complete discussion would have to include [Matthew 19:3-12](#) and [1 Peter 3:1-17](#). The question of the man/woman relationship *in the church* would require another study, based on [1 Corinthians 11:2-16](#) and [1 Timothy 2:11-15](#). At least some of the difficulties in these passages are resolved in the light of the historical context of the first century. However, still unresolved is the hermeneutic problems raised by the link that Paul establishes between his exhortations and [Genesis 1:26](#) ([1 Corinthians 11:7](#)), 2:18-23 (in [1 Corinthians 11:8](#), 9 and [1 Timothy 2:13](#)) and [3:1-6](#) (in [1 Timothy 2:14](#)).

²⁵ The reference is to the idea that the man is characterized by reason and the woman by intuition, the man by the courage and the woman by tenderness, the man by daring and the woman by dependence.

²⁶ Op. cit., p.22.

woman to 'submit herself' to her husband ([Eph. 5:22](#)) is not teaching that the woman is an inferior being, but that she is a being whose nature adapts more easily to that function within marriage. The fact that the exploitation of women by men at times is based on 'the feminine nature' is a direct consequence of the fall expressed in the words of God to the woman: 'Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you' ([Gen. 3:16](#)). But that the woman sees in submission to her husband something more compatible with the characteristics of her own sexuality is consequence of a voluntary acceptance of the plan of God in creation, expressed in his words: 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him' ([Gen. 2:18](#)). For that reason Paul adds that the submission of the woman is as 'unto the Lord' as a Christian duty. In our society, more totalitarian than egalitarian, the desire to be freed from all paternalism is flourishing. One development has been the 'death of God' complex, to use an expression of Roger Mehl,²⁷ which establishes a necessary contradiction between every idea of authority, on the one hand, and the democratic ideal of equality and fraternity. In this context, and in the light of a long history of abuses committed against the submissive sex, it is not surprising that what has been called to question is the biblical model for the matrimonial relationship: 'However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband' ([Gal. 5:33](#)). Apart from the recognition of the different functions that correspond to the man and the woman in the human couple, however, there is no hope for the survival of marriage. 'Whatever should be the evolution [p. 288](#) of customs and the egalitarian tendency of civilization, it is essential that the man and the woman in no way forget that they have been created *different*, that each one is called to fulfill a distinct vocation, and that sexual differentiation is an essential characteristic of humanity.'²⁸

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Watchman Nee—Church Planter and Preacher of Holiness

Norman H. Cliff

This article brings to light many unknown details of the life and ministry of the influential Chinese preacher, Watchman Nee. The author's analysis of his doctrine of holiness and of the church provides a helpful framework to understand the preacher's writings. Norman Cliff, son of missionary parents, spent the first 20 years of his life in China. He has recently completed an M. Phil. thesis on The Life and Theology of Watchman Nee with the Open University, England.

(Editors)

²⁷ *Society and Love*, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1964, p.20.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.41.