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Thus, Wesley's position, when true to its own dynamics of theologizing, will provide a respectable, relevant solution to the contemporary theology of mission.

It may be reasonably assumed that Wesley's approach and position will also provide constructive contributions in other contemporary theological frontiers. This represents a challenge to, and responsibility of the students of Wesley today and in the future.

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Imago Dei and Church Order

Leroy S. Capper

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The crowning act of the creative work of God was his creation of man in his own image:

Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.'

**So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.**

([Gen. 1:26, 27](#))

It is his being in the image of God which distinguishes man from all the rest of God's creation and gives him an elevated status, and it is the fact of his being in the image of God which serves as the basis for human ethics (cf. [Gen. 9:6](#)). In recent years a particular view of the nature of the image, first suggested by Karl Barth, has been urged by Paul K. Jewett as the basis for sexual egalitarianism in the ministry and offices of the church (finding written expression in his work *Man as Male and Female*). From this perspective 'the image of God' has primary reference not to individual men or women but to man(kind) as male and female. It is our purpose here first to examine whether such a view of the *imago dei* has a biblical foundation and then to determine whether such a view leads to the dismissal of the role distinctions traditionally recognized as biblical and practised in the Christian Church.

Our first task is to consider the nature of the image of God in man. Prior to the Reformation there was a tendency to distinguish between 'image' and 'likeness' and in this distinction to find some indication of what the image consists of. For Irenaeus and Tertullian, the distinction was between bodily and spiritual traits; for Clement of Alexandria and many following him, the distinction was between those qualities essential to man as man, and those qualities not essential to man, which could be cultivated or lost. The Reformers and most scholars since have rejected such distinctions, seeing 'image' and 'likeness' as two almost (if not entirely) synonymous words giving full expression to the single concept of 'the very image of God'. For Luther, this image consisted solely of original

righteousness which was lost at the fall, but for Calvin and the Reformed tradition the image of God also encompassed those qualities which distinguished man from the animal world, such as rationality, self-consciousness and emotion. To this has [p. 215](#) also sometimes been added the dominion of man over the world. The common element to all these aspects of the divine image is that they relate the divine image to man in terms of his being (*ousia*). For Barth, however, the divine image in man is interpreted in terms of relationship (*relationis*), male to female. Having concluded in agreement with traditional orthodoxy that the use of the plural verb and pronouns in [Genesis 1:26](#) points to ‘a genuine plurality in the divine essence’¹ and noticing that parallel structure of [1:27](#), in which ‘image of God’ in lines one and two is parallel to ‘male and female’ in line three, Barth finds ‘a clear and simple correspondence, an *analogia relationis*, between this mark of the divine being, namely, that it includes an I and a Thou, and the being of man, male and female.’² As succinctly described by Berkouwer, for Barth ‘the relation between “I” and “Thou” which is already present in God (“let us make man in our image”) finds its creaturely analogue in the relation between man and woman.’³ Is the image of God thus to be understood relationally or is it instead to be understood in terms of man’s being?

IMAGO DEI: BEING OR RELATIONAL?

In the estimation of the present writer, the answer is not to be found in either one of these views in distinction from the other, but rather in both of them. The traditional view certainly has much to commend it. The *imago dei* clearly includes more than the original righteousness lost at the fall, because the image is clearly present in man after the fall ([Gen 9 6](#), [Jas. 3:9](#)). Those natural endowments such as rationality, and self-consciousness thus do seem to be an integral part of the image of God. Laidlaw even suggests that the elements of man’s personality as part of the *imago dei* are implied in the text of the creation account:

The God who is essentially three in one, an inter-linked personality—this God alone furnishes the mould on which personality could be formed. Thus we seem to get a full meaning to those words, ‘Let US make man in OUR image after OUR likeness’ ... In the light of the entire biblical delineation of God, the words have no strain put upon them, but are only seen to be divinely pregnant, if we hold them as now indicating to us that man was created an image of something *inter-trinitarian* ... the inter-trinitarian [p. 216](#) relations of Godhead find a copy in man’s personality, as related to God on the one hand and to his fellow-men on the other.⁴

Man’s personality is an integral part of the image of God in man. Thus there does seem to be an aspect of God’s image resident in the individual.

It is these same plurals in [Genesis 1:26](#) which led Laidlaw to focus on personality, however, which stimulated Barth to conceive of the image relationally. This interpretation of the image seems compelling, because the only point in the creation narrative at which the plurals are employed is at the creation of man. The significance of man’s creation is heightened by God’s taking counsel with himself (rather than by simple fiat) as well as by

¹ Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. III, Part 1: *The Doctrine of Creation* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1958), p. 191.

² *Ibid.*, p. 196.

³ G. C. Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), p. 73.

⁴ John Laidlaw, *The Bible Doctrine of Man* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1879), pp. 128–129.

the thrice repeated use of the strong word for 'create', *bara*, in verse [27](#).⁵ The account could have read, 'I will make a man in my image', but it does not. Linking the plurality to the angels makes no sense, for the sovereign God consults no one in his plans (cf. [Isa. 40:14](#)) and nowhere does the Bible speak of man being in the image of angels. Some argue for a plural of majesty here; while this may explain the plurality in the name of God (*'elohim*), it is not so likely with regard to the plural cohortative ('let us make') and the plural pronominal suffixes, and G. C. Aalders even goes so far as to reject the entire concept:

... this is impossible because the Hebrew does not have such a use of the plural ... It would seem most acceptable to hold to the interpretation advanced by the ancient church fathers and universally accepted by scholars of the past, that this is a reference to the Triune God. It goes without saying that this passage, standing by itself, would not constitute a clear proof of the Trinity. There is, for instance, no mention of three here. But what is indicated here is that God, in His unity, has a certain plurality.⁶

This strong suggestion of plurality within the Godhead in verse [26](#) forms the immediate context of verse [27](#). Verse [27](#) itself has three parallel lines, with lines one and two virtually identical except for a reversed word order in line two. The significant factor is that 'image of God' in lines one and two is paralleled in line three by 'male and female'. Furthermore, as Von Rad observes, in line one 'the Hebrew word "*adam*" ("man") is a collective and is therefore never used in the plural; it means literally "mankind".'⁷ The singular pronoun 'him' in [p. 217](#) line two is governed by the singularity of the collective noun. Thus rather than the traditional understanding that God created individual men in his image and individual women in his image, the passage suggests that the plurality-in-unity God created the *one* mankind in his image with the *plurality* of genders. It must be admitted that the similar use of '*adam*' in [Genesis 5:1](#) includes both male and female,⁸ and such usage cannot be denied here. Also, in [Genesis 5:2](#) God names the male *and* female 'man' (*'adam*), indicating that 'though the male, as head, bore the name of the race, it takes the two sexes together to express what God means by human'.⁹ This last point is certainly implied in [Genesis 1:27](#), since mankind is in God's image as male and female, and is clearly confirmed in [Genesis 2:18](#), where God declares that man by himself was 'not good' and that a suitable helper was needed for him. Man as male was incomplete without the woman; the woman, created to correspond to the man, would be incomplete without him. Thus, the male and female complement one another to express the full meaning of what it is to be man(kind). Prior to the creation of Eve, it must thus be said that Adam both *was* (in regard to being) and *was not* (relationally) in the image of God. It takes both the male and the female to reflect fully the image of God. This corresponding complementary relationship implies the equality of the sexes which was previously established in their equally being image bearers. As further demonstration of the equality, it is to the male and female together, that is, to mankind (*'adam*) that God gave dominion over the rest of creation in [Genesis 1:26, 28](#). Some have included dominion as part of the image of God, yet it seems more likely to this writer that dominion is a consequence of man being in the image of God,

⁵ James Orr, *God's Image in Man* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), p. 36ff.

⁶ G. Ch. Aalders, *Genesis*, 2 Vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 1:70.

⁷ Gerhard Von Rad, *Genesis* (London: SCM, 1961), p. 55.

⁸ Aalders, p. 138.

⁹ Derek Kidner, *Genesis* (Chicago: Inter-Varsity, 1967), p. 80.

rather than an aspect of it. Dominion is a blessing given to man who is already *imago dei*. The structure of verse [26](#), with the jussive joined by a *waw* to the cohortative ‘Let us make’, also suggests this. Per Gesenius, a jussive joined by a *waw* to a preceding cohortative expresses in the jussive an intention depending on the contingent occurrence of the event expressed in the cohortative.¹⁰ This is not to diminish the fact, however, that joint dominion implies and confirms the equality of the sexes.

At the same time, however, it also seems that man as male and female in the image of the plurality-in-unity God also implies that a [p. 218](#) certain order and distinction exists within the Godhead. The light of later revelation shows that within the Godhead there are three persons: Father, Son and Spirit. These three persons are the same in essence and each is equally and fully God. Yet the Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Spirit. It is the Father who sent the Son ([John 20:21](#)) and the Son came to do not his own will, but the will of the Father ([John 5:30](#)). The Spirit who proceeds from the Father is sent by the Son to bear witness to the Son ([John 15:26](#)). The equality of the persons of the Godhead does not negate an order of function among them. It is a harmonious order, to be sure, but an order nevertheless. If, then, the Godhead consists of a plurality of persons in an ordered harmony, mankind who is imaging God can also be expected to have a harmonious order amidst the plurality of male and female.

This is not reading New Testament doctrine back into the text of Genesis, because the doctrine of the Trinity, while not fully developed, is certainly indicated through the plurals of [Genesis 1:26](#) as has already been shown. Moreover, when the summary of man’s creation in [Genesis 1](#) is expanded by the details of [Genesis 2](#), it is very clear that male and female exist in an ordered relationship. The man is created first and with him God made the Covenant of Works. It is later than the woman is created. Being formed from the same substance as the man (out of his rib) indicates an equality between them, but at the same time it must be noted that the woman was formed out of his previously existing substance and brought to him as one corresponding to him, and not vice versa (cf. [1 Cor. 11:8, 9](#)). It is not that one lump of clay was divided into two parts so that the male and female simultaneously appeared. This order is heightened when in verse [23](#) the man names the female ‘woman’, because ‘to give a name is the prerogative of a superior’.¹¹ By these actions man is clearly delineated the head. God created man as male and female, a plurality of persons imaging God both in their plurality-in-unity and in their ordered harmony.

In this way the *imago dei* is seen not only to involve the *being* of an individual human but also the *relationships* of the human community as well, being demonstrated most specifically in the male/female relationship. Bromiley was quite right to criticize Barth for negating the former in expressing the latter. He notes that the male-female distinction is not uniquely human but is also present in animals ([Gen. 6:19; 7:2–3](#)) ‘and therefore the endowment of rationality, volition and ethical sense is still necessary for human intra-personal relationship in [p. 219](#) the image of the divine. Barth has to assume this aspect of the *imago* even though he may be right in giving a slightly different emphasis or focus’.¹² This willingness on the part of Bromiley to recognize both analogy of being as well as analogy of relationship to the *imago dei* captures the proper balance which the Scripture itself seems to indicate. This will hopefully become more clear as we turn to consider the view of G. C. Berkouwer set forth in his work *Man: The Image of God*.

¹⁰ E. Kautzsch and A. E. Cowley, *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910), p. 322.

¹¹ J. A. Motyer, ‘Name’, *New Bible Dictionary*, 1962, p. 862.

¹² G. W. Bromiley, ‘Image of God’, *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 1982, rev. ed., II:804.

IMAGO DEI AND NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

Berkouwer himself rejects the image as an analogy of relation, claiming that Barth is ambiguous when he 'sees the image lying in the distinction between man and woman (I-thou; partnership) and at the same time says that it lies in the distinction and relation between man and fellow man (I-thou; community).'¹³ Instead he wishes to emphasize 'the importance of the biblical witness to Christ as the image of God and to the renewal, in communion with Christ, of man according to that image.'¹⁴ This concept of the relationship between the *imago dei* and the new man in Christ that is so significant for Berkouwer has its roots in the thinking of John Calvin. In his commentary on [Genesis 1:26](#), Calvin presented a framework for understanding the *imago dei* that has significantly influenced all subsequent discussion of the image, including that of Berkouwer. It has rightly been referred to as a 'restoration hermeneutic',¹⁵ in view of the fact that it seeks to understand the image in terms of that to which man is restored after the Fall. In Calvin's own words:

Since the image of God has been destroyed in us by the fall, we may judge from its restoration what it originally had been. Paul says that we are transformed into the image of God by the gospel. And according to him, spiritual regeneration is nothing else than the restoration of the same image. ([Col. 3:10](#) and [Eph 4:23](#))¹⁶

This aspect of the image is often referred to as 'original righteousness' and is derived from the verses Calvin mentioned above: [Colossians 3:10](#) and [Ephesians 4:22-24](#). This 'knowledge, righteousness and holiness' is considered to be a chief part of God's image in man p. 220 (though these terms in themselves are understood by Calvin to be a synecdoche and thus not expressive of the totality of the image).¹⁷ Both texts mentioned above are in the context of discussion of the new man in Christ and both relate the newness of life to God and his image. [Colossians 3:10](#) especially seems to deliberately echo the [Genesis 1](#) account: 'put on the new man who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him' (emphasis mine). This close relationship between the *imago dei* and the new man has gained almost universal recognition; that the knowledge, righteousness and holiness spoken of in reference to the new man is an aspect of the *imago dei* (though now distorted by the fall) seems indisputable. While it is wise to remember Calvin's caution that this original righteousness may not constitute the whole of the image, Berkouwer is correct to focus on this connection.

It is important to note, however, that the newness of life is something reflected in the community as well as in the individual. Berkouwer himself is very conscious of the significance of the *imago dei* for the community. In commenting on [2 Corinthians 3:18](#) he states:

When reference is in fact made to a 'reflection' of God's glory, it is clear that such reference is in the context of the transformation, the becoming similar to Christ, the continuous renewing of life ... This transformation is eschatologically oriented, but is nevertheless

¹³ Berkouwer, p. 77.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

¹⁵ Robert L. Reymond, class lecture, 4/6/83.

¹⁶ John Calvin, *Commentary on Genesis*, 2 Vols., reprint in 1 vol. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 1:94.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

already actual in principle, and it becomes *manifest in the community*, which is a readable epistle of Christ. The relationship between the image of God and newness of life, indeed the identity of the image and the concretely visible sanctification, in which the glory of the Lord becomes evident to all is unmistakable (emphasis mine).¹⁸

In fact, much of Berkouwer's analysis in relating the image of God to newness of life is filled with discussion of the implications of the new life for the Christian community.¹⁹

This is not unexpected; both [Colossians 3:10](#) and [Ephesians 4:22–24](#) are directed to churches. Having already been instructed to put off the 'old man', the plurality of people which constitute the church are commanded to put on the 'new man' with the already-mentioned image qualities. Each passage then immediately follows with instructions concerning how these qualities are practically to work out in the relationships within the Christian community (e.g., 'speak truthfully to p. 221 his neighbour' [Eph. 4:25](#), 'bearing with one another and forgiving each other' [Col. 3:13](#), cf. [Eph. 4:32](#)). These sections on conduct within the Christian community are concluded by instructions concerning role distinctions that are to be followed by the community ([Eph. 5:22ff.](#), [Col. 3:18ff.](#)). These sections on role distinctions, however, are set in the context of statements concerning the equality of the members of the redeemed community ([Eph. 5:21](#), [Col. 3:11](#)). Thus the image qualities are related to a newness of life which impinges on individual believers as well as the Christian community, a community wherein members are both equal and distinct from each other.

MALE-FEMALE DISTINCTION IN *IMAGO DEI*

As was noted above, Berkouwer gives credence to the relationship between the new life and community as well as to the identity of the image with the new life. This seems to support the concept of a relational aspect of the *imago dei*, but Berkouwer tries to avoid including community within the image by indicating that the newness of life in the community is a consequence of the new life of the individual. Yet he admits that community is included in the image of God.

In this (new) life, the image of God becomes visible. The New Testament sheds the fullness of its light on the newness of this life, and it appears that this newness does not merely refer to a new aspect in the life of an individual but that it includes and indeed brings about the community.²⁰

This is a significant (though probably inadvertent) admission on the part of one so adamantly opposed to *relationis* in the divine image. When one considers, however, how tightly woven together the concepts of image, newness of life and community are in [Colossians 3](#) and [Ephesians 4–5](#), it should not be so surprising. The focus on the newness of community relationships seems too comprehensive to be merely the effect of the renewal of individuals. Even if one were to make such an argument, the incompleteness ('not-good'-ness) of the male by himself in [Genesis 2:18](#) in the context of the complementary nature of male and female as the image of God in [Genesis 1:27](#) would still seem to be left unexplained. The biblical data does seem to support within the image the concept of relation.

¹⁸ Berkouwer, pp. 111–112.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 98ff.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

Berkouwer's objection that ambiguity between the male/female relation and the man-fellow man relation prohibits inclusion of the [p. 222](#) idea of relation in the image does not seem valid on two counts. First, as we have seen above, the Apostle Paul seems to move between man-fellow man and male-female quite easily in his discussion of image. In fact, after calling on the church to put on the new man created in the image of God, he first deals with general community relationships before discussing male-female relationships. That Paul can so easily move between these kinds of relationships suggests that while the male-female relation is the most fundamental of those human relationships which image the plurality-in-unity God, the male-male and female-female relations are also included, though not specifically stated. This is the second counter to Berkouwer's objection. If this is not so, then all that would be necessary for the church to image God is for the men to be in proper relation to the women. As long as strife or gossip or broken relationships existed only among members of one sex, the image of God would be preserved. This is absurd, of course. Berkouwer's objection of ambiguity is not a valid objection to the presence of relation in the *imago dei*.

More recently Philip Hughes has attacked Barth's view that the image involves the distinction between male and female. He objects to Barth's view on the following grounds: 1. animals also were created male and female, 2. this would imply sexual distinctions in the Godhead, 3. Jesus was fully human yet never married, 4. marriage is abolished in the eternal state ([Matt. 22:30](#)), 5. Christians are said to be conformed to Christ's image and likeness ([Rom. 8:29](#); [2 Cor. 3:18](#)) and not to that of the Trinity.²¹

In response, it must first be noted that this paper does not advocate, as does Barth, relationship as expressed in 'male and female' as the exclusive aspect of image. It is, however, argued to be an important usually overlooked aspect of image, to be held in conjunction with the being aspects of image such as righteousness and holiness. In this respect this writer differs very little from J. I. Packer, who, while not extensively developing the idea, does include 'community' (based upon the plurals of [Gen. 1:26](#)) as one of the key aspects of the *imago dei*.²² Furthermore, the fact that God uses the gender distinction among men to mirror an ordered relationship within the Godhead does not require gender within the Godhead itself. It is a relation between distinct persons which is being imaged. That gender is the distinction among men does not necessitate that gender be the [p. 223](#) distinction within the Godhead. That animals are also male and female is irrelevant. It is *man* as male and female which is in the image of God. The creation account makes no mention of gender in the animals, but does focus on the gender distinction in mankind. The presence of sub-human gender distinctions does not negate the image quality of human gender distinctions, because it is in the *human* male and female that God has chosen to image himself.

Since it is the male-female relationship in [Gen. 1:26](#) which images God, the absence of marriage cannot be counted against this view, because male-female relationships can clearly be in a harmonious ordered relationship apart from marriage and procreation. Marriage, while certainly affording a tremendous opportunity for a man and woman to image God, is by no means at any place stated to be a necessary aspect of the image. Jesus himself as a single man is the greatest demonstration of this fact. Man and woman in relationship is sufficient to image God apart from the bond of marriage.

Hughes' final objection on the basis of the statements of Scripture which speak of the Christian being conformed to the image of Christ can also be readily answered. The

²¹ Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *Christian Ethics in Secular Society* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), pp. 149–151.

²² J. I. Packer, *Knowing Man* (Westchester, IL: Cornerstone, 1979), pp. 30–31.

statements of Scripture are not in dispute. What needs to be considered, however, is whether the intent of those passages is to give a complete exposition of what the image is and means. In the estimation of this writer this does not seem to be the case. [Romans 8:29](#) and [2 Corinthians 3:18](#) seem to concern themselves with the being and character of the individual, and not the relationships between male and female per se (though the being will admittedly have an effect on their relationships). A man or woman should be conformed to the image of Christ as he presents his being and character. These passages, however, are silent with regard to the relationship aspect of image, a silence born not out of opposition to the concept presented here, but rather a silence due to the limited intent of the passages themselves.

Thus that aspect of Barth's development of the doctrine of the *imago dei* which suggests an analogy of relation, that it is man as male and female which is the image of God, seems to be a valid and fair assessment of biblical teaching. With this conclusion Paul Jewett stands in complete agreement.²³ But from this he concludes that 'the theology of Man as male and female ... is inimical to a doctrine of sexual hierarchy. The basic thrust of that theology is rather one of a fellowship of equals under God.'²⁴ This fellowship of equals is [p. 224](#) reasserted in [Galatians 3:28](#) and therefore, Jewett urges, women ought not to be kept from the offices of the church.²⁵

AN ORDERED HARMONY

This reasoning depends on two premises: that [Genesis 1](#) teaches only an equality of sexes, and that subordination equals inferiority. Yet both of these premises are inaccurate. As was shown above, man as male and female in the image of God conveys not only a sense of equality but of order as well. As the Son, who is equally God with the Father, submits to the Father's will, so also the plurality of mankind can be expected to reflect a similar order among the sexes without losing the equality between the sexes. Subordination does not equal inferiority and [Genesis 1](#) does in fact allow for role relationships of male and female. According to Jewett, Paul's discussion of female subordination is drawn solely from [Genesis 2](#) which could be read to imply subordination, but which should be read—according to Jewett—only in terms of the equality of [Genesis 1](#). Thus subordination is due to a rabbinical tendency not to read [Genesis 2](#) in the context of [Genesis 1](#).²⁶ Quite the opposite appears to be true. [Genesis 2](#) speaks of subordination amidst equality *because* [Genesis 1](#) establishes man as male and female as analogous to the ordered Trinity-in-Unity Godhead. Paul may refer directly to the words of [Genesis 2](#), but these words are in accord with the teaching of [Genesis 1](#). It is not Paul the Apostle who misreads [Genesis 2](#); it is Paul King Jewett who misreads [Genesis 1](#).

Subordination is not the curse of the fall which is removed by the emancipatory work of Christ (according to Jewett's interpretation of [Galatians 3:28](#)). Rather, the fall occurred via insubordination (cf. [Gen. 3:6, 17](#)). As E. J. Young observes:

In the divinely imposed arrangement the woman was to occupy a certain position of subordination ... In the temptation and fall, however, she abandoned this subordinate role

²³ Paul K. Jewett, *Man as Male and Female* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), p. 49.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 142ff.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

and sought to assume a position of leadership. Thus she raised herself above the man, emancipating herself from him, and in addition she led him into sin.²⁷

Furthermore, the curse is not the imposition of order, but the effect of the fall on already established order, just as the curse on man is not the imposition of work, but the effect of the fall on already established [p. 225](#) work. The desire of the woman for her husband and his rule over her in [Genesis 3:16](#) must be understood in light of a parallel construction in [Genesis 4:7](#), where sin is said to desire Cain but which he must rule. Thus the desire of Eve/sin is seen to be a desire to master Adam/Cain.²⁸ The female, rather than imaging God by following the order in which she was created, would seek to rule her husband and his rule (also affected by sin) would thus be a burden. Instead of a plurality of persons in ordered harmony, there is a plurality of persons in disorder and disharmony, the latter already evidenced in the man blaming his wife for his own sin ([Gen. 3:12](#)). [Galatians 3:28](#) speaks of the salvation of man(kind), but does not address the ordered harmony between male and female as the image of God. A salvation which restores man(kind) in the image of God is not from disorder to no order but from disorder to order, or from disharmony to harmony.

On this basis Paul, rather than abusing [Genesis 2](#) out of context from [Genesis 1](#), shows a keen insight into both creation narratives when he discusses role relations in [1 Corinthians 11](#). Women can and should be in submission to men in the church (vss. [8-9](#)—a direct reference to [Genesis 2](#)) even though they are equal as persons (vss. [11-12](#)), because the man is head of the woman just as in the Triune Godhead the Father is head of the Son (vs. [3](#)). In relating the *order* of the relationship of male-and-female to the order of the Godhead, Paul seems quite likely to be making a veiled reference to [Genesis 1:27](#), where man(kind) is God's image as male and female. Paul seems to substantiate such an allusion by his reference to 'image' in verse [7](#) with the curious phrase '[man] is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of man.' No one wishes to argue that women are not in the image of God, so Paul cannot mean that only the man is in God's image. Rather, the context seems to indicate that Paul, in calling attention to the image, desires to stress its relational quality. From verse [3](#) we see that 'God' is used in the sense of 'Father' rather than 'Trinity'. Thus Paul stresses the fact that within the relational aspect of the image, it is the man that mirrors or 'images' the Father, and not the woman; though unstated, the clear implication is that she images or mirrors Christ. With this analysis Calvin is very much in agreement.

Both sexes were created in the image of God, and Paul exhorts women no less than men to be formed anew, according to that image. The *image*, however, of which he is now speaking relates to the order of marriage, and hence it belongs to the present life, and is not connected with conscience. [p. 226](#) The simple solution is this—that he does not treat here of innocence and holiness, which are equally becoming in men and women, but of the distinction, which God has conferred upon the man, so as to have superiority over the woman. In this superior order of dignity the glory of God is seen ...²⁹

This superiority is not with reference to worth or value, but of order and function. The ordered relationship between men and women argued for in verses [3](#) and [8-10](#) has its

²⁷ E. J. Young, *Genesis 3* (London: Banner of Truth, 1966), p. 126.

²⁸ Susan T. Foh, *Women and the Word of God* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1979), pp. 68–69.

²⁹ John Calvin, *Commentary on I and II Corinthians*, 2 Vols., reprint in 1 vol. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 1:357.

foundation in the *imago dei* (vs. 2). Bromiley capably shows how this passage uses the image to set forth the proper relationship between men and women.

The true relationship between man and woman is established on the basis of the *imago dei* in 1 Cor. 11:7 ... perhaps the true point of the introduction of the image here is that the relation between man and woman should reflect the relation between Father and Son within the godhead. Insofar as this relationship is demanded by the very structure of human life, the image is inescapably present. Insofar as it is perverted in practice, the inter-trinitarian relationship is no longer perceived. The true course is to remodel the practice on the divine original, so that this will be reflected not only in structure but in practice, too.³⁰

This is the very point which Jewett seems to miss completely. In speaking of man in the image of God as 'Man as male and female' or 'Man-in-fellowship', he ignores the nature of the fellowship of the three persons within the one Godhead of which the Man-in-fellowship is to be an image. The *economic* subordination of the Son to the Father in the Trinity does not negate their *essential* equality. The Father and Son are equally God, but the Son submits to his head, the Father. Paul very clearly understands this and relates it to the image in male and female (again, cf. [1 Cor. 11:3](#)). If only Jewett would recognize this, he would not have to posit an inconsistency within Paul. Further, it is this understanding which helps us to understand Paul's appeal to the angels as a ground for order in [1 Cor. 11:10](#). As C. K. Barrett indicates:

The angels are the guardians of the created order ... As such they would be particularly offended by the variation from the principle set out in verse 3.³¹

The angels who at creation were witnesses to the image of God in man [p. 227](#) as male and female, should also now, especially in the church as it worshipped, be able to look upon this new creation redeemed by Christ and see the image of God. But this requires the plurality of male and female within the church to be in an ordered harmony.

In a similar way this understanding of man-as-male-and-female as the image of God clarifies and confirms Paul's appeal to the creation order as the ground for woman *not* to teach or to have authority over men in the church ([1 Timothy 2:11–15](#)). The redeemed community should be ordered just as the unfallen community, as the image of God, was ordered. Paul does not ignore [Genesis 1](#) but rather confirms its implicit teaching which is then made explicit in [Genesis 2](#).

Thus the recognition of the image of God as man(kind)-as-male-and-female does not overthrow the traditional role distinctions within the church, but (contra Jewett) confirms them. As was seen earlier, this view of the *imago dei* does in fact have a Scriptural basis, finding its analogy in the Godhead itself. The Christian God is a Triune God, the fellowship of three persons within the one Godhead. The relationship (*relationis*) of these three persons is as much a part of their Godness as their being (*ousia*), for our God is not a one-person Unitarian God. Rather, he is eternally the Triune three-persons-in-one-divine-essence God. That both being and relationship, a plurality of persons in an ordered harmony, are reflected in his created image is not surprising but rather to be expected. Man is created in the divine image, male and female, a plurality of persons in ordered harmony, an order which does not deny equality, but an order which must be maintained in the church and specifically in the ministry and offices of the church.

³⁰ Bromiley, 'Image of God', *ISBE*, II:804.

³¹ C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), p. 254. cf. M. D. Hooker, 'Authority on Her Head', *New Testament Studies* 10 (April 1964), 410–416.

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Instruction on Certain Aspects of the Theology of Liberation

Vatican, Rome

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This is the second half of the Instruction (the first half was published in the last issue of ERT) which was adopted at an ordinary meeting of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith and was approved at an audience granted to Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger by his Holiness Pope John Paul II on 6th August, 1984.

This Instruction is one of the clearest and the most incisive evaluations of liberation theologies. Evangelicals will no doubt profit from several of the scriptural truths outlined in this document. We agree with the analysis that the aspiration and 'the positive will' for liberation is the result of Christian gospel. We also endorse the emphasis of liberation from sin as the primary and the basic liberation. But there are also some aspects which we cannot accept such as the voice of the Magisterium (the Church's authority over the Scriptures and the tradition). A further clarification is needed. The document uses the term 'evangelical' to mean 'Christian', 'spiritual', or 'gospel' rather than a reference to the theological stance of the historic movement for the defence and proclamation of biblical faith and authority.

The document also acknowledges certain significant limitations. It does not address itself to all the liberation theologies but rather only to those who have been inspired by the Marxist analysis and to those who have atheistic tendencies built into their framework. Some liberation theologies are more strongly grounded in biblical principles than others.

ERT will be publishing two important documents in the next issues: one will give an Evangelical Perspective on Roman Catholicism—the result of more than two years' study by the Theological Commission's Task Force dealing with the issue and the other is the Singapore Statement, from the Theological Commission's consultation in Singapore in June 1986. Both are very relevant for the theme under discussion.

(Editors)

IX THE THEOLOGICAL APPLICATION OF THIS CORE

1. The positions here in question are often brought out explicitly in certain of the writings of 'theologians of liberation'. In others, they follow logically from their premises. In addition, they are presupposed in certain liturgical practices, as for example a 'Eucharist' transformed into a celebration of the people in struggle, even though the persons **p. 229** who participate in these practices may not be fully conscious of it. We are facing, therefore, a real system, even if some hesitate to follow the logic to its conclusion. As such, this system is a perversion of the Christian message as God entrusted it to His Church.