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# EXPOUNDING 1 TIMOTHY 2:8–15

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Another article on this much-discussed passage? Here in Britain, the ordination of women to the priesthood of the Church of England has marked, for some evangelical Anglicans, the moment at which the Church of England has defected decisively from Scripture. Some have left the church as a result. The first such ordinations are taking place in cathedrals up and down the country almost weekly, as I write. Inevitably, our attention turns again to this text which seems so clearly to deny a teaching and leadership role to women in the church.

I feel deeply for the crisis of conscience which this has involved for many of my fellow-Anglicans. And I respect and admire the integrity and bravery with which some have given up paid ministry in the church. I want very much to remain in fellowship and love with these brothers in Christ. But I will argue in this article that they are mistaken in their exegesis of this central text, 1 Timothy 2:8–15. In spite of the deluge of writing about it, I am convinced that more can be said about this text. In particular, failure to be sensitive to the basic linguistic distinction between *meaning* and *reference* has muddied the waters of the discussion at certain crucial points.

Before plunging into the exegesis, some preliminaries.

(1) I do not survey and interact with the others who have written on this passage. This would be well beyond the scope of one article to attempt![1]

(2) I leave aside also the questions raised by other texts, particularly 1 Corinthians 14:33–35. Personally, I am convinced by the argument of Gordon Fee that these verses are a marginal comment by a scribe, which was incorporated into the text at an early date.[2] But I do not tackle that issue here.

(3) I leave aside also the positive arguments that might be deployed *for* the ordination of women to the priesthood. There is much that may be said. But the exegesis that follows has an essentially *negative* aim: it is concerned solely to show that 1 Timothy 2:8–15 does not put an insuperable Scriptural obstacle in the path of those who, *on other grounds*, feel that God is leading the church forward into a new affirmation of the ministry of women.

(4) Neither do I discuss the issue of the male 'overseer' of 1 Timothy 3:1–7. In addition to the definition of 'oversight', that passage raises a further hermeneutical issue: are the *assumptions* of Scripture as authoritative as its *requirements*? There Paul *assumes* that the 'overseer' will be

male, but *requires* him to be 'self-controlled, respectable, hospitable . . .' I do not tackle that question here—but I believe that this distinction between assumptions and requirements is vital for the proper application of the Scriptures today.[3]

(5) A word about method. Exegesis is a subtle art. We need to listen patiently and openly to the details of the text, to its movements and emphases, and to the inner connections of ideas. We need to keep asking the exegete's fundamental question, the one which unlocks the doors of meaning—*Why?* And this provides us with the right order of proceeding: we start with the phenomena of the text itself, and not with any presumed situational background. If the text throws up conundra which require it, then we will ask whether there is unspoken reference to some presumed background situation or need.

We need to bear in mind the pitfalls inherent in the process of 'mirror-reading'—while recognising the indispensability of it for an exact hearing of the voice of the text. 'Mirror-reading' is the term given by some to the process of using the phenomena of the text to reconstruct the situation addressed. In an excellent article John Barclay has highlighted the problems caused by a hasty assumption that any exhortation or warning implies that the opposite was being canvassed in the environment of the readers, and sets out helpful criteria to control the process.[4] To the criteria Barclay identifies, I would add 'surprising collocation': when two ideas are brought into connection with each other for no obvious reason of logic or theology, then it *may be* that the reason for the collocation lies in the situation addressed. This criterion is of particular significance for 1 Timothy 2:8–15.

(6) Finally, I assume a starting-point: it is not an option for evangelicals to say that Paul's teaching here may be set aside as the culturally limited voice of the first century, not applicable today. This is holy Scripture!

In what follows, I have generally provided my own translation of Paul, except where noted otherwise.

1 Timothy 2:8–15 begins with Paul expressing his desire that 'in every place the men should *pray* (emphatic), lifting holy hands without anger or disputing'. The phrase 'in every place' raises immediately the question which is so fundamental to the application of this passage: to what extent is Paul's teaching *locally directed*, so as not to be *universally binding*? Gordon Fee suggests that 'every place' refers to every house-church in Ephesus, so that the passage from the outset addresses issues particular to the Ephesian situation.[5] But 'in every place' is quite a common Pauline phrase—see also 1 Corinthians 1:2, 2 Corinthians 2:14, and 1 Thessalonians 1:8—and in all these cases it clearly has a more-than-local force. It is arguing too much to suggest that Paul is not giving universally binding instructions here.

And yet he phrases his instruction in a way that hints at special local



relevance. In 2:1 Paul has urged the whole church to pray, so 2:8 cannot be taken as a universal restriction of public prayer to men (cf. also 1 Cor. 11:5). So why then the specific reference to the *men*? We can connect this question with the gentle emphasis on the word 'pray', which highlights the contrast with the alternative, 'anger and disputing'. This is a 'surprising collocation', as defined above, for these are not the only things which might disturb prayer. So it looks as though the *instruction* may be of universal relevance, but the *need for it* may be something local to the Ephesian church. Paul addresses a particular encouragement to the men, *in view of a local Ephesian tendency to use their vocal organs for less spiritual forms of speech*! Instead of arguing, they should *pray*.

This relates to the opening verses of the letter. Paul's first concern in writing to Timothy is to support him in relation to the 'certain people' (sex not specified) who 'promote controversies' by pushing false teaching, also unspecified (1:3–4). It is not fanciful to connect the 'controversies' of 1:4 with the 'anger and disputing' of 2:8.

The word with which verses 9–10 begin (ὡσαύτως) is vital. The NIV translates it meekly with 'also', but it means much more than this. '*In the same way*, I want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety . . .'. Expressions like 'in the same way' are meat and drink to the exegete, because they are the hinges between ideas, or the oil that lubricates the flow of thought. But this one is puzzling—in fact, the first of a string of puzzles with which the passage now faces us. What is the inner connection ('in the same way') between telling the men not to argue but to pray, and telling the women not to dress extravagantly but to clothe themselves in good deeds? Again, we encounter a 'surprising collocation'.

Paul's language about the unacceptable dress is strangely emphatic, putting together a string of expressions for various types of adornment, mainly expensive—'not wearing braided hair and gold, pearls or rich clothing'. Why is the *modest dress* of the women cognate with the *peaceful prayer* of the men? No obvious connection of logic or practice suggests itself. So the answer may again lie in the social conditions of the church in which Timothy ministers.

Verse 11 continues the exhortation to women, urging them to 'learn in quietness and full submission'. Here it is important to emphasise two things:

(1) 'Quietness' (ἡσυχία) is not 'silence': it is the practical expression of the 'peaceful and quiet life' (same word) for which the whole church is encouraged to pray in 2:2.

And (2) 'submission' does not mean 'submission to the men', I contend, but 'submission to the church'. The women must not be like the false teachers against whom Paul writes in chapter 1: they claim to teach the law, but their first mark is that they are 'lawbreakers and

unsubmissive' (1:9—same word). In a general way, these false teachers disrupt the peace of the church by refusing to submit to the disciplines of a godly life—as Paul makes crystal clear in 1:9–10. Here in chapter 2 the context concerns the church gathered for prayer, so we should probably understand this 'submission' in the light of Paul's exhortation in Ephesians 5:21 to 'submit to one another in the fear of Christ'. That exhortation is also given in the context of the church at *worship*, as here (Eph. 5:18–20).

'Submission' is the mark of a church at peace with itself. It is basically a mutual commitment to live in harmony and peace, and to accept each other's ministry as fellow-members of the body of Christ—something directly challenged by the arguing of the men, and also (apparently) by the extravagant dress of the women. Both arguing and extravagant dress are violations of submission—that is, they make it impossible for the church to worship as a whole, 'with all reverence and dignity' (2:2). Again, we inevitably wonder about the particular significance of *braided hair and jewellery*: why does Paul focus on this? No answer immediately suggests itself from the passage, except that it points to self-advertisement and self-assertion, rather than quiet submission to the needs of others.[6]

In relation to these instructions to the women in 2:9–11, therefore, we must say the same as about 2:8, that the teaching is of *universal application* but of *local causation*. By no means all women could (and can!) adorn themselves with gold and pearls. And in certain times and places it is perfectly possible for a woman to wear gold ear-rings and an expensive dress while still acting modestly and submissively towards the rest of the church. In other words, there is no *necessary, global* incompatibility between expensive coiffeur and dress on the one hand, and 'quietness' on the other. So they must be set in opposition to each other because they were *locally* incompatible—in Ephesus.

This brings us to verse 12. Paul expands his exhortation to submission with 'I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent' (NIV). Here three exegetical points are vital:

(1) 'Silent' is a mistranslation—and a gravely misleading one. 'She must be there in quietness' would be a better translation of the last phrase, which is in *contrast* to 'have authority over a man' and in *parallel* to 'in submission' in 2:11. The word is again ἡσυχία, as in 2:11, the word that indicates the 'quiet life' for which the church is to pray (2:2). This 'quietness' or 'submission' is clearly violated by 'having authority over a man'.

This mistranslation illustrates the importance of not blurring the distinction between 'meaning' and 'reference' in exegesis. ἡσυχια has quite a broad 'meaning' or 'semantic range', covering *rest, relaxation, quietness, leisure, peace*: it is both an attitude and an associated action (or possibly inaction!). On many occasions, of course, ἡσυχια would be expressed and evidenced by silence, and thus would *refer* to silence. But it does not *mean* 'silence', because it could be expressed in many other ways, also: it could *refer* to sitting, praying, reading, debating, drinking with friends—all activities which could be expressions of ἡσυχία for Greeks.



The NIV has made the judgment that, on this occasion, it refers to silence. Is this justified? No. The contrast with 'teach and have authority over a man' hardly suggests silence, because there are many forms of speech which do not involve teaching or exercising 'authority'—singing, praying, reading, asking questions. The translators may have been influenced by 1 Corinthians 14:34, which clearly states, 'Let the women be silent in the churches! For they are not permitted to speak . . .' But there a different word is used (σιγᾶν)—and different problems are raised. The context here in 1 Timothy 2 strongly suggests that Paul simply wants the women to avoid types of behaviour which violate ἡσυχία, that 'tranquil life' which Paul urges them to lead 'with all reverence and dignity' (2:2).

(2) The likelihood that Paul is continuing to deal with violations of 'quietness' in worship gatherings lends support to the view that 'have authority over' is also a mistranslation. Much has been written recently about the word Paul uses here, αὐθεντεῖν.[7] For some reason, he avoids the usual word for 'exercise authority over' (ἐξουσιάζειν), and chooses instead this extremely rare word, whose meaning remained unclear until scholars were able to use the computerised word-search facilities provided by the 'TLG' project[8] to find many more examples of it than were previously known. Debate still continues over its precise nuances. But in this case also, a failure to distinguish between meaning and reference has unnecessarily complicated matters.

In a nutshell, the picture revealed by the studies of this word shows that it changed its meaning quite markedly over the 400-year period from 200 BC to AD 200. At the beginning of this period, it was thoroughly nasty, sometimes even signifying 'murder'. But by the end of this period it had been rehabilitated, particularly by Christian writers, and could be a synonym of ἐξουσιάζειν. By the time of Chrysostom, memory of its earlier 'nasty' meaning had faded completely.[9]

In fact we should be more precise and speak of a change of characteristic *reference*, rather than a dramatic change of *meaning*, in the case of this word. As far as its basic denotation is concerned, it has a broad semiotic range, denoting the assertion of the self over others —and obviously there are many ways and circumstances, both good and bad, in which this can happen. Murder is self-assertion to the point of depriving another of life. But generally speaking it is clear that this basic meaning or denotation was *referred* to progressively 'better' things as time went by.[10]

Looking at its use in 1 Timothy 2:12, the context suggests that a

'nasty' reference is in mind. 'Teach and αὐθεντεῖν over a man' is the *opposite* of ἡσυχία. We could suggest translations like 'domineer'[11] or 'boss around', although we need to be as sensitive as we can towards the text in seeking the reference of this word. What exactly were the women doing? We can say four things with reasonable certainty from the text here. This disruptive self-assertion which disturbed ἡσυχία was expressed (a) by extravagant self-advertisement through dress, especially by wealthy women in the church, and (b) by behaviour in which the women in some sense asserted themselves over the men. The fact that Paul links αὐθεντεῖν with *teaching* suggests that (c) the (some?) women had started holding classes or speaking in church in *rivalry*, perhaps even in *opposition*, to male teachers in the church. We know from 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4 what Paul would have thought of such divisive behaviour. (No wonder the men needed to be warned against 'anger and disputing'!) And (d) the fact that the prohibition on teaching balances the command to 'learn in quietness' suggests that their teaching was at the very least inadequate, possibly heretical (cf. 1:3).

(3) It is thus vital that we understand the two infinitives in 2:12 in relation to each other. The second qualifies the first: 'I do not permit a woman to teach—that is, to boss a man around'. In Titus 2:3 Paul envisages women teaching, so a total prohibition is here impossible. There is much to support the view that Paul did not restrict the teaching gift and ministry to men.[12] Piper and Grudem suggest that the gifted and highly-educated Priscilla was in Ephesus at the time of the writing of this letter, and draw the conclusion that even as significant a woman as she was barred from teaching men in public.[13] However, it is possible to stand this argument on its head. If Priscilla was exercising a leading role in the church in Ephesus (as in Acts 18:26), then it would be clear to all readers that Paul's prohibition here refers to something quite different from her ministry—in fact, something thoroughly unsavoury in comparison with the wholesome and gentle instruction she gave to Apollos. The second verb introduces the qualification made necessary by what sounds at first like a blanket prohibition: Paul only prohibits teaching expressed through domineering bossiness, and urges 'quietness' instead.

And of course not only women may be guilty of bossiness! Paul does not re-use the word, but his later instructions to Timothy amount to the same thing. In his teaching, Timothy is to 'provide a model for the believers in speech, in lifestyle, in love, in faith, in purity' (4:12); he must beware of the love of money (a fault of these richly-dressed women?), and instead 'pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness' (6:10–11).

Verse 13 begins with 'for', and thus poses the first of a series of puzzles that face us in 2:13–15. What kind of explanation or justification does this 'for' introduce? More fundamentally, why does Paul introduce



Adam and Eve at this point? Of what significance can *the order of their creation* possibly be (2:14)? Is Paul really aligning himself with the commonplace Jewish view[14] that women are inherently more gullible than men (2:14)? And why does he suddenly introduce the theme of childbirth in 2:15?

The 'traditional' explanation of these verses finds here an appeal to a creation order or mandate as the justification for the precedence given to men in the ministry of the church. In 2:13–14, it is maintained, Paul gives the *Scriptural justification* for the prohibition on women teaching which he has just given. The universal applicability of this prohibition thus rests on a something fundamental to our identity as men or women—or rather, on two 'somethings', (a) the priority of *the man* in creation (2:13), and (b) the priority of *the woman* in the Fall (2:14). Both these facts make it appropriate, it is held, for women to observe silence in the public ministry of the church. And on this basis the trans-situational nature of Paul's teaching is underlined.

I believe that this exegesis is fundamentally flawed. It faces deep-seated problems of *logic*, of *justice*, and of *theological consistency*, and should be gently pensioned off.

*Its logic is highly questionable.* On what grounds do we justifiably deduce male authority and female submission from the fact that Adam was created first? Douglas Moo is explicit about it: 'The logic of this passage . . . make[s] this clear: for Paul, the man's priority in the order of creation is indicative of the headship that man is to have over woman. The woman's being created after man, as his helper, shows the position of submission that God intended as inherent in the woman's relation to the man, a submission that is violated if a woman teaches doctrine or exercises authority over a man.'[15] But what does this have to do with 'logic'? Male headship can no more be *logically* deduced from prior creation than can human authority over the rest of creation be deduced from the creation of mankind *after* the animals. In both cases, we require more than merely the order of events to secure the authority. Moo implicitly recognises this by the little qualification 'as his helper' in the statement above (which is loaded and question-begging, so far as Genesis 2 is concerned!). But as he himself points out, Paul's whole emphasis here falls strongly just on the *order* of creation, which in itself says nothing about the relative authority of Adam and Eve.

I listen very seriously to Paul, as an apostle of our Lord. But I would want to engage in brotherly debate with him, if he is arguing something so vital as male authority and female submission on such inadequate logic. As a matter of exegetical principle, I will feel more drawn to an explanation which rests on some clear logical entailment.

The same applies to the argument from Genesis 3, in 2:14. *If* Paul is saying that women are inherently more liable to be deceived than men, because of Eve's deception, then once again we must challenge the

logic. This was certainly a widespread view, as noted above. But popularity has never guaranteed logical exactness. With as much logical force, we could suggest that, because of Eve, all women have a more powerful response to the appearance, colour and smell of fruit, than men!

In any case, the next objection also applies here:

*Its justice is highly debatable.* It is important for exegesis to be committed, and not just to stand back and affect an uncritical objectivity. And so I ask: how can it possibly be just for all women to be debarred from teaching and from positions of authority in the church, simply because it was Eve, rather than Adam, who fell first into sin? The accusation of injustice here can only be parried by replying that a permanent change in the relationship between men and women was introduced by the sin of Eve. And of course this was true: 'Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you' (Gen. 3:16b). But Paul makes no mention of this curse on the woman! It could be that the reference to child-bearing in 2:15 is a veiled allusion to it, 'with pain you will give birth to children' (Gen. 3:16a)—but why does he refer to that aspect of the curse, when the other would have been so much more germane to his argument? In any case, if he *is* referring to Genesis 3:16a in verse 15, the force of his remark is that women are *saved* from the effects of the curse, and not still subject to it.

So once again we are required to believe that the vital step in the argument—in this case, that because of the Fall women are to be ruled over by men—is implied and not actually expressed. To my mind, this makes the exegesis unlikely. If, on the other hand, this 'traditional' exegesis seeks to make sense of the passage on the basis of what Paul *does* say, rather than on the basis of what it deems to be implied, then it lays itself open to a grave charge of injustice.

But if the exegesis does appeal to an implied Genesis principle of male authority, then we will have to say also that:

*Its theological consistency is suspect.* I want to make sense of this passage in the context of Pauline theology and anthropology as a whole. If the argument here rests upon the curse of male domination pronounced in Genesis 3:16, then it is hard to reconcile with Romans 5:12–21 and 1 Corinthians 15:22, 45–49, where the vital thrust of Paul's teaching is that our connection with Adam has been broken, our consequent enslavement to sin has been ended, and we are now 'in Christ', that is, we have been translated into a whole new humanity in which grace reigns, and not death. The curse has been dissolved.

It is not surprising, therefore, that proponents of this 'traditional' exegesis seek to find the Scriptural foundation for male authority in the creation accounts of Genesis 1–2, before the Fall, rather than in Genesis 3, after it. The trouble with this approach is twofold: (a) 1 Timothy 2:14 is without question an argument based on the Fall, however we interpret it, and (b) Genesis 1–2 provides very slender grounds for male authority, scarcely sufficient to justify a total ban on women teaching men.



This second point needs to be developed briefly. The first creation account paints a picture of undifferentiated equality between the sexes (Gen. 1:27–28). The second calls the woman 'a help corresponding to him' (*ēzer kᵉnegdō*)[16] and emphasises the perfect way in which she complements and matches him, meeting his need for a companion like all the other animals (Gen. 2:18–24). Only the use of the word 'help' might provide some ground for male authority. But in the Genesis context this 'help' is very specific—the woman supplies the man's need for a perfect companion. It hardly provides a mandate for total silence in church. One can imagine situations in which wise women might 'help' the men of a congregation by bringing some much-needed Scriptural illumination to bear. (In fact, imagination is not required: we Christian men have surely all experienced it, whether in private or through public ministry!)

The essay devoted to this topic in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (which as a whole is a sustained and detailed defence of the 'traditionalist' position[17]) can only find a mandate for a vague male 'responsibility' in Genesis 2:18–25, and does this not on the basis of any substantial exegesis but simply by extrapolation from the word 'helper'.[18]

So the 'traditional' exegesis of 1 Timothy 2:12–15 faces the double dilemma, (a) that Paul clearly appeals to the Fall in justification of his ban on female teaching and authority, and yet elsewhere declares us free of the curse of the Fall in Christ—so 2:14 becomes a conundrum; and (b) that Genesis 1–2 does not provide a sufficient mandate for full male authority of the sort apparently taught in 2:12—so 2:13 apparently misuses Genesis by deducing more from the order of creation than can logically or exegetically be drawn from it.

The 'traditional' exegesis thus faces us with grave difficulties. I would contend that its fundamental purpose is in reality to bring what Paul *actually* says into line with what Paul *ought to have said* in justification of the blanket prohibition found in 2:12. But what if there is no blanket prohibition in 2:12? How do verses 12–15 read, assuming the exegesis of verses 8–12 proposed above?

We must first recognise the surprising nature of these verses. In fact, we have here another 'surprising collocation' which alerts us to the possibility that Paul is addressing particular factors in Timothy's situation. Such an address would follow on from 2:8–12, where we have already felt the presence of extra-textual factors in the conversation. From our point of view, listening in on this conversation between Paul and Timothy, the *surprises* are (a) the appeal to Adam and Eve (why should they be introduced, to support a prohibition on female bossiness and disruption of ἡσυχία?); and (b) the choice of the three things

mentioned in 2:13–15—the order of creation, the deception of Eve as opposed to Adam, and 'salvation through childbirth'. The last of the three is particularly surprising.

Richard and Cathy Kroeger have done much to help us answer these questions.[19] Their work has been criticised because it relies on sources much later than the New Testament period, and the force of this criticism must be granted. We simply do not know how many of the ideas associated with later Gnosticism were already current in the first century. But Paul's parting shot to Timothy is to 'guard the deposit, turning away from worldly, empty talk and the objections put up by falsely-named "knowledge" (γνῶσις), which some have accepted and so wandered from the faith' (6:20–21). So the letter itself reveals that γνῶσις has become a semi-technical term in its environment, and invites us to ask the questions which the Kroegers have explored. And, granted the necessary caution about dating, they have been able to adduce sufficient evidence for us to say that we can mirror-read Paul's words with reasonable certainty—although still conjecturally. We cannot adduce all their evidence here. But the exegetical results are these:

Verse 13 can be brought into connection with the 'myths and endless genealogies' against which Timothy is warned in 1:4—remembering that the 'anger and disputing' in 2:8 can plausibly be connected with the 'controversies' caused by these 'false doctrines' in the church (1:3). Some Ephesian women could well have been promoting a new genealogy in which Eve came first, not Adam. If this is the case, then 2:13 picks up the prohibition on teaching in 2:12a, and the 'for' connects it by opposing the specific content of the teaching which accompanied and expressed this female self-assertion within the church.

We just do not know what these women might have been saying about the Fall. But it is quite possible that Adam was getting the lion's share of the blame! Certainly 2:14 seems to be countering some such re-writing of the Genesis story. The final three words in 2:14 are emphatic—Eve 'fell into transgression' (NIV 'became a sinner')—and could likewise be designed to counter a down-playing of Eve's sinfulness.

Verse 15 causes special problems. But here the very mention of child-birth lends credence to the Kroegers' overall approach, even if we cannot know which, or indeed whether any, of the later-attested views were current in Paul's day. We can bring 2:15 into connection with the denial of marriage mentioned in 4:3 as one of the tenets of the false teachers, and mirror-read a situation in which both marriage and child-birth were shunned as part of an overall 'package' of female supremacy. Against this background, Paul assures Timothy (and through him these erring women) that child-birth does not jeopardise salvation, but is perfectly compatible with it—provided that faith, love, holiness and decency are there as well.

This exegesis, for all its speculative nature, makes much more compelling and consistence *sense* than the 'traditional' alternative. It carefully asks 'Why?' about the *surprising* features of Paul's writing. It allows what Paul *actually says*, rather than what he might *imply*, to play a direct role in the argument. It does justice to the choice of the unusual word αὐθεντεῖν. And it allows a more consistent presentation of Paul, who signally fails to mention the sex of the recipients in all three passages devoted to spiritual gifts (Rom. 12:3–8; 1 Cor. 12:4–31; Eph. 4:7–16), as though it mattered not a whit. How misleading, if the traditional interpretation of these verses is correct!



The aim was limited, so also is the conclusion: 1 Timothy 2:8–15 does not form an obstacle to those who find themselves impelled, on other grounds, to support the ordination of women to the priesthood, or the place of women in the public ministry of the church.

Endnotes

1 I warmly commend the recent book by Craig S. Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives: Marriage and Women's Ministry in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1992), for its carefulness and exhaustive interaction with the writings of others.

2 G.D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 699–708. D.A. Carson replies in ' "Silent in the Churches": On the Role of Women in 1 Corinthians 14:33b–36', in John Piper and Wayne Grudem (eds.) *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1991), 141–45. (This volume is cited as *RBMW* below.)

3 Failure to do so can lead to bizarre results. For instance, Michael Schluter and Roy Clements have argued that, because the extended family was the normal social pattern in the Old Testament, Christians should develop and campaign for social policies which would re-establish the extended family today (*Reactivating the Extended Family: From Biblical Norms to Public Policy in Britain*, Cambridge: Jubilee Centre, 1986). But the Old Testament also assumes slavery, polygamy, a clan and tribal structure, and local administration of justice—so that the clan elders could execute a rebellious son (Deut. 21:18–21). Do these also constitute 'norms' to be 'reactivated'? Responsible hermeneutics *must* distinguish assumptions from requirements.

4 J.M.G. Barclay, 'Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case', *JSNT* 31 (1987), 73–93.

5 G.D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1988), 71.

6 Keener, *Women and Wives*, 103–107 has helpfully gathered material illustrating the view, held widely by both Jews and Gentiles, that inner beauty of character was much more valuable than external adornment—while at the same time physical beauty was also highly prized.

7 In recent years the word has been studied by George W. Knight III, 'AYΘENTEΩ in Reference to Women in 1 Timothy 2.12', *NTS* 30 (1984), 143–57; Catherine Clark Kroeger, '1 Timothy 2:12—A Classicist's View', in Alvera Mickelsen (ed.), *Women, Authority and the Bible: An Evangelical Breakthrough on the Biblical Debate* (Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering, 1987), 225–44; L.E. Wilshire, 'The TLG Computer and Further Reference to AYΘENTEΩ in 1 Timothy 2.12', *NTS* 34 (1988), 120–34; Douglas J. Moo, 'What Does It Mean Not to Teach or Have Authority Over Men?', *RBMW*, 179–93; Robert W. Yarbrough, 'I Suffer Not a Woman: A Review Essay', *Presbyterion* 18 (1992), 25–33; L.E. Wilshire, '1 Timothy 2:12 Revisited: A Reply to Paul W. Barnett and Timothy J. Harris', *EvQ* 65 (1993), 43–55.

8 The 'TLG' project ('Thesaurus Linguae Graeca'), based at the University of California, has entered virtually the entire corpus of ancient Greek literature spanning some

63 million words, 3,000 authors and a 1,200-year period onto a computer data-base, enabling searches of many kinds to be carried out. This enabled Wilshire to survey a total of 329 occurrences of αὐθεντεῖν and its cognates in his *NTS* article.

9 See the summary of Chrysostom's use of the word in Wilshire, 'AYΘENTEΩ', 131–32.

10 The distinctive feature of the contribution of Richard and Cathy Kroeger to the debate about this word is their attempt to define this hub 'denotation' as 'to declare oneself the author or source of anything' (R.C. and C.C. Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11–15 in the Light of Ancient Evidence* [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992], 101–103). They then explain 1 Timothy 2:12 against the background of various Gnostic cults in which women regarded themselves as the superior sex, from whom men were derived. But this approach falls foul (I submit) of what James Barr has taught us to know as the 'etymological fallacy' (*The Semantics of Biblical Language* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961]). The meaning or denotation of a word cannot be sought through its etymology, but only through its usage. And in the realm of usage we can often only gain access to the *meaning* of words like αὐθεντεῖν (that is, their conceptual semiotic range) by observing the range and variety of their *reference*.

11 Among translations, this word is used here only by NEB. Moffatt and REB translate 'dictate to', and Knox 'issue commands to'. Apart from these, the consistent translation is 'have (or exercise) authority over'.

12 See the Appendix 'Women's Ministry Elsewhere in Paul' in Keener, *Women and Wives*, 237–57.

13 Piper and Grudem, 'An Overview of General Concerns', *RBMW*, 82.

14 David M. Scholer summarises and attests this viewpoint in '1 Timothy 2:9–15 and the Place of Women in the Church's Ministry', in Mickelsen, *Women, Authority and the Bible*, 210.

15 Moo, 'What Does It Mean', *RBMW*, 190.

16 The word *neged* means 'the front of', and then by extension comes to mean 'the conspicuous or distinctive characteristics' of something (BDB, 617ab). The woman is a 'help' in that she matches the distinctive features of the man exactly.

17 In fairness we must recognise that Piper and Grudem reject the word 'traditionalist' as a description of *RBMW*, on the ground that 'it implies an unwillingness to let Scripture challenge traditional patterns of behaviour' (xiv).

18 Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr., 'Male-Female Equality and Male Headship: Genesis 1–3', *RBMW*, 95–112.

19 See their work, *I Suffer Not a Woman*, and Cathy Kroeger's essay 'A Classicist's View' both cited above.