

Cultural Confusion and the Role of Women in the Church:

A Study of I Timothy 2:8-14

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Introduction

As the preacher finished her morning sermon in the Pastoral Epistles she stated, "Next Sunday we will consider one of the most stimulating subjects in our society: The role of women in church leadership." The thought went over positively with the people. After all, this church had called her to be their pastor only a few months earlier. There had been an exodus of some of the old diehards but the majority of the congregation stayed either out of curiosity or because of integral family ties. The new preacher was middle-aged, married, attractive, and well-educated. Compared to the previous clergy person she was much more accessible to the congregation. As I spoke with some of the members afterward it was evident they were pleased with their new pastor.

What has brought about the entry of females into leadership roles as head pastors, co-pastors, deacons, elders, chaplains, pastor-counselors, campus ministers, general staff appointees in positions formerly held only by men?

The most recent survey of all denominations reveals that there were 3,276 women clergy in 1930 and 11,130 in 1980. Carroll notes:

The large-scale entry of women into the ordained ministry is not an isolated phenomenon. It is part and parcel of broader changes in the attitudes and structure of American society regarding "woman's place," including her place in the work force. In 1950, for example, 29.6 percent of the American labor force was female; by 1980, the percentage increased to 42.5.¹

It would be easy and typical for many conservative evangelicals and fundamentalists to dismiss this phenomenon as something that will never happen in their church. Yet the issue is in their very midst! Though it may not be obvious, there are silent sympathizers who, if given the opportunity, would and ultimately will endorse the egalitarian cause. Men and women in the work force are going to their life experience and reading it back into their church life and ultimately into the Scripture. That experience increasingly affords women a role of equality in the secular domain and in growing amounts of church domain. This switch which began in the context of secular culture and is being read into church culture has caused theologians to reevaluate the traditional biblical view of male/female role relationships. Perhaps the old notion of a hierarchical understanding was never initially accurate? When did submission begin?

Are women inferior to men? Did Christ and Paul disagree on the woman's role? If God gave women extraordinary gifts, why does the church limit their participation? How may a woman function in the church? Are the Apostle Paul's directives to women cultural or normative (I Cor 11:2-16; 14:34-35; I Tim 2:8-15)?

It is the purpose of this article to isolate one particular text, I Timothy 2:8-14, and briefly review the literature about certain exegetical and hermeneutical concerns regarding the cultural validity of Paul's restrictions to women in the church. For many the hermeneutical answer to this question provides the basis as to how one will respond to the other above inquiries. First, this will begin with a brief overview of the current state of feminist hermeneutics and its relationship to cultural concerns. Secondly, areas of exegetical importance in I Timothy 2:8-14 will be examined. Thirdly, some principles for cultural/normative interpretation of I Timothy 2:8-14 will be discussed. Finally, some summary thoughts will be offered.

Hermeneutics and Feminism

As in most current theological concerns, hermeneutics is at the heart of the issue. R K Johnston notes: "From the earliest days of the current discussion it has been recognized that the question regarding the role of women within the congregation and the home is largely a hermeneutical one."² Through an assumed hermeneutical approach, individuals attempt to determine what the text means for them. This has become a much larger discipline than exegesis. Scholars have points of exegetical disagreement but within the discipline itself one can only project different parameters of word meaning and grammatical clause structure that are confined to certain historical and literary contexts. Thus, words cannot have meanings of which readers have never heard. However, the hermeneutical ramifications of passages dealing with women offer numerous approaches and differing interpretive results. Even after exegesis occurs the results are filtered into a hermeneutical structure that tends to eisegete the text. Scholars are forever trying to discover a new method of interpretation to give role relationship texts meaning and significance for current culture. Even if, have no understanding of exegesis, they may offer an interpretive opinion. Fee notes: "All people 'do' hermeneutics, even if they they know nothing about exegesis. It is no wonder that there are so many differences among Christians..."³ While not implying that those who have studied role relationships have no exegetical ability, it is suggested that the hermeneutical approaches and opinions are varied and sometimes considerably weak in exegetical substantiation.

Hermeneutical Approaches to Role Relationship Texts

Several overlapping interpretive methods that have developed address the biblical texts dealing with women. Most of these approaches are from the feminist perspective which parallels the more recent sympathy for

egalitarianism in culture as a whole. The views that are developing have become much more serious and well-defined in the past several years. The following eight views are briefly offered.⁴

View #1: Jewish Hermeneutics. This view attempts to examine biblical texts from the viewpoint of rabbinic tradition, outside the framework of the Christian church. Judaism has its own definition of certain concepts of theology, canon, and exegetical traditions. Thus, Jewish feminist hermeneutics carries many extra-biblical traditions considered important for interpretation. Rightfully it also critiques much of Christian feminism as a new form of anti-Semitism since it often accuses first century Judaism of being oppressive, patriarchal, misogynist, and androcentric.⁵

View #2: Radical Hermeneutics. This view rejects the Bible as thoroughly oppressive, patriarchal and misogynist. It offers little hope of recovering support of any value for egalitarianism from the text.

View #3: Recounting Hermeneutics. This approach observes the texts which oppress women as terrible experiences that must not be repeated.⁶ Tribble's goal is to interpret

stories of outrage on behalf of their female victims in order to recover a neglected history, to remember a past that the present embodies, and to pray that these terrors shall not come to pass again. In telling sad stories a feminist hermeneutic seeks to redeem the time.⁷

View #4: Reconstruction of Biblical History Hermeneutics. Championed by Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, this view along with views #2 and #3 takes a radical approach to the biblical text.⁸ Fiorenza views the Bible as a skewed document regardless of one's approach whether patriarchal or feministic. She espouses the principle that everyone has an advocacy viewpoint from which he or she approaches the text. Fiorenza's point of view is feministic.

Her approach is basically four-fold. First, one must suspect the text of being androcentric and patriarchal. Second, one must proclaim the texts as supportive of women. Third, the texts which have been traditionally interpreted must be retrieved and re-explained. Fourth, it is important to recreate the texts to fit the current Christian tradition.⁹

View #5: Liberating Hermeneutics. This method seeks to view biblical texts that call for liberation of oppression as the norm.¹⁰ The way Jesus treated women and the Pauline message of Galatians 3:28 are viewed as the standard.

View #6: Documentation Hermeneutics. The next two types have similar approaches and are used in varying degrees by those who would call themselves evangelical feminists.

This method enjoined by Jewett¹¹ and Mollenkott¹² attacks hierarchalism in the biblical tradition. Many texts are viewed as representing the egalitarian viewpoint. This position also tends to see Paul contradicting himself. He is viewed as sometimes speaking as a Rabbi, espousing hierar-

chalism; and at other times he is viewed as presenting the new vision of Christ, egalitarianism. Jewett finds tension between the Jewish and Christian perspective in Pauline writings.

Because these two perspectives—the Jewish and the Christian—are incompatible, there is no satisfying way to harmonize the Pauline argument for female subordination with the larger Christian vision of which the great apostle to the Gentiles was himself the primary architect. It appears from the evidence that Paul himself sensed that his view of the man/woman relationship inherited from Judaism, was not altogether congruous with the gospel he preached.¹³

View #7: Retrieval Hermeneutics. Similar to the previous hermeneutic view which endorses biblical authority, this view is more moderate and also espouses inerrancy. This approach claims that the Bible does not support what it has been assumed to teach about subordinate roles of females in the church. While there are certain localized cultural passages that may have shown limited submission of women (I Cor 11:3-16; I Tim 2:8-15) they have been wrongfully interpreted over the centuries. Furthermore, Galatians 3:28 should be retrieved (or recalled) as the norm through which all other texts must be read. Scanzoni and Hardesty note:

The matter of hermeneutics is central in discussing the question of women's role and status. For too long proof texts from the Bible have been hurled at women to "keep them in their place." Now the church is beginning to take a new look at Scriptural teachings on human personhood and human relationships with regard to both sexes.¹⁴

View #8: Sustaining Hermeneutics. This view attempts to review and uphold all traditional interpretation intact except where a cultural situation is not intended to be normative. Those who affirm the traditional subordination of women to men in marriage and in the church are generally referred to as conservative evangelicals and/or fundamentalists. This hermeneutic is often termed anti-feminist. Lightfoot comments:

Lately, Paul has suffered immeasurably from the advocates of women's liberation. Again and again he has been made the whipping boy, the classic male chauvinist of all time...Paul clearly is not misogynist in his views on women and second,...his different statements on women are not in irreconcilable disarray and mutually contradictory.¹⁵

Having briefly examined several of the latest approaches surrounding feminist hermeneutics, it is time to test the way some of these positions would represent cultural or normative validity of principles surrounding the injunctions about women. The primary reference to be tested is I Timothy 2:8-14.

Feminism and its Relationship to Cultural Concerns

An overview of the eight positions reveals that views #2 through #5 would not uphold the integrity of the Biblical text. For this reason there is little interest among supporters of these positions to view stipulations regarding women's submission to man as being any more than 1) male chauvinism, 2) interpolated texts which are blatantly inconsistent with

other points in the biblical record, or 3) notions which are out of place with current egalitarian thought.

The authority of Scripture is not considered sacred causing their advocates to bring any number of pre-understandings to the text. However, the last three hermeneutical positions reveal much more interest in desiring to hermeneutically harmonize biblical accounts. View #6 appeals to the authority of Scripture but not to inerrancy. Views #7 and #8 claim to endorse inerrancy. These latter three views, documentation, retrieval, and sustaining, make great attempts to interact with each other while at the same time protecting the cultural and abiding validity of the biblical record. In representing the interaction and intentions of these groups, Fee's comment is appropriate.

The big issue among Christians committed to Scripture as God's Word has to do with problems of cultural relativity, what is cultural and therefore belongs to the first century alone and what transcends culture and is thus a word for all seasons.¹⁶

How then would each of these groups view I Timothy 2:11-14 with regard to traditional roles for women? The documentation and retrieval hermeneutical stances with their egalitarian tendencies basically fret about the exclusionary implications of this passage and about the apparent contradictions between it and others of the Pauline corpus. The sustaining view espousing traditional roles for women in the church sometimes wields these verses as a "coup de grace"¹⁷ which prohibits women from various leadership functions.

R K Johnston who espouses an egalitarian view offers some unique terminology that could be applied here. In his discussion on the hermeneutical issue of women, he warns against the egalitarians becoming "dualistic" in their approach to Scripture.¹⁸ There is a danger of isolating the time bound from the universal, the human from the divine, the rabbinic from the Christian. On the other hand, he warns the traditionalists of a parallel danger, that of "spiritualizing" Scripture by treating it unhistorically. He notes:

Rather than viewing Scripture as being time bound, it is now understood as timeless truth. Just as the dualist stumbles over the Bible's humanness, so the spiritualizer errs in his understanding of Scripture's "supernatural" nature. The former seems overcome by Scripture's time-relatedness; the latter seeks to deny this time-relatedness any real significance.¹⁹

Still one is faced with the question who is correct and what is cultural or normative? The case should not be biased before considering the evidence. Still it may be asserted that most recent literature opts for a dualistic perspective. These opposing dangers that Johnston observes are often a reality. The dualists explain away abiding principles by making them cultural.

It is this writer's contention, however, that those whom Johnston would call guilty of spiritualizing are merely honoring truths which transcend culture and cannot be either illuminated due to current life style

or negated due to increased awareness of general revelation. Perhaps if the potential for danger of spiritualizing is limited to those who never understand real cultural principles as temporary it is justified.²⁰ However, it is unwarranted to apply this claim to those who are basing timeless principles on creation order. The determination of time bound or timeless principles in I Timothy 2 must begin by addressing limited exegetical considerations.

I Timothy 2:8-14: Areas of Exegetical Importance

Submission is established in I Timothy 2 as the reason why females are to remain silent in the church. They are commanded to receive instruction with all submissiveness and not to be teachers or exercise authority over men (I Tim 2:11-12).

It is generally understood that I Timothy 2 is addressing itself to problems of public worship.²¹ In the early part of the chapter instruction is given regarding public prayer (I Tim 2:1-7). Paul proceeds to indicate who may pray publicly as an obligation which rests on men. The term used for men in v 8 is *andros* instead of *anthropos* which denotes men in distinction to mankind.²² The structure is subsequently developed in vv 9-14 to designate *andros* and *gune* as two distinct groups of people who have distinct areas of service in the church life. Males but not females are obligated to lead in prayer when mixed congregational worship occurs. On the other hand, women are obligated to curtail leadership functions over men for reasons which are subsequently presented.

Ephesian Heresy

The problem that prompted the Apostle to give needed instruction regarding women is unstated. From the nature of his discussion, however, it seems that regardless of whatever the exact specifics of the problem it evidenced itself in insubordination.

It has become a more popular view among egalitarians (dualists) to link the problem of women at Ephesus with the Ephesian heresy. This heresy is the general problem of false teachers and doctrine referred to in both Timothy and Ephesians (cf I Tim 1:18-20; 4:1-8; 5:16; 6:3-10, II Tim 2:16-18; 3:1-9; 4:3-4, 14-15).²³ There is no doubt that some women were affected by the false teachers (I Tim 4:3; 5:11-15; II Tim 3:6-7).

The question that arises is whether the problem in I Timothy 2 concerns women teaching false doctrine to men. If this is the issue, then the problem of insubordination can be altered to refer to a form of teaching (false teaching) rather than teaching of any kind. If this is so, then it could also be suggested that men were equally guilty of this heresy throughout the book and should thus equally be called insubordinate over women since they also taught error. One might thus conclude that if this is the problem then it can also be implied that if women did not teach heresy to men then they would be permitted to teach them. Nothing in the context of chapter 2, however, suggests that the issue was the Ephesian heresy.

What can be established from the text is that women were not to teach men in public worship without any qualifications. It was insubordination regardless of what kind of teaching was occurring over men.²⁴ If this is the case, then the real issue at stake is that women who possessed spiritual equality with men thought there was no longer any need to retain a functional distinction.

Women and Prayer

Kaiser has asserted an idea that has gained many admirers. He notes:

In the very passage most frequently used to urge women to absolute silence in church, Paul encourages them to "lift up their hands in every place" in prayer. The key word comes at the beginning of verse 9, "likewise" or "in like manner." But [to] what is the "like manner" referred...Paul wants women to *pray* "in like manner" as men do in every place. Thus the missing main verb in verse 9 is the same verbal idea he has just given in verse 8. "Likewise (I desire that women pray in every place) adorning themselves."²⁵

Clearly those who regard the commands as cultural or who try to exegetically reword the passage have made a concerted effort to adjust Paul's command to women in v 9. There is definitely an ellipsis involved. The phrase, "likewise also the women" (*hosautos [kai] gunaikas*) refers back to the previous verb *boulomai* in v 8. However, instead of *proseuchesthai*, *kosmein heautas* is supplied.

Can it be argued as Kaiser and others have contended that the complementary infinitive ought also to be included as part of this ellipsis? Did Paul really mean he wanted women to pray in like manner as men should in every place while adorning themselves properly during the activity?²⁶

This possibility tends to obscure the functional distinction between men and women. Certain factors argue against this proposal. First, grammatically it is unlikely. If Paul wanted to replace *boulomai* with *proseuchesthai* as the complementary infinitive why did he include *kosmein* in the infinitival form? A participial form would seem more likely. Second, this rendering employs *kosmein* as a unique employment of *asyndeton*.²⁷ Thirdly, public prayer by women in the presence of men seems inconsistent with the command for women's silence in vv 11-12 (even if silence is translated as "quiet spirit" or "quietness") even if one accepts the command as cultural. Fourthly, the subject matter of vv 9,10 is the decorum of females, not their praying habits. Thus, the most natural way to render v 9 is to supply *boulomai* alone after *hosautos*. The desire expressed by Paul is that women are to display the same attitude of holiness in their dress as men do in their public prayers. Fairbairn comments that *hosautos* "is intended simply to couple the women with the men in having equally with them a relation to duty, bound to a becoming line of conduct in their own particular sphere."²⁸

Women and Silence

Few have ever advocated that I Timothy 2:11-12 (*esuchia* teaches the absolute silence of women. Yet the word could convey this possibility. Those who seek to hermeneutically retrieve the meaning are not even happy with qualified silence.²⁹ The word could also be translated quietness, quiet spirit or peaceful.³⁰ This translation aids those who espouse the Ephesian heresy as the women's problem in I Timothy. Some understand quietness as not being limited to the cessation of all authoritative speaking over men but only to that speaking which is quarrelsome, disputative, controversial or divisive in demeanor and doctrine (I Tim 6:14; II Tim 2:23).

Yet even if quietness is the proper rendering it is still a strong indicator of silence from any kind of teaching over men in the church not just that connected with the Ephesian heresy. The translation "quietness" is also linked with speech that in no way exercises authority. There is no kind of vocal prayer or teaching over men in public worship which could be classified as offered in quietness without being also authoritative. Whether offered in quietness or not these are activities which convey authority. Furthermore, three of the four uses of the term *esuchia* in the NT (Acts 22:2; I Tim 2:11-12; II Thes 3:12) are translated silence by the major lexicons. It is also suggested that silence best maintains the context with the word *didaskhein*.³¹

Women and Paul's Preference

In I Timothy 2:8,11 *boulomai* and *epitrepo* are suggested as indicating Paul's cultural preference rather than God's universal command.³² The discussion does not really argue for any less importance or normality of these statements. Moo is helpful here in suggesting:

It is precarious to infer any less *authority*: the words of the Apostle Paul, writing inspired scripture. There appears to be a hidden disjunctive in [the egalitarian argument]...here: either Paul's personal advice or universally valid principles. But of course Paul is usually giving both.³³

Women Teaching and Authority

Paul's statements have been challenged on two accounts. First, the kind of teaching to which he is referring. And second, that I Corinthians 11:5,13 seems to allow women to prophesy which is also an authoritative function over men. These will be looked at respectively.

First, concerning the kind of teaching. There are many settings and contexts in which the word *didaskhein* is used; but in this context Paul has in mind the teaching of biblically related truths in a formal capacity. This activity was restricted to specific individuals who commanded the respect of the hearers. The very activity of teaching required the exercise of authority over the hearers. Paul ranked teaching as a special gift (I Cor 12:28,29; Eph 4:11; Rom 12:7). Timothy was encouraged not to neglect this gift in himself (II Tim 1:11; 4:1,11; 6:2). Thus, as a formal authoritative activity in the church, regarding the message and proclamation of truth, women were not to teach men.³⁴

Secondly, less persuasive are Moo and Grudem's arguments which permit women the right to prophesy before men but not to teach them. Moo attempts to explain this apparent contradiction by designating it as a derived authority. He explains it as more directly "pneumatic" than teaching thus involving a less authoritative and less personal relationship between the speaker and hearer.

Grudem explains teaching as that which provided normative doctrinal and ethical guidance for the church. Prophecy had no such authority. Those employing it did not tell the church how to interpret and apply Scripture to life nor did they proclaim doctrinal and ethical standards for the church to follow.³⁵

Payne seems more convincing by arguing that prophetic activity was an exercise of authority over another.³⁶ A survey of prophecy itself refutes the claim that it is a passive function. The one prophesying in both OT and NT was considered a mouthpiece revealing a message from God to his listeners.³⁷ Involved in prophecy were the activities of foretelling (prediction, Eph 3:3-5; John 4:29) and forthtelling (upbuilding, encouragement, and consolation, I Cor 14:33). Regardless if the prophecy came as a form of prediction, exhortation, comfort or rebuke, the activity was always accompanied by a certain didactic element. Hence, men or women who made use of this gift placed themselves in a position of authority over their hearers. Specifically for a woman to employ the gift of prophecy in the church involved authority over man.³⁸

The fact that I Corinthians 11:4-13 appears to allow women to prophesy while I Corinthians 14:34-35 charges women to keep silent causes an apparent contradiction. Both I Corinthians 14:34-35 and I Timothy 2:11-12 deny women the right to speak over men in the church but I Corinthians 11 may allow authoritative praying and prophesying to occur.³⁹ How might this contradiction be resolved?

One potential solution is to view I Corinthians 11:5,13 as not granting females the right to pray or prophesy in the church even with their heads covered. In these verses Paul admits that some women were attempting to remove all functional distinction not only by removing the veil in public worship but also by exercising prayer and prophecy. In these verses and in vv 4,7 Paul indicates prayer and prophecy was to be accomplished without the head covering. Women were correct in recognizing this fact but this still did not grant them the right to use these authoritative functions. They were not to perform these activities before men. To accept Moo and Grudem's explanation to grant women the right to these activities by assuming that prophecy was a non-authoritative function is unacceptable. It has been argued above that these are authoritative functions.

A further solution offered to nullify the offense of female praying and prophesying in the mixed congregation is to imply that vv 5, 13 allow women the right to pray and prophesy if they wore the covering. This latter explanation is a categorical assumption that must be read into the

text. Paul never states that women could pray and/or prophesy even if they wore the veil.⁴⁰

When women wore the covering in the first century, it did show submission to men. This does not negate the obvious facts that women were still females and were not to exercise authoritative functions over men. This understanding resolves potential contradictions between I Corinthians 11:4-13; 14:34-35 and I Timothy 2:8-14. All of them prevent women from exercising authority over males in public worship either by teaching, praying, or prophesying.

Women and Dominance

The English translation to overbear rule or domineer (*authentein*) in v 12 has afforded those who embrace the Ephesian heresy a useful argument. Paul's injunction for silence/quietness was to curb the misuse of authority not authority itself. If women spoke before men without domineering, then it would be all right. Knight has all but eradicated the basis for this argument by showing this word is a positive concept and in no way does it have overtones of misuse, position, or power.⁴¹ Knight's point is that Paul's command was not against the abuse of authority but against any exercise of authority by women in mixed assembled worship.

Arguing also for the neutral use of this word are two other terms. *Didaskein* (v 12) has already been established as the normal activity of teaching rather than limited to a certain kind of improper teaching. Also the term *pase hupotage* (all submission v 11) is not used to curb the abuse of authority or teaching but as an alternative to any and all teaching and authority that women were exercising over men.

Women and Creation Order

The verses in the Timothy passage which give the fundamental reasoning behind Paul's call for submission are found in I Timothy 2:13-14. The basis of submission is the creation order, Adam was created first. Kaiser has tried to lessen the effect of this word (*eplasthe*) by changing its representation. He notes:

The man like Adam, has had the advantage of being shaped, formed, molded (*plasso* not *ktizo*, "created") (in doctrine and experience?) first. Since women were at this time only beginning to be taught, even as Eve had been shaped by doctrine and teaching after Adam, so now men must assume the entire responsibility for the church.⁴²

Subtly Kaiser, has changed the meaning and intent from physical priority to mental and educational priority. The implication is that as soon as women are brought along educationally the importance of priority ceases. However, the argument breaks down when *plasso* is examined more closely. The Septuagint uses this word in Genesis 2:7, 15 with regard to Adam's physical creation.⁴³ Paul seems to be suggesting in this text as well as in I Corinthians 11:8-9 that priority of physical derivation is the real basis of role relationship at Corinth and Ephesus.⁴⁴

Paul's other argument from creation addressed the deception (*apatheisa*) of Eve. That she was deceived and Adam was not provides a basis for submission. Moo assumes that Eve's failure is "exemplary and perhaps causative of the nature of women in general and that this susceptibility to deception bars them from engaging in public teaching."⁴⁵ Yet it does not seem likely that men are any less susceptible to error because two of them were put out of the church (I Tim 1:19-20; cf II Cor 11:3). If he were saying women are more prone to error, then he also should have restricted them from teaching other women and children. It also means Paul is using a biological argument to uphold a difference in role relationship. If this is so, women are prevented from teaching men because they are emotionally unfit for the retention and propagation of the truth.

The Apostle does not elaborate on his statement about the woman's beguilement. Yet it seems to be a low blow to women to tell them they intrinsically lack leadership capability. Further reflection on the context surrounding v 14 indicates that Paul may not have been focusing on the female's supposed propensity for deception. The mention of Eve's deception and man's lack of it may simply be a phrase to call to the mind of his readers the whole episode of the fall. Having triggered their minds about the circumstances, his real purpose is to show what was pictured in and precipitated by the woman's deception. In her discourse with Satan and subsequent activity (all of which Paul refers to as "the woman being deceived") Eve had usurped Adam's role and began to lead her husband.

This explanation of the illustration parallels the context of Paul's statements here in I Timothy 2. His whole point to the women is not their inherent incapability to lead but that by teaching and exercising authority they were insubordinate in the same manner as Eve. A paraphrase of Paul's thought might be: "Remember Eve's insubordination (deception) and Adam's choice to follow his wife's sinful conduct (not deceived). You women at Ephesus are showing the same quality (unsubmissiveness) in the church and it is wrong." It is thus suggested that it is more in keeping with a balanced discussion of role relationship in I Timothy 2 and a more accurate evaluation of the Genesis account as Paul uses it here in his argumentation to think of the woman's deception as an illustration of insubordination rather than an intrinsic weakness in the woman's physiological makeup to lead.⁴⁶

The limited exegetical considerations discussed above help to clarify and/or to disallow certain points of exegesis used by both feminists and traditionalists to bolster their claims concerning I Timothy 2:8-14. Disallowing certain points to the feminists makes their task of cultural relativity that much more difficult. Yet those committed to a documentation or retrieval hermeneutic (dualists) still can claim Paul's text is cultural with little validity for current times. On the other hand, those who appeal to sustaining hermeneutics (spiritualists) attest this text as normative for present church situations. What are some principles that may help determine cultural/normative interpretation?

What is Cultural/What is Normative?

R C Sproul has put his finger on the main issue by stating: Unless we maintain that the Bible fell down from heaven on a parachute, inscribed by a particular heavenly language uniquely suited as a vehicle for divine revelation, or that the Bible was dictated directly and immediately by God without reference to any local custom, style, or perspective, we are going to have to face the cultural gap.⁴⁷

Thus the key question to ask is to what extent is the Bible's relevance limited by changing human strictures and perspectives about the biblical text? Feminists are forever crying "cultural" or "partly normative." Specifically, in I Timothy there are three approaches that one might observe in view of the text. First, that the rules for women's attire and conduct are completely cultural and have no bearing on the church today. Second, that the rules for attire and conduct are semi-cultural/normative. The commands apply but may not be reflected in the same form of clothes or in the same restriction of speech as in the first century. Third, that the rules for attire and conduct are completely normative. While clothes may be reflected in different styles, the restrictions for speech should be applied in the church today as in the first century. It is suggested that the latter view is correct. Paul has substantiated his teaching by grounding it in creation order. Not only has he established the principle of modesty and submission but also he has verified certain activities for which women may not be permitted to participate.

It must be granted that there are certain local circumstances that are unique to a given time and locale. One must have good hermeneutical reasons to allow local circumstances to limit all abiding application. If not, local circumstances could be used to rule out all biblical commands. I Timothy 2 has some local factors in it which were unique to the Ephesian church. There was some confusion between male/female role relations over the attire and speech of women. Whatever the exact factors were they gave rise to Paul's teaching on modesty, silence and submission.

Much effort in egalitarian thought attempts to focus upon the local events for the sole purpose of removing normative application. Moo points out the steps of the argument that are often used: 1) teaching occasioned by a local situation is not universally applicable; 2) the teaching in question is occasioned by a local situation; 3) therefore, the teaching in question is not universally applicable.⁴⁸ However, it is too categorical an assessment to assume that all teaching stemming from a local situation must be cultural. This is exactly what Osborne, Fee, Johnston, and others have attempted to do with the I Timothy 2 passage.

Is this fair to place so much value on local circumstances as a way to negate normative teaching or could it be that even out of local situations principles of abiding validity occur? Perhaps similar circumstances might occur again in different places and the principles could be reapplied. If a situation similar to the Timothy passage occurs, could not the principles have abiding validity? The following guidelines may be offered

to show the normative quality of the principles in I Timothy 2. First, a circumstance may extend beyond the initial event when the activity or condition under discussion is constant or recurs. Thus while the activity in I Timothy is a local discussion about regulations in the worship service it is also a constant that exists any time believers come together for worship. God has not changed the rules for his church. Similar problems often arise that are not part of the Ephesian event but could be called similar circumstances or problems. The context of I Timothy 2 would thus apply for today's church.⁴⁹

Second, the underlying reason for a command may provide a key. If a command is based solely on a local or temporary reason the application to a future circumstance may be curtailed. However, if the reason given is a general principle it will have application to all future similar circumstances. McQuilkin stipulates: "When a reason is given for the teaching, it may be assumed that the teaching is normative only when the reason itself is treated as universal and permanent."⁵⁰ The principles Paul affirms in I Timothy 2:11-12 are grounded in the general, axiomatic, permanent ideas of creation (I Tim 2:13-14). Paul is establishing more than the submission principle in the creation account. He is rendering the rules concerning women teaching men, exercising authority over them, and remaining silent as being normative for the present church. They are practices which the creation account supports as impermissible for women in the church situation. Some have tried to dispute Paul's use of Genesis 2, as a Rabbinical misrepresentation. They would say that although Paul interpreted Genesis 2 to sound as if it taught submission, it is not really there.⁵¹ This conclusion is incongruous with the doctrine of inerrancy.

Another common error by feminist hermeneutics is to dismiss the abiding character of I Timothy 2:11-14 by explaining the basis for Paul's statements as the temporary lack of education of the women at Ephesus.⁵² Today's educational opportunities for women make the need to curtail their speaking ability unnecessary. The inadequacy of this explanation is observed in that it introduces a reason for Paul's statements which is not only foreign to the context but also disregards the significance of the general principles of creation. It further implies that Paul erred in using a universal principle because it was not really meant to be interpreted universally.

Third, if similar commands or teaching are found in other locales with similar circumstances, then the principles invoked may extend beyond a particular context. If, however, commands in a given text contradict texts elsewhere, then the commands are probably one-time restrictions. This principle finds validity when other Pauline texts are compared with I Timothy 2:8-15. I Corinthians 14:34-35 also restricts women from speaking authoritatively over men. As has been shown I Corinthians 11:5, 13 does not permit women the right to pray and prophesy before men in the worship service. Likewise, other examples that Paul mentions (Rom 16:1, 3,6,12; Phil 4:2-3; Acts 21:9) never establish conclusively that women participated

in official ruling, teaching or authoritative positions where it impinged upon men. The hermeneutics of retrieval has attempted to reinterpret many of these passages to establish functional equality.

Furthermore, it is observed that Paul consistently borrows from creation order to verify male/female role relationship distinctions in church and/or marriage (I Cor 11:7-9; 14:34-35, "just as the Law also says"; I Tim 2:13-14; Titus 2:5, "that the Word of God may not be dishonored"; Eph 5:21-33 [31]). I Timothy 2 is not an incidental reference, but uses the same principles of creation which are consistently referred to elsewhere. This must be accepted as hermeneutically significant of a universal principle.

Regarding the potential of contradictory texts as a means of relegating certain commands to a cultural status, dualist hermeneutics have given strong credence to Galatians 3:28 as the key normative text espousing equality. It is proposed by Howard that:

Christianity has broken down distinctions which divided and separated humankind...But it is here in Gal [3:28] that equality of Christian men and women finds its fullest expression. And it is this equality implicit in the New Testament teachings of the inbreaking of the kingdom of God, which becomes the hermeneutical principle I would like to evaluate in I Timothy 2.⁵³

Scholer calls Galatians 3:28 the controlling text obliterating functional and essential distinctions. He asks, "Why should we assume that I Timothy 2:11-12 is the controlling text through which other texts on women must be read?"⁵⁴

There is really no significant difference whether one begins with Galatians 3:28 or with I Timothy 2:11-12. The real issue is: Does Galatians 3:28 obliterate all functional distinction or only essential ones? Obliterating the former would mean the elimination of all hierarchical structure so that men and women may enjoy mutual participation and interchangeability in all realms of church, home and societal life. Obliteration of the latter means the elimination of any racial, sexual, and/or societal differences that would prevent equal inheritance in the sonship of God. If both are obliterated I Timothy 2 must be interpreted culturally or there will be an apparent contradiction between the two texts. However, I Timothy is based on creation order and is, therefore, a normative text. The answer to any potential conflict is that Galatians 3:28 regards essential distinctions not functional distinctions. All may participate by faith in the inheritance of Abraham to be called sons of God.⁵⁵ The controversy that is posed between these two texts is in the minds of the proponents of current cultural trends rather than in the texts themselves. Both texts are normative and do not contradict.

Fourth, as one views the overall purpose of the book it must be determined whether or not it was written solely to that localized situation or it applies to believers in situations everywhere. When the epistle of Timothy is considered, the book even though written to the local Ephesian circumstance is not isolated to that context. The letter was also written as a worship manual to the body of Christ. I Timothy 3:14-15 confirms this

by stating "I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; but in case I am delayed, I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth." The principles conveyed within I Timothy 2 are applicable to current culture as norms for role relationship in the church.

Summary and Observations

Cultural interpretation is a difficult area of hermeneutics. There are numerous areas that are left exposed in the present discussion. It is seldom right to uplift current cultural standards as the norm for biblical interpretation. Culture often can be and is perverted. For this reason culture tends to explain away axiomatic principles regarding role relationships. God has established specific roles and rights at creation which He intended to continue unabated in this temporal world.

Some of these axiomatic principles revolve around the role relationship of male and female. Paul verifies this in I Timothy 2. When one looks at Scripture and at the corresponding parallel culture it might seem, in certain instances, that misogynist culture corresponds with patriarchal viewpoints of Scripture and vice versa. This must not lead to the conclusion that the Apostle Paul's advice is also misogynist or that it endorses the repressive treatment of women.

The danger of the hermeneutical circle is that it tends to come to the text prepared for negotiation. If not handled properly, this approach can and often will encourage the interpreter to make *a priori* judgments about texts on women. This article has only aroused limited awareness of some of the complexities in the debate of male/female role relationships by examining certain exegetical and hermeneutical concerns in light of I Timothy 2:8-14. It also focused upon some guidelines for normative and/or cultural interpretation.

The following observations are offered. Individuals studying feminism are providing a more mature effort to reexamine biblical texts about women's role in the church. Theologically only a few of these groups (documentation, retrieval, and sustaining) are willing to protect to varying extents the integrity of the text. The former two (dualists) attempt to call I Timothy 2 a cultural text, while the latter (spiritualists) uphold it as normative. Some dualists uphold limited aspects of the passage as normative: i.e. moderation and certain areas of submission. However, they would change the mode of its expression in today's culture.

Some of the cultural interpretations are based upon exegetical work which assumes that Paul never really wrote to support role relationship distinctions in the assembled public worship or in leadership aspects of the church. It is suggested that: 1) The Ephesian heresy is not the problem in I Timothy 2. If it is, then insubordination could be limited to certain kinds of heretical teaching by either men or women but not a complete ban of all teaching by the latter. 2) Females are not given the right

to pray publicly before men. 3) Silence or quietness is the alternative offered to women rather than teaching or exercising authority over men. 4) Teaching, public prayer and public prophecy are all displays of authority over another which women are not permitted to perform. I Timothy 2:8-14, I Corinthians 11:4-13 and 14:34-35 all prohibit women from exercising these types of authority over men. 5) The practice of dominance over men is forbidden to females. Paul condemns any and all such activity not just the abuse of it. 6) The Apostle grounds his commands for women in the creation order account which indicates man was given the priority in creation. Thus the Ephesian women demonstrated insubordination in the same manner as Eve.

Even though certain exegetical considerations refute some points useful for feminist argumentation, this still does not prevent equalitarians from calling I Timothy 2 cultural. Thus, hermeneutically it must be asked if I Timothy 2:8-14 is cultural or normative. It is concluded that: 1) The continuing activity of worship and male/female involvement remains a current practice in the church and so does the right to apply these texts although current circumstances and culture are not completely similar. 2) Both submission and the actual mode of expressing it are grounded in the foundational order of creation. 3) The principles established in I Timothy 2 are upheld by corresponding texts in other Pauline writings. I Timothy 2:8-14 does not contradict Galatians 3:28 because the former addresses function and the later essence. 4) I Timothy was written as a manual for the Ephesian believers as well as to believers of every age.

Sustained are the biblical commands of I Timothy 2:8-14 which exclude women from areas of ecclesiastical ministry, whether the exercise of authority over men be vocal or in practice. Silence/quietness and submission are still the method objectifying this relationship. This was not a cultural command of the first century but normative for all centuries. Thus I would recommend, on the basis of God's Word, that the woman preacher be removed from her congregation and that the two newly elected female deacons be dismissed from office.

Endnotes

Jackson W Carroll, Barbara Hargrove, Adair T Lummis, *Women of the Cloth: A New Opportunity for the Churches* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 4; she also notes on p 1: "When the history of American Protestantism during the 1970's is written, surely one of the important developments to be chronicled will be the entry of large numbers of women into the ranks of the ordained clergy, with the attendant conflicts and changes surrounding their entry."

²R K Johnston, "The Role of Women in the Church and Home: An Evangelical Test Case in Hermeneutics," in *Scripture Tradition, and Interpretation*, ed W Ward Gasque and William S LaSor (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) 235; see also David M Scholer, "Unseasonable Thoughts on the State of Biblical Hermeneutics: Reflections of a New Testament Exegete," *ABQ* 2 (1983) 134-41; "Hermeneutics is at the forefront of discussion today and is recognized as one of the most important and significant subjects about which we can

talk together;" Grant R Osborne, "Feminist Hermeneutics and Women in the Church," *JETS* 20 (1977) 337-52; Gordon D Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982) 57-71; Williard M Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath, War and Women: Case Issues for Biblical Interpretation* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1983) 211-15

³Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 57

⁴Scholer, "Feminist Hermeneutics and Evangelical Biblical Interpretation," *JETS* 30 (1982) 408-11; the present writer is indebted to him for the categorical names of several of the following groups.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Overtures to Biblical Theology; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) 13:2-3; She views four OT stories: Hagar, Tamar, the Unnamed woman and Jephthah's daughter. These stories she claims show scripture thus interpreting scripture undercuts triumphalism and raises disturbing questions of faith. Further, in her interaction with other feminist hermeneutics she rejects the biblical oppressed women as just relics of a distant, primitive and inferior past. She sees them as real true accounts of Christian chauvinism and biblical tension.

⁷Ibid., 3

⁸Elisabeth S Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983); *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984); "The Ethics of Interpretation; De-Centering Biblical Scholarship" *JBL* 107 (1988) 9; "I hasten to say that I do not want to be misunderstood as advocating a return to a pre-critical reading and facile application of biblical texts on and about *Women*. Rather I am interested in decentering the dominant scientist ethos of biblical scholarship by recentering it in a critical interpretive praxis for liberation. Ethos is the shared intellectual space of freely accepted obligations and traditions as well as the praxical space of discourse and action"

⁹Scholer, "Feminist Hermeneutic and Evangelical Biblical Interpretation," 411

¹⁰Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Overtures to Biblical Theology 2; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978).

¹¹Paul K Jewett, *Man as Male and Female* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975).

¹²Virginia R Mollenkott, "A Conversation with Virginia Mollenkott," *The Other Side* 12 (1976) 21-30, 73-75; *Women, Men and the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1977); also Scholer, "Feminist Hermeneutics and Evangelical Biblical Interpretation," 407; Osborne, "Hermeneutics and Women in the Church," 337-52

¹³Jewett, *Man as Male and Female*, 112-13; see also his more recent work, *The Ordination of Women*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980).

¹⁴Letha Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty, *All We're Meant to Be* (Waco: Word Books, 1974), 19; Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 57-71

¹⁵Neil R Lightfoot, *The Role of Women: New Testament Perspectives* (Memphis: Student Association Press, 1978) 17-18; see also George W Knight, *The Role Relationship of Men and Women* (Chicago: Moody, 1985); Wayne House, "Neither...Male Nor Female...in Christ Jesus," *BSac* 145 (1988) 47-56; Stephen B Clark, *Man and Women in Christ* (Servant Books, 1980).

¹⁶Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 57-58

¹⁷Mark D Roberts, "Woman Shall Be Saved: A Closer Look At I Timothy 2:15" *TSF Bulletin* 5 (1981) 4

¹⁸Johnston, "The Role of Women in the Church and Home: An Evangelical Test Case in Hermeneutics," 240

¹⁹Ibid.; if one were to employ Johnston's terminology the following would be *dualistic*: Roberts, "Women Shall Be Saved: A Closer Look at I Timothy 2:15," 6; D M Scholer, "I Timothy 2:9-15 and the Place of Women in the Church's Ministry," in *Women, Authority and the Bible*, ed Alvera Mickelsen (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 1986) 215; Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 68; Scanzoni and Hardesty, *All We're Meant to Be*, 65; Walter Kaiser, "Paul, Women, and the Church," *World Wide Challenge* 3 (1976) 9-10; Osborne, "Hermeneutics and Women in the Church," 348; Philip B Payne, "Libertarian Women in Ephesus, A Response to Douglas J. Moo's Article, 'I Timothy 2:11-15: Meaning and Significance,'" *TrinJ* 2 (1981) 169-97; The following would be *spiritualistic*: Gleason L Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982) 411; Knight, *The Role Relationship of Men and Women*, 18-28; Susan T Foh, *Women and the Word of God* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980) 122-28; James B Hurley, *Man and Women in Biblical Perspec-*

tive (Zondervan, 1981) 195-231; Douglas J Moo, "I Timothy 2:11-15: Meaning and Significance," *TrinJ* 1 (1980) 62-83; "The Interpretation of I Timothy 2:11-15: A Rejoinder," *TrinJ* 2 (1981) 198-222; H Wayne House, "Paul, Women, and Contemporary Evangelical Feminism," *BSac* 136 (1979) 40-53; Robert C Sproul, "Controversy at Culture Gap," *Eternity* 27 (1976) 12-15, 40; Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ*.

²⁰See Osborne, "Hermeneutics and Women in the Church," 337; refers to those who view all the biblical command passages as literal and normative and must be obeyed. His examples are the Plymouth Brethren and Mennonites, some of whom are alleged to still practice absolute silence for women, the holy kiss, and/or foot washing.

²¹Homer A Kent, *The Pastoral Epistle* (Chicago: Moody, 1958), 99; Lightfoot, *The Role of Women: New Testament Perspectives*, 31.

²²Moo, "I Timothy 2:11-15, Meaning and Significance," 63 discusses whether Paul is referring to men/women or husband/wife. "It is not at all obvious that Paul confines his teaching to marital as opposed to sexual roles, and the context of the passage before us strongly supports the broader meanings."

²³Scholer, "I Timothy 2:9-15 and the Place of Women in the Church's Ministry," 199; also John Nolland, "Women in the Public Life of the Church," *CRUX* 19 (1983) 18.

²⁴Kaiser, "Paul, Women, and the Church," 11 has a different way of explaining the problem. "It has as its background the historical context of the persecutions of Nero." In light of the anti-Christian mood of the times it would cause persecution and thus women should refrain from teaching. The implication is, however, if times change then women could instruct men in the church. He later notes: "In a more relaxed day, Paul had thought Timothy most fortunate that his mother and grandmother had instructed him in the Scriptures. But now things have changed, or so it would appear."

²⁵*Ibid.*, 10

²⁶See also C K Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles in The New Clarendon Bible*, ed H F D Sparks (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1963) 55; "In the same way, I desire that women should pray dressed in a becoming manner...Men would pray aloud, with outward gesture, women also will pray but with care not to draw attention to themselves"; cf also A T Robertson, *Word*

Pictures in the New Testament, 4 (Nashville: Broadman, 1931) 569 allows for this possibility but states that "grammatically that is possible...but it is hardly consonant with verses 11 and 15..."

²⁷Also Heinrich A Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Hand-Book to the Epistles to Timothy and Titus in Critical an Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, ed H A Meyer (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1895; reprinted Winona Lake: Alpha Pub, 1979) 102; He notes that the infinitive *kosmein* is against this construction. While there are examples of two infinitives being connected by asyndeton 2:14; 6:18; Titus 3:1,2 there is no example with an elliptical verb that resupplies its complementary infinitive and combines it with a second one.

²⁸Patrick Fairbairn, *Pastoral Epistles* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1874) 124

²⁹Nolland, "Women in the Public Life of the Church," 18; Kaiser, "Paul, Women and the Church," 10

³⁰Arndt, W F, Gingrich, F Wilbur and Danker, Frederick w, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979) 349

³¹*Ibid.*; also Moo, "The Interpretation of I Timothy 2:11-15: A Rejoinder," 119 notes I Corinthians 13:34-35 uses *sigao* for silence which demands a verb. Paul never uses the noun form of *sigao* rather *esuchia* is the only word in his known vocabulary which would clearly denote silence.

³²Osborne, "Hermeneutics and Women in the Church," 347; Kaiser, "Paul, Women, and the Church," 11; Payne, "Libertarian Women in Ephesus: A Response to Douglas J. Moo's Article, I Timothy 2:11-15: Meaning and Significance," 170-73

³³Moo, "The Interpretation of I Timothy 2:11-15: A Rejoinder," 199

³⁴Moo, "I Timothy 2:11-15: Meaning and Significance," 65

³⁵Moo, "The Interpretation of I Timothy 2:11-15: A Rejoinder," 207; Wayne Grudem, "Prophecy—Yes, But Teaching—No: Paul's Consistent Advocacy of Women's Participation Without Governing Authority," *JETS* 30 (1987) 11-18; see also Grudem's book, *The Gift of Prophecy in I Corinthians* (Washington: University Press of America, 1982) 72-73; D A Carson, *Showing the Spirit A Theological Exposition of I Corinthians 12-14* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982) 129-130

³⁶Libertarian Women in Ephesus: A Response to Douglas J. Moo's Article, I Timothy 2:11-15: Meaning and Significance," 184

³⁷Samuel J Schultz, *The Prophets Speak* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968) 25-32; James L. Boyer, "The Office of the Prophets in New Testament Times," *Grace Journal* 1 (1960) 13-18

³⁸It is this writer's understanding public prayer in the worship service also employs the element of authority over its hearers. One praying publicly is voicing his or her thoughts to God for the group. He/she is acting as an influential spokesperson for all those in his/her midst.

³⁹Knight, *The Role Relationship of Men and Women*, 33-34; He does not view public prayer or prophecy in the church if done submissively with veils to be an authority violation for the woman. Further he views I Cor 14:34-35 as a different kind of speaking.

⁴⁰See John Parry, *the First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians Cambridge Greek Testament Schools and Colleges*, ed John Parry (Cambridge: University Press, 1916) 210-211

⁴¹George W Knight III, "Authenteo in Reference to Women in I Timothy 2:12," *NTS* 30 (1984) 143, 150-152; also Carroll D Osborne, "Authenteo (I Timothy 2:12)" *Restoration Quarterly* 25 (1982) 12-12, she holds to the meaning domineer.

⁴²Kaiser, "Paul, Women, and the Church," 11-12

⁴³Arndt, Gingrich, and Danker, *A Greek Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 666 suggests many references for physical creation.

⁴⁴See Michael F Stitzinger, "Genesis 1-3 and the Male/Female Role Relationship," *GTJ* 2 (1981) 23-44

⁴⁵Moo, "I Timothy 2:11-15: Meaning and Significance," 70

⁴⁶I Tim 2:15 will not be considered exegetically. However, the "salvation" is best taken to refer to a woman's delivery from the sin of insubordination in the church and the proper application of her ethical and physical skills in the domestic realm upon her children. It helps to positively balance out Paul's claim that women should not be teaching or exercising authority over men in the church but their domain is in the home.

⁴⁷Sproul, *Controversy at Culture Gap*," 12

⁴⁸Moo, "The Interpretation of I Timothy 2:11-15: A Rejoinder," 219; this section

follows Moo's perception of the abiding validity of Paul's statements for contemporary culture.

⁴⁹Nolland, "Women in the Public Life of the Church," 20; Nolland an egalitarian opposes this idea; "Thus we ought to read the strong words in verse 12 about women not teaching as a practical injunction to a historical situation motivated by a biblical divine principle, and that we should read the text as "I do not give my permission now for a woman to teach."

⁵⁰J Robertson McQuilkin, "Problems of Normativeness in Scripture: Cultural Verses Permanent," in *Hermeneutics Inerrancy and the Bible*, ed Earl D Radmacher and Robert D Preus (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984) 232; see also Sproul, "Controversy at Culture Gap," 15; "To set principles of creation aside as mere local custom is the worst kind of relativizing and de-historicizing of the biblical content. Yet it is precisely at this point that many evangelical scholars have relativized New Testament principles. Here we see the existential method operating most blatantly."

⁵¹Stitzinger, "Genesis 1-3 and the Male/Female Role Relationship," 28-36. Gilbert Bilezikian "Hierarchist and Egalitarian Inculturations," *JETS* 30 (1987) 422

⁵²Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its worth*, 68; Kenneth Kantzer, "Women's Role in Church and Family," *CT* 25 (1981) 10-11

⁵³J Keir Howard, "Neither Male Nor Female: An Examination of the Status of Women in the New Testament," *EvQ* 55 (1983) 31; see also Lyle Vander Broek, "Women and the Church: Approaching Difficult Passages," *RefRev* 38 (1985) 229

⁵⁴Scholer, "I Timothy 2:9-15 and the Place of Women in the Church's Ministry," 213; cf also "Feminist Hermeneutics and Evangelical Biblical Interpretation," 417; on the issues of women in the church, it is just as plausible to start with Gal 3:28 as a clear text as it is to start with I Tim 2:11-12;" Scholer observes also that there is nothing internal to the canon that tells one with which text to begin.

⁵⁵House, "Neither...Male Nor Female...in Christ Jesus," 50