

## 1 Corinthians 11:2 – 16

<sup>11:2</sup> Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you.

church practice

<sup>3</sup> But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man [*andros*], and the man/husband [*aner*] is the head of a woman/wife [*gyne*], and God is the head of Christ.

<sup>4</sup> Every man [*aner*] who has something on his head while praying or prophesying disgraces his head.

men: covered disgraces

<sup>5</sup> But every woman [*gyne*] who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying disgraces her head, for she is one and the same as the woman whose head is shaved.

women: uncovered disgraces

women: shaved head disgraces

<sup>6</sup> For if a woman does not cover her head, let her also have her hair cut off; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, let her cover her head.

<sup>7</sup> For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man.

men: head not covered

<sup>8</sup> For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man [*andros*];

origin: man not from woman  
woman from man

<sup>9</sup> for indeed man [*aner*] was not created for the woman's [*gyne*] sake, but woman [*gyne*] for the man's [*andra*] sake.

creation  
dependence

<sup>10</sup> Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.

authority of women

<sup>11</sup> However, in the Lord, neither is woman [*gyne*] independent of man [*andros*], nor is man [*aner*] independent of woman [*gyne*].

new creation in the Lord  
dependence

<sup>12</sup> For as the woman [*gyne*] originates from the man [*andros*], so also the man [*aner*] has his birth through the woman [*gyne*]; and all things originate from God.

origin: woman from man  
man birthed from woman  
origin of all: God

<sup>13</sup> Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?

women: head covered

<sup>14</sup> Does not even nature [of our customs] itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him,

<sup>15</sup> but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her?

men: long hair is dishonor,

women: long hair is glory

women: hair is a covering

For her hair is given to her for a covering.

<sup>16</sup> But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God.

church practice

## Historical and Cultural Background

### Men and Women: A Biblical Overview

- The Greek terms for ‘man’ (*aner*) and ‘woman’ (*gyne*) also do double duty for ‘husband’ and ‘wife.’ We have to determine from the context which is intended, or whether there are subtleties.
  - The Greek term *andros* (1 Cor 11:3a) can also be used for either ‘husband’ or ‘man’ or ‘any human’ (Jn.1:13; Acts 9:13; 11:12; Jas.1:20). At times, in 1 Corinthians 11:2 – 16, Paul uses *andros* to indicate Adam (v.8, 9, 12). Paul deploys the figures of Adam and Eve – and their implied children (v.12) – to accentuate the issue of gender relations.
  - Earlier in this letter, Paul encourages singleness (7:7 – 9). Thus in 11:3, in the congregation, Paul cannot logically mean that *every man* is the head of *every woman*, as if maleness is the head of femaleness in principle. In 11:3, he probably means that Christ is the head of every person in the congregation, where marriage is a particular relation where the head-body image is applied to the husband-wife. But this raises the question of a married woman preaching to the congregation, because that is a head-body relationship.
- Women speaking in public: Roman custom and law forbade women from intervening in public.<sup>1</sup> By the time of the New Testament, Jewish synagogues of the time did not permit a woman to speak.<sup>2</sup> Spatially, men and women occupied different sections of the synagogue. This reflects the influence on Jewish custom of the Greek cultural prejudice against women. It was not originally part of the Jewish vision of life with God and service to God.
  - God intended men and women from creation *to speak authoritatively and pass down the word of God*. He entrusted both Adam and Eve to repeat to all their descendants the commands to be fruitful and multiply (Gen.1:28), to eat from the tree of life, and to not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen.2:16 – 17).
  - In the Israelite home, women had authority, as shown for example by the admonition that envisions fathers and mothers as having symmetrical authority, ‘Hear, my son, your father’s instruction, and do not forsake your *mother’s* teaching’ (Prov.1:8).
  - In the larger public community of Israel, women also had authority. After the Exodus, Miriam and other women led Israel in worship (Ex.15:20 – 21). During the period of the Judges, Deborah led Israel in worship in a song that memorialized Deborah’s own role as both prophetic judge and military leader, and the role of the woman Jael for her heroic act of courage (Jdg.5:1 – 31). Judges portrays Deborah as a ‘new Moses.’<sup>3</sup> Isaiah’s wife and Huldah the interpreter of Torah were prophetesses in Israel (Isa.8:3; 2 Ki.22:14), which means their counsel was sought publicly, even by male prophets and kings. Women were the authors of some Scripture: in addition to the previous examples, Hannah in 1 Sam.2; probably Ruth and Naomi for the book of Ruth; King Lemuel’s mother in Proverbs 31; and Esther for the book of Esther.
  - Israel looked forward to God’s fresh outpouring of the Spirit on both men and women in the messianic age (Joel 2:28 – 29), affirming the notion that such was God’s original vision for men and women from creation, since the messianic age would affirm the original creation.
  - At Pentecost, Simon Peter quoted Joel’s prophecy (Acts 2:17 – 18), which became Luke’s thesis statement for the book of Acts. Both men and women (Priscilla the teacher in Acts 18:24 – 28; the four prophetess-daughters of Philip in 21:9) speak by the Spirit. Elizabeth and Mary at the start of Luke’s Gospel were anticipations of this.
- In the New Testament, women taught men. Lois and her daughter Eunice taught Eunice’s son Timothy (2 Tim.1:5). Phoebe was entrusted by Paul to deliver and interpret Romans to his audience (Rom.16:1). Junia and her husband Andronicus were ‘well known among the apostles’ (Rom.16:7), and likely apostles themselves. Paul identified various women as house church leaders: Lydia (Acts 16:40); Chloe (1 Cor.1:10); Nympha (Col.4:15). He addresses other women as leaders of some sort: Euodia and Syntyche (Phil.4:2). Priscilla, whose husband was Aquila, probably taught Apollos (Acts 18:26).
- While modesty of dress was important in both displays of wealth and sex appeal (1 Tim.2:9; 1 Pet.3:9), Jesus made it possible for women to take up public roles in his community of disciples by making men responsible for their own lust (Mt.5:27 – 32).

<sup>1</sup> Richard Bauman, *Women and Politics in Ancient Rome* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1992), p.8, 10, 15, 105.

<sup>2</sup> Adam Clarke, *Clarke’s Commentary*, Volume 6, I Corinthians 14:34. See also [www.godrules.net/library/clarke/clarke.htm](http://www.godrules.net/library/clarke/clarke.htm)

<sup>3</sup> See Mako A. Nagasawa, *The Theme of Women in Judges and the Portrayal of Deborah as Leader*, found here: [www.anastasiscenter.org/bible-prophets-judges](http://www.anastasiscenter.org/bible-prophets-judges) and the resources cited there.

- It may be significant that a ‘sinful woman’ once washed Jesus’ feet with her unbound hair and tears (Lk.7:36 – 50), that Jesus received her act as worship, and that Luke, who of the four Gospel writers wrote most extensively, positively, and *theologically* about women, recorded the incident for posterity. This was highly unusual in the context of Second Temple Judaism.

#### Gender, Worship, and Dress: The Possible Problems in Corinth

- *Was the problem about female modesty?* A woman’s hair was somewhat erotic,<sup>4</sup> though probably not as much as breasts, today in the U.S. One theory even suggests that hair was seen as part of one’s genitalia.<sup>5</sup> Loose, unbound hair was likely to be sexually suggestive or indicative of availability. Evidence from this era shows that women did not appear publicly with her hair unbound and flowing, although styles did and do change.
- *Was the problem how to incorporate or regard dishonored women into worship?* If former prostitutes became followers of Jesus, how should they dress in worship settings? By Roman law from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, honorable women wore a *stola* (long pleated dress) and *palla* (mantle over shoulders and head, fastened by brooches), while prostitutes, adulteresses, and disgraced women had to wear a *toga* (which men wore) and the *mitrae*, a broad band of cloth of different colors, wound around the hair.<sup>6</sup> Jewish practice, by the Law of Moses, held to distinctions of dress by gender (Dt.22:5). Tensions between rich and poor, which might be related, were a problem in Christian meals and meetings, shown in the next section (1 Cor.11:17 – 32).
- *Is long, appropriately bound hair the intended head covering for women, or an adequate substitute for it?* The symmetry and development from v.4 – 6 to v.14 – 15 has been interpreted both ways. The phrase in v.4 translated ‘has something on his head’ is literally ‘has down the head.’
- *Was the problem about gender distinctions? Was it raised by the men and/or the women?* As for the *women*: Roman law prohibited women from speaking in a legal, public setting or holding political office; women could not vote.<sup>7</sup> Due to Greek culture’s prejudice against women, possibly Christian women wanted to appear as men to assert equality in some sense.<sup>8</sup> Or the women – perhaps out of some kind of spiritual exuberance, or desire to emulate the rites of Dionysus, Cybele, and Isis – might have been cutting their hair (‘uncovered head’?) or wearing their hair in an unbound, loosened (‘uncovered’?) manner. As for the *men*: Certain long hairstyles on men were criticized by Jewish and Roman sources for indicating homosexuality.<sup>9</sup> However, when they took a Nazirite vow of separation to God (Num.6:5ff.), Jewish men were to grow their hair long, and this was a mark of holiness, not dishonor. Paul himself had taken a vow prior to or during his time in Corinth, and cut his hair (‘uncovered his head’?) when he left Corinth (Acts

<sup>4</sup> Sarah Ruden, *Paul Among the People* (New York: Image Books, 2010), p.90 – 91 notes that the Roman Berber named Apuleius, a Latin-speaking prose writer, in his novel *Metamorphoses*, a.k.a. *The Golden Ass*, wrote the most famous classical erotic passage about women’s hair, in which he says, ‘I have a fixed and solid reason for judging a woman by her hair...’ He later commented that baldness in a woman was so shameful that even the goddess Venus, if bald, wouldn’t please her husband Vulcan. The Roman poet Ovid, in his book *Art of Love*, book 3, gave advice to female courtesans and prostitutes on how to seduce men, and he first addressed hairstyles. However, while short or cropped hair for women was fairly universally a cultural sign of grief or disgrace, hair covering trends in the 1st century Roman Empire, about which we know a significant amount, were varied in expression and meaning. See also Bruce W. Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003).

<sup>5</sup> Troy W. Martin argues that hair was regarded as part of one’s genitalia, arguing that Hippocrates and other Greek physicians believed that a woman’s long hair drew semen upward into her body. This might explain why Paul could speak of a woman exposing her long hair as both disgraceful and her glory, and why men’s hair was supposed to be short. However, Mark Goodacre disputes the lexical basis for this view. Mark Goodacre, Does Περιβόλαιον Mean ‘Testicle’ in 1 Corinthians 11:15? (*Journal of Biblical Literature* 130, 2011, 391 – 396); Troy W. Martin, Περιβόλαιον as ‘Testicle’ in 1 Corinthians 11:15: A Response to Mark Goodacre (*Journal of Biblical Literature* 132, 2013, 453–465). In my estimation, Martin’s evidence is thin.

<sup>6</sup> Juvenal, *Satires*, book 3, satire 6 writes that prostitutes exclusively wore the *mitrae*.

<sup>7</sup> Richard Bauman, *Women and Politics in Ancient Rome* (New York: Routledge, 1992). p.8, 10, 15, 105

<sup>8</sup> ‘It is only males who are created directly by the gods and are given souls. Those who live rightly return to the stars, but those who are ‘cowards or [lead unrighteous lives] may with reason be supposed to have changed into the nature of women in the second generation’. This downward progress may continue through successive reincarnations unless reversed. In this situation, obviously it is only men who are complete human beings and can hope for ultimate fulfillment; the best a woman can hope for is to become a man.’ (Plato, *Timaeus* 90e) ‘Women are infertile males, are defective by nature’ (Aristotle, *Generation of Animals*, I, 728a). ‘It is the best for all tame animals to be ruled by human beings. For this is how they are kept alive. In the same way, the relationship between the male and the female is by nature such that the male is higher, the female lower, that the male rules and the female is ruled.’ (Aristotle, *Politics*, 1254 b 10 – 14)

<sup>9</sup> Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, edited by I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), p.823 – 823

18:18), both of which might have prompted questions from the Corinthians. Also, men wore head coverings for mourning (along with women), a cultural connection which would have made Christian worship look like a funeral to pagan onlookers.

- *Was this a creative engagement with Roman, Greek, or Jewish customs of dress in worship, specific to the time and culture? Or did Jesus start a distinctively Christian worship custom, valid for all times and cultures (which was probably a modification of Jewish practice)?* The Roman Vestal Virgins, the only Roman priestesses, wore veils. In most Greco-Roman pagan worship, women *and men* wore head coverings in worship as participants.<sup>10</sup> For example, even Caesar Augustus worshiped at Corinth and was remembered thus (see right). Jewish women typically covered not only their hair but also their faces when outside the home.<sup>11</sup> Christians met in homes – so was that private or public?



### Head and Hair

- In Judaism, hair was a symbol of spiritual dedication, and perhaps power, for Jewish men taking the Nazirite vow (Num.6:1 – 21). Note that in the story of Samson, who took the vow, Samson had physical power because of his long hair (Jdg.16:17 – 22). The vow unto God was represented publicly ‘on his head’ (Num.6:7) by the hair, and entailed cleanness and maintaining a distance from death. Hiromi Iwashige notes that in Greek, the word ‘pray’ (*proseuchesthai*, προσεύχεσθαι) is close to the word ‘vow’ (euche, εὐχή) as they share the same root.<sup>12</sup> Jewish women could also take the Nazirite vow,<sup>13</sup> presumably with their long hair also being a symbol of spiritual power. Curiously, the Jewish Encyclopedia notes that wealthy benefactors could financially assist poor Nazirites to pay for the sacrifices prescribed by the Sinaitic Law to complete their vows and cut their hair (Num.6:13 – 21), and that this action was called ‘to have [his head] shorn,’ referring to the Nazirite.<sup>14</sup>
- The Greek word for ‘head’ is *kephale*. ‘Head’ is sometimes understood as connoting ‘authority’ and/or ‘source’ and/or a deliberate multiple meaning pointing to an interconnectedness that was specific to the context of the discussion.<sup>15</sup> For example:

<sup>10</sup> Paul’s instruction was clearly intended for a worship setting (to ‘pray and prophecy’). Otherwise, *men* could not wear helmets, hats, caps, etc. *at any time*, which goes far beyond what Paul says here. Michael Marlowe, *Headcovering Customs in the Ancient World*, <http://www.bible-researcher.com/headcoverings3.html>; last accessed November 18, 2014 notes exceptions in pagan worship: the Greek Dionysus, god of wine and revelry, had his female worshipers let their hair down while worshipping; the Greek Demeter had her female worshipers wear unbraided, uncovered hair, and initiates wore a laurel wreath; the Egyptian Isis (worshiped in Corinth), wife of Osiris and mother of Horus, had her priestesses let down their hair, perhaps to symbolize their equality of status with male prophets.

<sup>11</sup> Moses assumed (not commanded) that women braid or wrap their hair in some way publicly (Num.5:18).

<sup>12</sup> Hiromi Iwashige, *Corinthians* (<http://iwashige.net/corinthians.htm>; last accessed February 4, 2015), makes the case that vows are in view in 1 Cor.11:2 – 16 but it is unclear to me why Paul would address *vows* and prophecy in this section.

<sup>13</sup> Rabbi Aaron Goldstein, *What Nazirite Vow Can We & Especially Women Make Today*; May 22, 2013 (<http://www.thejc.com/blogs/rabbi-aaron-goldstein/what-nazirite-vow-can-we-especially-women-make-today>; last accessed February 4, 2015), notes that Manoah’s wife (Jdg.13) and Hannah (1 Sam.1) made Nazirite vows according to the common Jewish reading. Also, ‘There are two other women whose motivation for adopting nazirite vows for themselves are recorded by the first century CE Jewish historian, Josephus and the Mishnah composed around 200 CE. They state that many women used to take nazirite vows, especially in Roman times. They specifically mention Queen Helena of Adiabene and Bernice, sister of King Agrippa II: Two royal, female nazirites no less! Queen Helena was said to have taken her vow when her son went off to war. She vowed to be a nazirite for seven years. Her son returned unscathed and she completed her seven years... Bernice, the sister of King Agrippa II, king of an area now in southern Lebanon, took the nazirite vow when she recovered from an illness...’

<sup>14</sup> ‘Nazirite,’ *Jewish Encyclopedia* (<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/11395-nazirite>; last accessed February 4, 2015)

<sup>15</sup> Thiselton, p.816 – 820: Brown-Driver-Briggs divide the uses of *kephale* in Greek literature into eight categories: (1) head of humans or of animals; (2) top (e.g. of rocks, towers, pillars, ladders); (3) chief as in chief man, city, nation, or priest, or head of family; (4) front place (e.g. taken by the leader but also used of priority in time); (5) best; (6) of an army company; (7) sum or total; (8) other residual nuances. Liddell-Scott-Jones, in studying classical Greek uses, adds that head can function as a synecdoche for the whole person. Judith Gundry-Volf, ‘Gender and Creation in 1 Cor.11:2 – 16: A Study in Paul’s Theological Method,’ in J. Adna, S.J. Hafemann, and O. Hofius (editors), *Evangelium, Schriftauslegung, Kirche. Festschrift für Peter Stuhlmacher* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), p.151 – 171, argues that neither hierarchical nor egalitarian interpretations adequately explain what Paul’s concern was theologically. She argues that Paul was sensitive to cultural dynamics of honor and shame while operating within a dialectic between the creation order (with gender distinctions) and the redemptive order (with a new mutuality and reciprocity). Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, edited by Fee, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), p.502 – 503, note 44, observes that the Septuagint translators used *kephale* when the physical head (*rosh*) was intended in Hebrew, but almost never when *ruler* was intended. The only 6 cases where *rosh* = *kephale* = leader/chief are Jdg.11:11; 2 Sam.22:44; Ps.18:43; Isa.7:8, 9; and Lam.1:5. Of those exceptions, Fee agrees with Murphy-O’Connor that the ‘exception[s] (even Homer nods!) do not change the picture.’

- In Ephesians 1:22 – 23, Paul says that God made Christ the head over *all things in creation*: ‘And He put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him who fills all in all.’ In the immediate context, that would include especially the rulers and authorities (Eph.1:21) both in heaven (Eph.3:10; 6:10 – 20) and probably also on earth, as he refers to earthly rulers elsewhere using the same term, ‘rulers’ of this age (1 Cor.2:6 – 8). The relationship of head and body for Christ and the church is repeated in Col.1:18. Christ as head over all rule and authority is also repeated in Col.2:10, but once again the relationship of head-to-body is not developed in regards to the rulers and authorities. But it is interesting that the use of ‘head’ here in Ephesians 1:22 – 23 is used for authority, but Jesus’ authority is, in this passage, being shared *with* the church, his body.
- In Ephesians 4:15 – 16, Paul uses the head-body analogy in a slightly different way: ‘...but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the *head*, even Christ, from whom the whole *body*, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.’ In this case, does head indicate either ‘authority’ or ‘source’? Arguably neither in an immediate sense. It must be noted that the sense of ‘head’ as ‘source’ is present in Colossians 2:19, where Paul says, ‘...the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.’ But whereas in Colossians, the body clearly grows *from* the head (‘from whom the entire body’), in Ephesians, the body grows *up into* the head. In my opinion, the emphasis here falls on the idea of Christ as a sum/total where believers are ‘filling’ his body in the sense of the realm in which he is and of which he characterizes.
- In Ephesians 5:22 – 33, Paul uses the head-body analogy for both husband-wife and Christ-church. The stress there is arguably *unity*. For in Roman culture, the Roman father ruled his entire household, and could reasonably be said to be ‘head’ over everyone there. But in Ephesians, the head-body analogy is notably absent from the parent-child relationship (Eph.6:1 – 4), because there comes a time for children to *honor* their parents but *obey* the Lord, and see themselves as too fundamentally distinct from their parents to be considered a head-body unity with them. It is also absent from the master-slave relationship (Eph.6:5 – 9) where the typical power dynamics of the time were very strongly checked and undone. Thus, the husband-wife relationship is set apart from other types of relationships. Whether the head-body analogy for husband-wife in Eph.5:22 – 33 means *authority*, and in what sense, and/or *source*, and in what sense, is not straightforward. Clearly Paul very strongly limits the more powerful party. Questions exist about whether Paul in Eph.5:22 – 6:9 was subverting or affirming typical Greek household codes (e.g. Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*), where wives, children, and slaves/servants were not even addressed as moral agents, and husbands, fathers, and masters were given enormously disproportionate legal power. And more important questions exist about how strongly and in what sense the husband-wife, parent-child, and master-slave relationships discussed in Eph.5:22 – 6:9 are qualified by Paul’s *limitations* on marriage and slavery based on the higher priority of Christian mission and service in 1 Cor.7, his previous material in Eph.4:1 – 5:20 about spiritual giftedness, ethics, and mission which would pertain to all, and his overarching command to all to speak in Spirit-led ways (5:18 – 20) and to be subject to one another in love (Eph.5:21).

I believe the significance of the head is as the organ of speech, as shown when God spoke to Moses who spoke to Aaron who spoke to the people: ‘Moreover, he shall speak for you to the people; and he will be as a mouth for you and you will be *as God to him*’ (Ex.4:16). In that sense, God was a ‘head’ (speaker of words) to Moses, and Moses was a ‘head’ (speaker of words) to Aaron. ‘Head’ as an analogy is drawn to the body from the pattern by which God spoke things into being, and worked by speaking through men and women who then became ‘prophets’ (Am.3:7). ‘Head’ in the sense of leadership is also drawn from God’s speech-acts. For instance, the ‘heads’ (leaders) of Israel were to speak in various ways to the people: judge, instruct, and prophecy (Mic.3:9 – 11).

Questions: Preliminaries

- (If you're short on time, just refer people to the first two pages of background notes)
- Okay, let's get out our initial feelings – not thoughts or analysis – about this passage before we get into it. 'This sounds crazy!' 'Is this why women wear those little scarves or lace doilies on their heads in some conservative churches?' 'Is Paul sexist?'
- It seems strangely flattering that Paul says that the Corinthians 'remember me in everything,' when they haven't really done so 'in everything.' Do you think this a rhetorical move? Why would he do this?
  - 'Paul begins this new section of the letter on a conciliatory note because he is employing one of the conventions of classical rhetoric, in which the exordium (preamble) contains a *captatio benevolentiae* — a 'capturing of the good will' of the audience. The same rhetorical feature may be seen in several of his letters, and in his speeches in Acts (cf. the opening of his famous speech on Mars' Hill, recorded in Acts 17:22, 'Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious').'<sup>16</sup>
  - Perhaps he is speaking to the group of Corinthian Christians led by Chloe (1:10). He is critiquing those who may differ from he spells out in this section.

Study: The Chiastic Literary Structure

- First, read through Paul's argument in a linear way. Note that we as western readers tend to read in a linear fashion. We tend to look for the meaning in a sequential fashion, as if the beginning determines the meaning for the rest.
- But the chiasmic structure means that the center determines the meaning, and then develops the points in the second half of the chiasm. So follow the chiasmic structure.
- Explain how the points leading up to the center are developed and amplified on the other side of the center. And if you find yourself puzzled by Paul or upset with Paul in the first half of the chiasm, *make sure you read the second half of the chiasm, and ask yourself how the second half develops ideas found in the first half.*

Points A (11:3 – 5) and A' (11:16)

<sup>11:2</sup> Now I praise you because you remember me in everything  
and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you.

church practice

<sup>3</sup> But I want you to understand that  
Christ is the head of every man,  
and the man is the head of a woman,  
and God is the head of Christ.

<sup>16</sup> But if one is inclined to be contentious,  
we have no other practice,  
nor have the churches of God.

church practice

1. Paul says in his introduction to this section (11:2) that this is part of a Christian tradition. I assume that whatever it was, it came from Jesus himself. Notice that in 7:10, he said, 'to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord.' Paul is also happy to identify when he is saying something that Jesus did not say explicitly, for example in 7:12, 'But to the rest I say, not the Lord...'
2. Notice that this section about men and women and how they appear when they speak in worship comes before a short section on communion (11:17 – 32) and a long section about spiritual gifts (12:1 – 14:40). Both topics are about worship practice. So it appears that when Paul uses the phrase, 'pray and prophesy,' he seems to mean it as an umbrella term, a general phrase to include all the gifts. Prayer is speech directed from humanity towards God. Prophecy is speech directed from God towards humanity. Speech is how the Spirit is *manifested* (12:7) and how the knowledge of Jesus and the teaching of Jesus is passed on. It is likely that all the gifts listed in 1 Corinthians and elsewhere involve speech; healing, miracles, and tongues probably involve prayer; administration is the organizing of people and therefore requires speech (at a minimum) as well. 'Pray and prophesy' would therefore be a *merism* for all the gifts.

<sup>16</sup> Michael Marlowe, *The Woman's Headcovering*, Oct 2008; <http://www.bible-researcher.com/headcoverings.html>; last accessed December 16, 2014; although I disagree with Marlowe's analysis and conclusion that Jesus started a normative practice valid for all times and cultures

- a. There is a confusing comment Paul makes about women *not speaking* in the service in 14:34 – 35! How can both be true? This is worth a much deeper analysis, which I have done elsewhere.<sup>17</sup> Suffice to say here that I think Paul was quoting the Corinthians back to themselves sarcastically in 14:34 – 35. Paul affirms women in praying and prophesying in the worship service in 11:2 – 16, and then affirms the Spirit giving spiritual gifts to women as well as men in 12:1 – 14:40.
  - b. Note the theme of speech in the historical background note on men and women. Paul wants all to speak the word of God, both men and women. That is why the worship service is described shorthand as ‘pray and prophecy.’
3. VITALLY IMPORTANT: *Speaking God’s word reveals you but also reveals another who gave you that word. The head is connected to speaking, which is the main issue in this context.*

### Points B (11:6) and B’ (11:14 – 15)

<sup>4</sup> Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying disgraces his head.

men: covered disgraces

<sup>5</sup> But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying disgraces her head, for she is one and the same as the woman whose head is shaved.

women: uncovered disgraces

women: shaved head is disgraceful

<sup>6</sup> For if a woman does not cover her head, let her also have her hair cut off; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, let her cover her head.

<sup>14</sup> Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair,

it is a dishonor to him,

men: long hair is dishonor,

<sup>15</sup> but if a woman has long hair,

women: long hair is glory

it is a glory to her?

women: hair is a covering

For her hair is given to her for a covering.

1. Section B starts with the concern being men. Possibly men were raising questions by their own behavior. It might not have been just the women.
2. Section B speaks of *something to cover the head* and then *hair*. Section B’ speaks of *hair as a covering*. For a woman to have her hair cut off most likely denotes a loss of femininity or feminine honor. If hair is already a covering, in B’, then why would a woman need something else to cover her hair, which covers her head?
3. Section B seems to be an argument from *culture*. He says regarding women, ‘*If it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off...*’ Section B’ also contains an argument from culture regarding men, ‘*if a man has long hair...*’ But Section B’ is also an argument from ‘nature’ [*physis*]. And we must be careful about how we understand the word ‘nature.’ The Greek mind wanted to dissect things atomistically into its constituent parts, because Aristotle believed that you don’t really understand something until you understand it in isolation from everything else. The Hebrew mind saw everything as dependent on and related to God and related to other things. While at other times, Paul can use the word ‘nature’ to refer to the biblical creation order, as when he talks about marriage and sexuality, he can also use the word ‘nature’ to refer to the more general relatedness of things to one another that is not biological in nature (e.g. being Jewish vs. Gentile ‘by nature’ in Gal.2:15). In that case, as here in 1 Cor.11:14, ‘nature’ is *not* referring to the creation order per se, because the argument from creation order occurs separately, and in any case, from the Genesis creation order, there is neither a distinction between Jew and Gentile nor a specific meaning about hairstyles for men and women. The argument from ‘nature’ in 11:14 is an argument about *gender difference as it is expressed in cultures*. See Appendix A, below.
  - a. I believe that there is a development of thought from B to B’. Paul is saying that, for dishonored women especially, appropriately bound hair is enough. The dishonored woman could not by law and custom wear the Roman *palla* (shawl) which was worn by ‘proper’ Roman wives and

<sup>17</sup> See my analysis *Women and Speech in 1 Corinthians 11 and 14* ([http://newhumanityinstitute.org/pdfs/paul\\_1corinthians-women-&-speech-analysis.pdf](http://newhumanityinstitute.org/pdfs/paul_1corinthians-women-&-speech-analysis.pdf))



1. Section D and D' are both explicitly from the biblical creation order. Only someone acquainted with Genesis 2 would say that man does not originate from woman but woman from man. That's an Adam and Eve sequence.
2. Both D and D' are speaking of the interdependence of man and woman.
3. Section D speaks of the origin of woman from man. This reinforces the point in the beginning of this section, that the man/husband is the head of a woman/wife.
4. In section D', it would seem that Paul should say, 'so also the man *originates from the woman.*' But Paul does not phrase it that way. His shift of terms, while also true, stresses the original creation order being played out through ordinary childbirths: the man has his birth through the woman, and all things originate from God. However, I could easily be overplaying the significance of Paul's phraseology.
5. Section D' speaks of natural birth, of course. But it might also refer to Jesus, 'the man' who had his birth 'through' Mary, 'the woman.' That would reinforce the point in the beginning of this section, that God is the head of Christ. Notice that in v.11, section E', Paul says, 'However, in the Lord...' If Paul were including Jesus, then it would explain why he avoids saying that the man originates from the woman.
6. In any case, there is a mutual interdependence in terms of birth and origination. Paul adds and develops section D so that the biblical origin of *gender* is not the only thing in view. The biological origin of *individuals with gender* is also included in D'.
7. In both sections, the idea is that you respect where you come from. Being an origination point (Adam for Eve) or birth mother is connected to the act of speaking to others.
  - a. To speak the word of God ('pray and prophecy') is to give or offer life to another. That is why Paul discusses origination or birth. This issue of giving life by speaking is connected functionally to how God brought things into being by His word (Gen.1:1 – 2:3). It is also connected theologically to the Father making all things through His Word/Son. The idea here is a biblical and theological one. The ones who brought you forth will proclaim the word of God to you. As a Jew, Paul was raised believing that he should listen to both his father's *and mother's* teaching the word of God (Prov.1:8)!
  - b. *So in D', man having his birth through the woman is the basis for men listening to women, learning and receiving life from their words! This is an argument from the creation order, not the fall. It is an argument for women to speak in the congregation – whether teaching or prophesying.*
  - c. So whatever Paul means in 1 Timothy 2:12, he cannot be AGAINST women ever teaching men in an authoritative manner. For in 1 Corinthians 11:2 – 16, *he is clearly FOR women teaching men authoritatively and regularly!!*
8. Furthermore, given the ambiguity of *aner* meaning man OR husband, and *gyne* meaning woman OR wife, we can certainly read Paul in this passage (as I think he is asking to be heard this way) *that a wife can teach her husband the word of God, or prophecy to him, or pray on his behalf.* After all, Paul is mindful enough to say that a man/husband is the head of A WOMAN/WIFE (singular), not all women categorically! This removes the potential conflict of authorities when a wife is preaching authoritatively when her husband is in the congregation.
  - a. This would explain Priscilla and Aquila's marriage where Priscilla's name is often listed first, an unusual phenomenon for any ancient literature, suggesting that she was the more prominent when the issue was teaching (Acts 18:18, 26; Rom.16:3; 2 Tim.4:19), while Aquila's name is listed first when the issue was tentmaking (Acts 18:2 – 3) or ownership of a house (1 Cor.16:19).
  - b. This would also mean that Paul in 1 Timothy 2:12 cannot be against a wife ever teaching her husband at all. This is corroborated by the fact that, in 1 Timothy 2:12, Paul does not use the standard term for normal authority or power (*exousia*). Instead, he uses the term *autentein*, which means 'to lead astray or into error' in 66% of the extant Greek literature. So I believe Paul would be for a wife teaching the word of God to her husband accurately in an authoritative manner. He would be against her leading her husband astray, which is why he brings up the example of Eve leading Adam astray. The argument from the fall in 1 Timothy 2 regards marriage, not church leadership.
  - c. *This means that 'headship' as a term cannot mean that a husband has exclusive authority to teach or interpret the word of God to his wife.* I do believe headship refers to his posture in the marriage regarding speaking the word of God to his wife and words of his own which foster unity and not distance, as Ephesians 5:26 indicates, to counteract a husband's tendency to withdraw and not give himself in love to his wife. But I do not believe it is exclusively the husband's 'role' to have an authoritative word from God.

- i. A personal or cultural preference for male pastors, evangelists, bible teachers, and speakers, etc. is not a valid 'culture' left intact by the gospel. The gospel challenges it. The gospel reveals that God did not intend for the creation order to give men/husbands unidirectional authority over women/wives related to bearing an authoritative word from God. Neither does He intend for the new creation community in Christ to be that way. Regardless of cultural context, both men and women (but more likely men) need to be spiritually formed in Christian circles to receive God's word when He speaks through female pastors, evangelists, bible teachers, speakers, etc.
- ii. Thus, by itself, Paul's argument from creation in 1 Corinthians 11:2 – 16 leaves the door open to women being in church leadership. It means that no woman is in an inherent conflict when she speaks authoritatively (prays or prophecies) when men are present, or even when her husband is present, if she is married. Note that this can be held confidently even if one is still not sure how to understand the issue of headcovering and hair.
- iii. In Paul's view, this extends to other female-male relations:
  1. Can a wife exercise speaking authority when her husband is sitting in the congregation? Yes.
  2. Can a daughter can do so with her father? Yes (a VERY underappreciated point!!!).
  3. Can a dishonored woman like an ex-prostitute, who by Roman law had to wear her hair uncovered and bound without the traditional Roman *palla* of honorable Roman women, do so with people of honored social and legal backgrounds? Yes, as Paul said that hair was sufficient for a woman's 'covering.'
- iv. APPLICATION:
  1. So if you're a male, and a female is preaching, you have to remember Jesus' words against lust, and think of this woman as your mother. Before you is a person whose gender represents the mother from which you came. If you feel a temptation to undress her in your mind, you have to give that to Jesus, and he will give you back an image of *your mother*. That is actually what Paul is saying here!
  2. So if you're a female, and a male is preaching, you might have the tendency to think on certain occasions, 'He reminds me of my little brother.' Or maybe, 'That is my little brother!' But before you is a person whose gender represents Adam, from whom Eve came. If you feel a temptation to belittle in your mind, you have to give that to Jesus, and he will give you back an image of Adam.
- v. What does Paul mean by using the word and imagery of 'head' then? 'Head' means that there is a *chronological sequence* by which the word of God is spoken from one to another. And the God in His word has authority, not the human person per se. Because the one who is the human 'head' is communicating something to the next person, who then *shares in the authority of the word of God*. So 'head' means that there is a chronological sequence by which others come into shared authority.
  1. Christ is the 'head' of mankind, so that mankind might share in his authority. A husband is the 'head' of a wife (singular) so that the wife might share in her husband's authority. An ex-prostitute can share in the authority of 'honorable' people in the body of Christ, because she shares in the authority of Christ himself.
  2. Notice that Paul reasons this out from the creation! His reading of Genesis respects the chronological sequence of Adam being given the word of God before Eve, which must be honored in a confessional sense. But it doesn't mean that Adam was categorically 'over' Eve per se. For Eve was meant to share in his authority.
- vi. To fully answer the question of whether women could be elders, which would be connected to 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, Gordon Hugenberger observes that both Hebrew and Greek used the 'inclusive male tense' to include the female (much as the Spanish word 'el' can be used in a way that might refer to a woman). Eldership in Mosaic Israel serves as a precedent for eldership in the church. Because Deborah was a judge in Israel

(Jdg.4 – 5), she must have been an elder because judges were drawn from elders. The male tense for elders and judges in the Old Testament must then be read as the inclusive male tense. If Jesus returned the people of God to a model of having elders, before there were priests (Ex.19ff.) and kings (1 Sam.8ff), then we have sufficient reason to say that New Testament elders can be both male and female.<sup>18</sup>

- vii. Not only that, but when eldership is discussed in 1 Timothy 3, Paul uses the neutral pronoun *tis* which could mean male or female in 3:1, and then every other conjugated verb in 3:1 – 7 refers back to the *tis* in 3:1. Then, the widows in 5:3 – 25 were heads of household, and some were counted as Christian elders (5:17 – 18).<sup>19</sup>

### Points E (11:9) and E' (11:11)

<sup>9</sup> for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake.	creation dependence
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<sup>11</sup> However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.	new creation in the Lord dependence
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1. Section E seems offensive in our culture, at first glance. In what sense was woman created for the man's sake? For his pleasure? Certainly not. For sex and reproduction? In part, but there is more than that.
  - a. It is probably significant that Paul does not refer to women as daughters of their father. He tells men to think of themselves as sons of their mothers, but he does not do the parallel for women. Why not?
  - b. My belief is that the Roman principle of *patria potestas* (absolute power of the father) would interfere dangerously with what Paul wanted these Corinthian Christian women to understand. It would *disempower* them.
  - c. The Genesis narrative of marriage implies a partnership. A wife has an irreplaceable place in her husband's life, which reinforces her speaking authority, and sharing with her husband in the speaking authority he has.
2. Section E' is stressing the broader interdependence of woman and man 'in the Lord,' and sex and reproduction and the woman's equal role in it are not suddenly important because of Jesus' coming alone. It seems to me that if Paul was drawing from Genesis, then section E must refer to:
  - a. The verbal incompleteness of Adam by himself, from a theological perspective. If God spoke His word to Adam, to whom would Adam speak that word? To be an image-bearer is to be a word-bearer. So Eve was created for Adam's sake in that sense. It is telling that the Genesis text strongly suggests that Adam failed in this regard. For Eve adds something to God's word; she says accurately that she cannot *eat* the fruit of the tree of knowledge, but she mistakenly adds that she cannot *touch* the fruit. Touching the fruit was probably added by Adam as an additional 'hedge.' Unfortunately, as soon as Eve touched the fruit and didn't die, the entire statement was drained of credibility. *Invoking the Genesis account of Adam and Eve in this way also reminds us that Eve had the responsibility to double check with God what Adam told her!* (Also, I would argue that the responsibility was reciprocal: Adam needed someone to remind him to be faithful to the Lord's commandment to spread out over the earth, that is, to spread the garden and bring forth beauty and more life. And Adam needed someone to remind him not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil – that is, to not take the power to define good and evil into himself.)
    - i. The biological incompleteness of the man as source of future human beings. From both literary sections Genesis 1:1 – 2:3 and 2:4 – 4:26, this is evident. In Genesis 1:1 – 2:3, there is a stress on the married human couple bearing the image of God in the sense of being able to reproduce life from within one's self. In Genesis 2:4 – 4:26, there is a stress

<sup>18</sup> Gordon P. Hugenberger, 'Women in Church Office: Hermeneutics or Exegesis? A Survey of Approaches to 1 Tim 2:8 – 15', *Journal of the Evangelical Theology Society* (Sep 1992), p.341 – 360; [http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/35/35-3/JETS\\_35-3\\_341-360\\_Hugenberger.pdf](http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/35/35-3/JETS_35-3_341-360_Hugenberger.pdf); last accessed Feb 15, 2015; see also Hugenberger's summary, <http://www.parkstreet.org/teaching-training/articles/women-leadership>

<sup>19</sup> See my paper, *The Implications of the Chiasmic Structure of 1 Timothy on the Question of Women in Church Leadership*, available here: [www.anastasiscenter.org/bible-messiah-paul-pastorals](http://www.anastasiscenter.org/bible-messiah-paul-pastorals).

on the relationality and mutuality of husband and wife as the genealogical head of human beings, while being sure to point out in narrative form that husband and wife share the same human nature, since Eve was drawn from Adam.

- ii. The personal and functional incompleteness of the man as a gardener. Adam needed a 'helper' to reflect him back to himself to help him understand his unique status in the creation, and to help him tend the garden and care for all life. He needed another human person in whom he could see maturation and growth in godliness, knowledge, wisdom, and beauty.
  - iii. The theological incompleteness of the man made to image the Triune God. Adam in himself was a singular, solitary being. If he was to image the Triune God, who is Father and Son in the Spirit, then Adam needed Eve. Within humanity, Adam and Eve in the bond of their covenant, marital love images the Father and Son in the bond of their love who is the Spirit. At least that is one way of understanding the Trinity.
- b. Section E' stresses the additional information about gender that Jesus' coming introduces. When Paul says, 'However, in the Lord,' he must mean that there is something about Jesus' coming that supplies additional conviction about gender differences and gender interdependence from the Genesis creation account, whether explicitly or implicitly. It seems to me that section E' must refer to:
- i. In Christ and because of Christ, men are more interdependent with women than simply the creation. In some real sense, men are actually dependent on women. As far as I can tell, this started from Genesis 3:14 – 15 when God promised that the 'seed of the *woman*' would be the human champion who defeats the serpent and its seed. He did this to give women, and wives, more importance in His redemptive plan. In Genesis, God was notably trying to restore the unity of the husband-wife marriage relationship, which is especially clear for Abraham and Sarah throughout Genesis 12 – 22. Sarah's faith and motherhood mattered just as much to God as Abraham's faith and fatherhood. That's why God did not accept Abraham's lies about Sarah as a sister (Gen.12), refused Abraham's desire to name his servant Eliezer the heir to the promise (Gen.15), refused Sarah's and Abraham's enlistment of Hagar as a surrogate mother (Gen.16). Only when Abraham believed (Gen.15:6) and believed again with laughter (Gen.17:17) AND Sarah believed with laughter (Gen.18:9 – 15) could God give them their son Isaac.
  - ii. In some sense, Jesus drawing flesh from Mary in his incarnation. When Paul offers the phrase 'in the Lord,' he is first thinking of the human nature that is actually in the physical body of Jesus and the mode of union by which God took human nature to Himself. Hence, man is not independent of woman even in the case of Jesus. God was dependent on Mary (and her ancestry in Israel) to supply Him with a human nature by which He could cleanse and offer a new humanity to all men *and* women.
  - iii. Jesus' people, both male and female, partaking of his new humanity *in him*. Given what Paul says about honoring singleness in 1 Cor.7, he must mean more than a biological dependence, although the biological dependence is certainly included. He must mean a fuller dependence in ministry. People are realistically included in the Lord by virtue of Jesus' humanity *including* their humanity in principle (Eph.1:3 – 14). This was demonstrated by Jesus when he called his female disciples to tell the men of his resurrection and empty tomb. So this undergirds his command and assumption in this section that women, too, need to pray and prophesy, as they appear as women. For men alone cannot image the redemption that Jesus has brought about. Women must be present along with men, and appear as women, to image the redemption that Jesus has brought about to both men and women.
  - iv. So in Christ, men and women are dependent on each other: in kingdom ministry especially that of speaking, in friendship, and in marriage. The husband-wife pairing in particular still bears the image of God as a life-bearing union which resembles God being a life-bearing union in Himself (Gen.1:27), and human marriage connects us to the fact that God partnered with married couples of faith to bring about Jesus (even condescending to use David and Bathsheba to pass down the royal title through Joseph, but going through a different son of David to pass down humanity through Mary!).

## Center point F (11:10)

<sup>10</sup> Therefore the woman  
ought to have a symbol of authority on her head,  
because of the angels. authority of women

1. Why do we have the association of veils as the symbol of authority?
  - a. Dr. Bruce Metzger notes that, ‘The presumed meaning of the difficult ἐξουσίαν [ekousian (power)] in this passage is given by the explanatory gloss κάλυμμα [kalumma] ‘a veil,’ read by several versional [variation of an earlier or original type] and patristic [writings of the early church fathers] witnesses.’ (Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, p. 495)
  - b. Hiromi Iwashige<sup>20</sup> points out that Irenaeus of Lyons (130 – 202 AD) in *Against Heresies*, vol.1, ch.8, section 2 criticized the Gnostic heretic Valentinus, apparently for using the word *kalumma* in 1 Corinthians 11:10, instead of *exousian*. Valentinus’ use fits the Greek, and especially Gnostic, prejudice against women. So if this is true, then Irenaeus is to be preferred as an earlier witness to a reading of 1 Cor.11:10 that does not mean ‘veil’ or ‘covering.’ It means ‘power,’ and the etymology of the word *exousian* suggests ‘power out of oneself’ (*ex* – ‘out of’; *ousia* – ‘nature’). And that ‘power’ was reflected in a woman’s hair by itself without the Roman *palla*, as Paul accepts in 1 Cor.11:15. Irenaeus’ heritage as being from Smyrna in Asia Minor, and a student of Polycarp, is significant. Asia Minor was more thoroughly evangelized and disciplined by the apostles than Alexandria or Carthage.
  - c. Clement of Alexandria (c.150 – c.215 AD) is a confused witness. He wrote: ‘Let her be entirely covered, *unless she happens to be at home*. For that style of dress is grave, and protects from being gazed at. And she will never fall, who puts before her eyes modesty, and her shawl; nor will she invite another to fall into sin by uncovering her face. For this is the wish of the Word, since it is becoming for her to pray veiled.’ (Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus*, book 3, chapter 1, italics mine). But Clement’s teaching is puzzling. ‘Unless she happens to be at home’? Maybe Clement’s church meetings occurred in teaching halls or separate buildings, since Clement was an instructor at a school, but Paul’s churches met *in private homes*. That fact was probably one reason for asking about women’s head coverings in the first place. In a house church, was a woman ‘at home’ in private or ‘at a public meeting’ in a Christian worship setting?
  - d. Tertullian of Carthage (c.160 – 225 AD), in *On the Veiling of Virgins*, admits that he is changing church practice by calling for the veiling of virgin women at all times. He makes the case for adjusting and *improving* certain aspects of Christian practice in chapter 1: ‘The rule of faith, indeed, is altogether one, alone immovable and irreformable; the rule, to wit, of believing in one only God omnipotent, the Creator of the universe, and His Son Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, raised again the third day from the dead, received in the heavens, sitting now at the right (hand) of the Father, destined to come to judge quick and dead through the resurrection of the flesh as well (as of the spirit). This law of faith being constant, the other succeeding points of discipline and conversation *admit the novelty of correction; the grace of God, to wit, operating and advancing even to the end*. For what kind of (supposition) is it, that, while the devil is always operating and adding daily to the ingenuities of iniquity, the work of God should either have ceased, or else have desisted from advancing? Whereas the reason why the Lord sent the Paraclete was, that, since human mediocrity was unable to take in all things at once, *discipline should, little by little, be directed, and ordained, and carried on to perfection, by that Vicar of the Lord, the Holy Spirit*.’ In saying this, Tertullian admits that it was NOT church practice before to veil all women as a matter of principle. This is important because, in chapter 2, Tertullian wants to appeal to uniformity of practice among the churches, even though he concedes that only ‘the majority of churches keep their virgins [unmarried young women] covered.’ Moreover, observing an outward practice is not the same as the grasping the inner interpretation for that practice, which might admit of a different expression in another context as I think Paul is explaining here. Furthermore, in chapter 7, Tertullian refers to women having *power* on their heads, so he shows his knowledge of what Paul *intended* in 1 Cor.11:10. But he now *equates* it

<sup>20</sup> Hiromi Iwashige, *Corinthians* (<http://iwashige.net/corinthians.htm>; last accessed February 5, 2015)

with the veil, as if the veil denoted the power, although in Paul's actual writing it did not. In all of his many other writings, Tertullian reverts back to Valentinus' word 'veil.' This is a problematic position because it fails to perceive the chiasmic progression of Paul's statements in 1 Cor.11:2 – 16. It also fails to account for Paul's comments on Moses' veil (*kalumma*) in 2 Cor.3, that it is taken away in Christ.

- e. The Latin Vulgate (382 AD). The Vulgate is the Latin translation of the Bible. In 382 AD, Pope Damasus I commissioned the Christian scholar Jerome to lead the work of compiling Latin translations into the first Vulgate edition. It was regarded as the standard scholarly Latin Bible. In 1590 AD, Pope Sixtus V printed the Sixtine edition after mass printing techniques were developed. However, in 1592, 1593, and 1598 AD, Pope Clement VIII ordered revisions to correct printing errors. The Sixtine version has the Latin word *velamen* ('veil') instead of *potestatem* ('power'). Later, the corrected Clementine edition used the original word 'power.' But the association was assumed that the 'veil' was itself the word symbol of 'power.'<sup>21</sup> Iwashige and others argue that Paul did not copy or borrow from Jewish, Greek, or Roman worship practices, and that it was a heresy to have the word 'veil' in the first place.
2. Significantly, there is the biblical theme of God restoring both men and women to who He meant them to be.
    - a. That means praying and prophesying. God intended women from creation to also speak authoritatively and pass down the word of God (see historical and cultural notes on men and women, above).
    - b. That may have implications for appearance, but do we know enough? In the creation story of Genesis 2, Adam and Eve began life naked. It may be that clothing was to be a further development from creation, post-childbearing, and not just the result of the fall. This is probably why the word 'nakedness' is used as a kind of euphemism in the biblical story subsequently to denote both literal nakedness and the act of sex. But do we have enough information to say whether God intended *veils* or *headcoverings* for women from creation? Paul is a Jewish creational theologian arguing *from the creation order* in 11:7 – 9 and then symmetrically in 11:11 – 13. He seems to be arguing that 'long hair' was (or would have been) a sufficient covering for Eve in creation, and hence 'long hair' is sufficient for the women in 11:15. The portrait of honor among men and women involves the creation order because, as Paul teaches, Jesus in his new creation both affirms the original creation and transfigures it (e.g. 1 Cor.6:16; 15:20 – 28, 42 – 49). So it does matter how we envision the original Eve.
    - c. In the context of this question, I think it is significant that Luke records the incident of the 'sinful woman' who washed Jesus' feet with her tears and unbound hair. The unbound hair was typically reserved for the home, maybe even the bedroom.
    - d. Note that in 2 Corinthians, Paul refers to Moses wearing a veil (*kalumma*) to hide the glory of God reflected on his face after his meeting with God. Paul then says that believers in Christ do not wear a veil, and we see the glory of Christ as we see each other face to face (2 Cor.3:12ff.), so the particular veil that Moses used apparently covered his face. I think it would be contradictory of Paul if he insisted that Christian women wear veils in worship, and therefore 'veil' (*kalumma*) is not a likely interpolation of 'authority' (*exousia*) in 1 Cor.11:10.
  3. What do the angels have to do with it?
    - a. The Greek word *angellos* can also mean 'messengers' and therefore might refer to human messengers. Maybe other Christian messengers? Maybe non-Christian messengers who were visitors to the worship service? But, given Paul's statement from 6:3 that we will judge angels, it seems more appropriate to consider the heavenly beings.
    - b. I do not subscribe to the 'Nephilim' idea that 'male' angels mated with female humans (Gen.6:1 – 4); I am more persuaded that 'sons of God' and 'daughters of men' simply refers to human beings. Probably 'sons of God' refers to kings and rulers, or to men of faith from Seth's line compromising with unbelieving women from Cain's line.
    - c. The theory that angels somehow participate in, or observe, the worship of God among humans is also possible. Paul says in Ephesians 3:10 that God's manifold wisdom is made known by the church to the heavenly places.

<sup>21</sup> The English Revised Standard Version (RSV) 1952 edition reads: 'That is why a woman ought to have a veil on her head, because of the angels.' A footnote says, Greek authority (the veil being a symbol of this). Also, New Revised Standard Version followed by translating word *καλύπτω* as 'wear a veil' and in verse six, 'she should wear a veil' instead of translating the phrase, 'she should cover her head.'

- d. Paul had said that Christians will judge angels (6:3), which is the only sure idea that we can connect to, in 1 Corinthians. In fact, there is a major theme in the biblical story that the older will serve the younger. Examples:
- i. The creation hymn of Genesis 1:1 – 2:3: creation gets better and better until God makes humanity in His own image. The older things in creation serve the human, who are literally younger.
  - ii. The genealogy of Genesis 2:4 – 25: Adam and Eve are married in 2:24 – 25, and the “leaving” of parents is mentioned. This means that each new married couple “leaves” their parents and “cleaves/joins” to each other, to retell the story of Adam and Eve, and inherit their portion of the garden land, as this would have allowed God to recapitulate the original creation story every time. Thus, the older parents would have served the younger new married couple.
  - iii. The older sibling serves the younger sibling in some way: Ishmael served Isaac; Esau served Jacob; Reuben, Simeon, and Levi served Judah and Joseph.
  - iv. King Saul was meant to serve his successor King David. King David was meant to serve his successors, from Solomon to the Messiah.
  - v. Jesus served his disciples (Jn.13) and said that his apostles will do greater things than he did (Jn.14:12).
  - vi. Paul says that apostles are meant to serve the broader church (1 Cor.3 – 4) and places himself in relation to the church into the relation of the ox serving the human (1 Cor.9:8 – 12), which is a creation order portrait.
  - vii. In Psalm 91 and 1 Corinthians 6, we learn that angels serve humans (Ps.91), and will be judged by humans (1 Cor.6:3). This relatively simple understanding has the advantage of staying within canon, as opposed to having to consider Jewish or Christian literature outside the biblical canon speculating about angels.
  - viii. Perhaps this pattern is even related to the Father serving the Son in a particular sense (1 Cor.15:27).
  - ix. Now in this passage in 1 Corinthians 11:2 – 16, we learn either that a wife (gyne) is the glory of her husband (aner), or that the woman (gyne) is the glory of humanity (andros), in the same way that humans are the glory of God in creation. Glory means the “revealing of, in and with honor.”
    1. Perhaps it is associated with “reputation,”<sup>22</sup> although I think more substantial things are at play.
    2. Other passages in Scripture indicate that ultimately, the glory of the human originates from the glory of God and converges with the glory of God: God's glory makes Moses' face shine with glory (Ex.34:29 – 34); the glory of God calls forth the Psalmist's glory (Ps.57:5, 8, 11); Christ in us is the hope of glory (Col.1:27).
    3. Glory seems related to the tabernacle-temple structure: God makes something beautiful the structure or container for revealing something even more beautiful.
  - x. So the symmetry in this passage is between “head” as the source and the “glory” ultimately revealed. This makes good sense for women to wear a sign of their own authority on their heads, to tell the angels that humanity as a whole will become greater in honor and glory than the angels!!
  - xi. If so, then the preacher-congregation relationship is given a spiritual interpretation by Paul in 1 Cor.11:2 – 16. The “head” is the organ of speech to the congregation or “body,” which is the main topic of 1 Cor.11 – 14, where “glory” is ultimately revealed in the body now via word and Spirit (1 Cor.3:16; 6:18 – 20), anticipating the fuller glory of the resurrected body later (1 Cor.15:40 – 42).
- e. Illus: In *The Lord of the Rings* story, Eowyn had to be the one to slay the Witch-King of Angmar, because there was a prophecy that said that no man could kill him. Galadriel bore one of the three great Elven rings and was a staunch enemy of Sauron. Melian the Maia was crucial as an ally to her husband Thingol. The name of Elbereth the Vala had power to drive off the Nazgul. And the

<sup>22</sup> Marg Mowczko, “Man and woman as the image and glory of God (1 Cor. 11:7),” Marg Mowczko, August 7, 2018; <https://margmowczko.com/man-woman-image-glory-god-1-corinthians-11-7/>

female Valar had equal importance and power to the male Valar, though Manwe did lead them. This shows how in Tolkien's story, both men and women were vitally important. *How much more true is that in God's story?*

- f. My personal conclusion: I believe that Paul is saying long hair suffices as the woman's culturally appropriate mark of honor, because it identifies her as a woman, and thus reflects her authority and power *to speak the word of God to the whole congregation of men and women*.
- i. Gordon Fee suggests that the use of 'head covering' in the beginning and 'hair' at the end of the chiasm makes Paul's original meaning confusing beyond our ability to recover. However, he does not account for the chiasmic structure of the section, where the latter points seem to amplify, clarify, or build upon the former points. Nor does he weave the Nazirite vow, and possible uses of it in any modified form by Jesus or Paul, into the background of the passage.
  - ii. This does make Paul's use of the phrase 'down the head' unusual, but not outrageous if he is reinterpreting customs of dress in light of Jesus. Paul probably had in view bound hair as opposed to unbound hair, to respect cultural convention.
  - iii. What were his reasons for saying this? I don't believe that Paul had only one purpose in writing this section. He probably had multiple reasons:
    1. To preserve gender distinctions to show that Jesus honored and redeemed both men and women
    2. To welcome dishonored women under the Roman legal dress code into the Christian worship service to show that Jesus honored people from all walks of life (and in which the 'sinful woman' of Luke 7:36 – 50 served as an important precedent); Jewish Christians would have expected distinctive dress by gender, and Paul here says that a woman's hair is enough to suffice for a headcovering.
    3. To anchor the power given by God to Christian women to speak (pray and prophecy) in Christian service within a certain culturally reasonable dress and hair code
    4. To correct the overreaction of silencing women in the service completely (reflected in 1 Cor.14:34 – 35<sup>23</sup>)
    5. To clear up any confusion that lingered because of his own Nazirite vow.
  - iv. Illus: When I came to Jesus during my junior year of high school, I met my first Christian mentor, Gail Yoshimine. She and her husband John were at Anaheim Japanese Free Methodist Church. Now in Japanese culture, a traditional woman did not have a lot of voice at all. She was supposed to silently communicate to her husband by the way she set the table and the tea cups! Three things stood out to me about Gail. First, she was the assistant pastor, and she was a good speaker and teacher of the Scriptures. Second, she knew a ton. So when I came with questions – emotional questions because my parents were arguing about divorce, and intellectual questions because I was wrestling with atheism and Buddhism as background worldviews – she would listen and advise, and also give me good books to read. I devoured them. She exposed me to Richard Foster and the life of spiritual formation, liberation theology and Sojourners and Christian political activism, Jacques Ellul and his Christian sociological critiques, etc. Third, she and her husband and their two friends Bryce and Bruce lived in community together in a suburban house in Anaheim, CA. They all came to Jesus sometime in the 1970's, during the Jesus people movement in the middle of the hippie days. So they wanted to live their faith radically. I looked at the way they lived and thought it was different, but I loved it. I made sure that the woman I married wanted to live in Christian intentional community, too. My wife Ming and I do now in a high crime, low income neighborhood in Boston! It was because of Gail, my spiritual mom, because especially at that time, I needed a mom, and God spoke to me through her. Ever since I was trained to do expository preaching my senior year of college, I have trained men and women in that style of preaching, too, and I think of Gail often, and praise God for her.

### **(Optional) Evidence from the Early Church**

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<sup>23</sup> See my analysis *Women and Speech in 1 Corinthians 11 and 14*, available here: [www.anastasiscenter.org/bible-messiah-paul-corinthians](http://www.anastasiscenter.org/bible-messiah-paul-corinthians)

What did the early church believe? Here is the evidence from church history that women preaching was accepted

1. 1<sup>st</sup> century, Rome: T.F. Torrance wrote an article in 1992 called 'The Ministry of Women' in which he highlights an amazing mural drawn in one of the earliest Roman catacombs in the Capella Greca, within a century after the death and resurrection of Jesus. In the mural, seven elders are seated around a table breaking bread and celebrating communion. This is called 'The Catacomb of Priscilla' because Priscilla is one of the seven elders seated next to the presiding elder, presumably her husband Aquila. The institution of the seven Christian elders is copied from the institution of seven Jewish elders that led smaller Jewish synagogue communities throughout the Jewish Diaspora, including in the city of Rome. This is impressive for various reasons, but it strongly suggests that Priscilla was an elder in the Christian community at Rome, who presided at the Lord's Supper and taught the congregation as an elder.<sup>24</sup>
2. 2<sup>nd</sup> century: The martyrdom story of a woman named Blandina, which occurred in 177 AD in Roman Gaul, is preserved by church historian Eusebius of Caesarea (c.265 – c.340 AD). Perhaps around 313 AD, Eusebius recounts the story, presumably as he had learned it from others, thus:

'For while we all trembled, and her earthly mistress, who was herself also one of the witnesses, feared that on account of the weakness of her body, she would be unable to make bold confession, Blandina was filled with such power as to be delivered and raised above those who were torturing her by turns from morning till evening in every manner, so that they acknowledged that they were conquered, and could do nothing more to her. And they were astonished at her endurance, as her entire body was mangled and broken; and they testified that one of these forms of torture was sufficient to destroy life, not to speak of so many and so great sufferings. But the blessed woman, like a noble athlete, renewed her strength in her confession; and her comfort and recreation and relief from the pain of her sufferings was in exclaiming, 'I am a Christian, and there is nothing vile done by us.'<sup>25</sup>

Jackson Lashier points out that Blandina's testimony and model encourage a male martyr to stand firm:

'Blandina, one of the Gallican Christians martyred around 177 C.E., the account of which is preserved by Church historian Eusebius of Caesarea. [...] Blandina... constantly is looked to as a source of inspiration by the Christians undergoing torture. In one place, her direct encouragement to a young man in his hour of weakness allowed him to remain steadfast... Notably, this feminine leadership occurs despite the presence of numerous men... including, among the Gallican Christians, the revered bishop Pothinus.'<sup>26</sup>

Attributing the encouragement to Blandina and other female martyrs is important because other men were present among the martyrs, including the bishop of Lyons, Pothinus, predecessor of Irenaeus, who was among those martyred. If Christians wanted to minimize the role of women, Blandina's testimony might have been silenced and forgotten from the annals of history. It apparently could not be. The story was passed down in such a way that encouraged Christian men and women to hold fast to the faith. It is quite reasonable to assume that Irenaeus of Lyons had a direct role in encouraging the spread of this story and others like it.

3. 2<sup>nd</sup> century: Irenaeus of Lyons (130 – 202 AD), a disciple of Polycarp of Smyrna, and the second bishop of Lyons from 177 – 202 AD, writes in a fragment that Eve was *stronger* than Adam. This is suggestive that the early Christians read Genesis without a preconception of Eve's inferiority or subordination to Adam. It is also important to note that Irenaeus was a strong biblical theologian, and made a strong effort to stay close to the Judaic roots of Christian faith in the practice of observing Easter according to the Jewish calendar and not the Roman:

'Why also did it not prefer to make its attack upon the man instead of the woman? And if thou sayest that it attacked her as being the weaker of the two, [I reply that], on the contrary, she was

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<sup>24</sup> T.F. Torrance, 'The Ministry of Women,' *Touchstone*, Fall 1992, p.5

<sup>25</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea, *Church History*, book 5, paragraphs 18 – 19

<sup>26</sup> Jackson Lashier, "In the Company of the Fathers: The Female Martyrs," *Seedbed*, April 25, 2014; <https://www.seedbed.com/company-fathers-female-martyrs/>

the stronger, since she appears to have been the helper of the man in the transgression of the commandment. For she did by herself alone resist the serpent, and it was after holding out for a while and making opposition that she ate of the tree, being circumvented by craft; whereas Adam, making no fight whatever, nor refusal, partook of the fruit handed to him by the woman, which is an indication of the utmost imbecility and effeminacy of mind. And the woman indeed, having been vanquished in the contest by a demon, is deserving of pardon; but Adam shall deserve none, for he was worsted by a woman,—he who, in his own person, had received the command from God. But the woman, having heard of the command from Adam, treated it with contempt, either because she deemed it unworthy of God to speak by means of it, or because she had her doubts, perhaps even held the opinion that the command was given to her by Adam of his own accord. The serpent found her working alone, so that he was enabled to confer with her apart. Observing her then either eating or not eating from the trees, he put before her the fruit of the [forbidden] tree. And if he saw her eating, it is manifest that she was partaker of a body subject to corruption.<sup>27</sup>

Out of all the patristic theologians, Irenaeus had the highest view of women as women in terms of being made in the image of God. In the *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, dated circa 195 AD, meant to summarize Christian teaching for new converts, Irenaeus writes:

‘But man He formed with His own hands [i.e. the Word and the Spirit as the ‘hands of God’], taking from the earth that which was purest and finest, and mingling in measure His own power with the earth. For He traced His own form on the formation, that that which should be seen should be of divine form: for (as) the image of God was man formed and set on the earth. And that he might become living, He breathed on his face the breath of life; that both for the breath and for the formation man should be like unto God. Moreover he was free and self-controlled, being made by God for this end, that he might rule all those things that were upon the earth. And this great created world, prepared by God before the formation of man, was given to man as his place, containing all things within itself.’<sup>28</sup>

Irenaeus does not elevate the interiority of human rationality to be ‘the image of God’ as would Augustine and others. Those later theologians compared the individual’s psychological thought process (mind, knowledge, and will) to the Trinity in what is now known as the ‘psychological model’ of the Trinity. Instead, Irenaeus celebrates the physical form of humanity as somehow mirroring the divine form, although he does not explain this. In fact, I rather suspect that Irenaeus was thinking of the Hebraic, physical understanding of the oneness of male and female in marriage as being in the image of God, since it is that oneness which is life-bearing and life-giving, as reflected in the grammar of Genesis 1:27 and also the literary concern of Genesis 1:1 – 2:3 where God makes all living beings to be life-bearing ‘after its kind.’ Irenaeus seems to be thinking this way, because he happily commingles phrases from Genesis 2 (‘from the earth’; ‘breathed on his face’) and Genesis 1 (‘image of God’; ‘be like unto God’; ‘rule all those things that were upon the earth’) in his explanation of human creation in the *Demonstration*. Hence, I think Irenaeus had a relational (in fact, marital) and physical understanding for what it meant for human beings to be in ‘the image of God.’ To the extent that he set about to answer the question of how an individual human being – and not just a married couple – was in ‘the image of God,’ Irenaeus in *Against Heresies* appealed to the relational identity of the Word-Son as the image of God. Each human being was meant to be in relation to God by the Spirit, in some sense mirroring an internal relation of the Son to the Father in the Spirit. Irenaeus’ theological anthropology was relational to its core.<sup>29</sup> For Irenaeus, there was no individualistic notion of human personhood. This sets Irenaeus up to explain the fall in terms of damaged relationship, and the atonement in terms of restored relationship.

4. 2<sup>nd</sup> century: Another popular document called *The Acts of Paul and Thecla* is significant for our purposes here. In this story, Thecla was a Christian woman who was gifted in teaching and purportedly accompanied Paul in some of his travels. In the story, Paul tells Thecla:

<sup>27</sup> Irenaeus of Lyons, *Fragment 14*

<sup>28</sup> Irenaeus of Lyons, *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* 11

<sup>29</sup> For an excellent discussion of Irenaeus’ theological anthropology, see Matthew Craig Steenberg, *Of God and Man: Theology as Anthropology from Irenaeus to Athanasius* (New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2009), ch.1.

‘Go and teach the word of the Lord... [so] she went to Seleucia and enlightened many in the knowledge of Christ... certain gentlewomen heard of the virgin Thecla and went to her to be instructed in the oracles of God.’<sup>30</sup>

The book was widely circulated before 190 AD and read in an approved manner in the first few centuries. Copies survive in Greek, Coptic, Syriac, Armenian, Latin, and Ethiopic. Moreover, around 200 AD, in his treatise on baptism, Tertullian of Carthage says that ‘the example of Thecla’ is used by those who ‘defend the liberty of women to teach and to baptize.’<sup>31</sup> He opposed women baptizing. Moreover, notably, he also wanted to *change* church practice in the more ‘conservative’ direction to institute veils for *all* post-pubescent women in the worship service.<sup>32</sup> Tertullian is valuable here as a hostile witness to women in positions of formal leadership, although, intriguingly, he wanted to modify the practice of women prophesying in the worship service in Carthage (all women veiled)! While we can be relatively certain that some of the content of *The Acts of Paul and Thecla* has been exaggerated, for our purposes here, what matters is that the early Christians cherished a document that featured a woman teaching prominently. The physical evidence of Thecla’s popularity is also important to consider. Stephen J. Davis, *The Cult of Saint Thecla: A Tradition of Women’s Piety in Late Antiquity*, explores the abundance of shrines to Thecla throughout the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern regions.<sup>33</sup>

5. Late 2<sup>nd</sup> century: The Montanist ‘New Prophecy’ movement, which started in the mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century, was led by three individuals who practiced ecstatic and prophetic inspiration from the Holy Spirit: Montanus (male), Prisca/Priscilla (female), and Maximilla (female). It started in Phrygia, in Asia Minor, but spread throughout the church in the Mediterranean world. Even today we are not sure exactly what they believed. According to Epiphanius of Salamis (c.320 – 403 AD), *Against Heresies* 49.2.5, they ordained female bishops and presbyters. The Montanist movement provides us with evidence that early Christians accepted female prophets and leaders because of how long it took non-Montanist Christians to label Montanism a heresy, and the uneven reaction to it.<sup>34</sup> *If having female leaders was so obviously against church practice and teaching, would the Montanists not have been counteracted immediately on that basis?* Modern Anglican theologian Sarah Coakley also argues that Montanism is what caused a church-wide movement to gradually displace women from positions of leadership and authority.
6. Early 3<sup>rd</sup> century onward: *The Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas* is composed (some traditions ascribe it to Tertullian), circulated, and promoted. Classical historian Mary Beard says of this very unusual document:

‘One particularly revealing moment is described, in the account of her own trial, by a Christian woman who was sent to be killed by wild beasts in the amphitheatre in Roman Carthage in 203 CE. Vibia Perpetua, a newly converted Christian, was aged about twenty-two, married and with a young baby, when she was arrested and brought before the procurator of the province, who was acting in place of the governor who had recently died. Her memoir is the most lengthy, personal and intimate account by a woman of her own experiences to have survived from the whole of the ancient world, dwelling on her anxieties about her child and the dreams that she experienced in prison before she was sent to the beasts. Even in this account the frustration of her interrogator comes across, and his keenness to get her to recant. ‘Have pity on the white hairs of your father, have pity on your tiny baby,’ he urged her. ‘Just make a sacrifice for the well-being of the emperor.’ ‘I will not do so,’ she replied. ‘Are you a Christian?’ he asked, now putting the formal question. When she said she was – ‘Christiana sum’ – she was sentenced to death. The procurator was obviously baffled, and so it seems was the crowd who watched her die in the amphitheatre.’<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> *Acts of Paul and Thecla* 10

<sup>31</sup> Tertullian of Carthage, *On Baptism* 17

<sup>32</sup> Tertullian, *On the Veiling of Virgins*

<sup>33</sup> Stephen J. Davis, *The Cult of Saint Thecla: A Tradition of Women’s Piety in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)

<sup>34</sup> See William Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions and Testimonia: Epigraphic Sources Illustrating the History of Montanism*, Patristic Monograph Series (16) (Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2009); much cited by Wikipedia, ‘Montanism’:  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montanism>

<sup>35</sup> Mary Beard, *SPQR: A History of Ancient Rome* (New York, NY: Mary Bear Publications and Norton & Company, 2015), p.518

Jackson Lashier points out that the narrative activity of Perpetua the character is highly significant. Perpetua exhorts, interprets prophetic dreams, and teaches:

‘...in her imprisonment Perpetua is given a series of heavenly visions, which she shares with the group to encourage perseverance. Notably, this feminine leadership occurs despite the presence of numerous men in both groups, including, among the Gallican Christians, the revered bishop Pothinus.

‘Both stories also portray the women in ways scandalous to the norms of a patriarchal culture where women are defined by and have worth only through their roles as daughters, wives, or mothers. Perpetua, for example, is first introduced in her roles as a mother (she has an infant son) and a daughter (she is visited in prison by her father). However, Perpetua refuses to heed her father’s pleas for her to deny Christ in order to save her life and raise her son. Instead, she gives up the care of her infant to her father, thus renouncing both roles to follow Christ. Far from condemning her, the narrative praises this action as one of paradigmatic discipleship.’<sup>36</sup>

Furthermore, and most tellingly, the *Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas* opens with the great quotation from Joel 2:28 – 29 about the Spirit of God poured out upon, and speaking through, both sons and daughters, men and women. This is surely not accidental to the subject matter, where Perpetua and Felicitas, women, are speakers and Christian role models. Simon Peter quotes this very same vision in his Pentecost speech of Acts 2, which opens the book of Acts. The quotation functions paradigmatically to describe the Christian community henceforth. This Spirit-outpouring and Spirit-proclamation is the very thing happening in the martyrdom accounts of these two women:

‘For in the last days, says the Lord, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and their sons and their daughters shall prophesy. And upon my servants and my handmaidens will I pour out of my Spirit; and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. [Acts 2:17 – 18; Joel 2:28 – 29] And thus we — who both acknowledge and reverence, even as we do the prophecies, modern visions as equally promised to us, and consider the other powers of the Holy Spirit as an agency of the Church for which also He was sent, administering all gifts in all, even as the Lord distributed to every one as well needfully collect them in writing, as commemorate them in reading to God’s glory; that so no weakness or despondency of faith may suppose that the divine grace abode only among the ancients, whether in respect of the condescension that raised up martyrs, or that gave revelations; since God always carries into effect what He has promised, for a testimony to unbelievers, to believers for a benefit. And we therefore, what we have heard and handled, declare also to you, brethren and little children, that as well you who were concerned in these matters may be reminded of them again to the glory of the Lord, as that you who know them by report may have communion with the blessed martyrs, and through them with the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and honour, for ever and ever. Amen.’

7. 3<sup>rd</sup> century: Opponents of Christianity said the Christians were ‘led by women,’ as recorded by Origen of Alexandria (184/5 – 253/4 AD).<sup>37</sup> But in his commentary on First Corinthians, Origen of Alexandria (185 – 254 AD) argues that various women who are said to have prophesied in Scripture did it in other than a public Christian worship assembly:

‘If the daughters of Philip prophesied, at least they did not speak in the assemblies; for we do not find this fact in evidence in the Acts of the Apostles. Much less in the Old Testament. It is said that Deborah was a prophetess ... There is no evidence that Deborah delivered speeches to the people, as did Jeremiah and Isaiah. Huldah, who was a prophetess, did not speak to the people, but only to a man, who consulted her at home. The gospel itself mentions a prophetess Anna ... but she did not speak publicly. Even if it is granted to a woman to show the sign of prophecy, she is nevertheless not permitted to speak in an assembly. When Miriam the prophetess spoke, she was

<sup>36</sup> Jackson Lashier, “In the Company of the Fathers: The Female Martyrs,” *Seedbed*, April 25, 2014; <https://www.seedbed.com/company-fathers-female-martyrs/>

<sup>37</sup> Origen of Alexandria, *Contra Celsum* 3.55; cf. Margaret Y. MacDonald, ‘Was Celsus Right? The Role of Women in Early Christianity’, edited by David L. Balch and Carolyn Osiek, *Early Christian Families in Context*, p.157 – 158

leading a choir of women ... For [as Paul declares] 'I do not permit a woman to teach,' and even less 'to tell a man what to do.'<sup>38</sup>

In my opinion, Origen's interpretation has some fatal flaws:

- (1) worship 'assemblies' were the context Paul was talking about in 1 Cor.11:2 – 14:40, not just private conversations or events in the home but outside the worship service, as Origen argues;
- (2) the use of Miriam as an example from Exodus 15 actually serves to illustrate women speaking in a worship assembly;
- (3) the fact that Deborah's song is now memorialized in Judges 5 means that the author encouraged it to be recited in worship assemblies, recalling Deborah's voice, and Origen fails to recognize the literary techniques which portray Deborah in the mantle of Moses;
- (4) Huldah was identified as a 'prophetess' in Scripture and known as such *before* she was consulted (2 Kings 22:14 – 20); Origen misreports that she spoke to 'a man' (there were actually five men), and disguises their official roles in leadership as representatives of King Josiah, who was no ordinary man; Origen supposes that they spoke 'at home' even though that detail is not provided by 2 Kings, as it is more likely they asked Huldah to appear in some official space; Origen conveniently neglects to mention that the substance of their conversation was how to interpret Scripture ('the book of the law'), and probably the status of the covenant itself; Origen also neglects to mention that King Josiah accepted Huldah's interpretation and leads the nation in repentance;
- (5) Origen simply quotes 1 Timothy 2 without exploring textual difficulties and contextual questions, then conditions all else around it.
- (6) Origen is not truly consistent with himself. Observing Phoebe the deacon (Greek *diakonos*, which was translated into the surviving Latin manuscripts of Origen's commentary as *quae est in ministra*) in Romans 16:1 – 2, Origen comments, 'This passage teaches that there were women ordained in the church's ministry by the apostle's authority.... Not only that – they ought to be ordained into the ministry, because they helped in many ways and by their good services deserved the praise even of the apostle.'<sup>39</sup> This is a significant admission by Origen because Phoebe would have been entrusted by Paul to read his letter to the Roman Christians in their various house church worship meetings, and interpret the letter if they raised any questions.<sup>40</sup>

8. 3<sup>rd</sup> century: Hippolytus of Rome (170 – 235 AD), denounces the Montanist heresy for its views of the Holy Spirit and 'new revelation,' but not because it was led by women per se, curiously.<sup>41</sup> It is difficult to ascertain whether Hippolytus was indeed a disciple of Irenaeus of Lyons, as he claimed. At the very least, Hippolytus does appear to have read Irenaeus carefully, which may account for why he does not criticize women per se teaching and prophesying.
9. 4<sup>th</sup> century: Gregory of Nyssa (c.335 – c.395 AD) writes a biography, *Life of Macrina*, about his sister, Macrina the Younger, who was his mentor, a theologian, and founder and co-leader (with a man) of a monastic community where slaves and free people were equals. Gregory also wrote *On the Soul and Resurrection* as a series of dialogues with his sister as she taught him Christian doctrine. Macrina the Younger was the granddaughter of another famous Christian woman, the philosopher Macrina the Elder.
10. 4<sup>th</sup> century: Melania the Elder (325 – 410 AD), a wealthy widow, leaves her young son in Rome with family members to start a dual (male and female) monastic community on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem in 375 AD. She is honored for it in Christian literature (!). She is called a 'Desert Mother,' and became friends and colleagues with Jerome, Augustine, Paulinus of Nola, and Evagrius of Pontus.

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<sup>38</sup> Origen of Alexandria, *Fragmenta ex commentariis in epistulam ad Corinthios (in catenis)*, Greek text published in Claude Jenkins, "Documents: Origen on I Corinthians. IV," *Journal of Theological Studies* 10 (1909), p. 41. English translation from Roger Gryson, *The Ministry of Women in the Early Church* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1976), p.28

<sup>39</sup> *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament VI, Romans*, p.355

<sup>40</sup> Patrick Gray, *Opening Paul's Letters: A Reader's Guide to Genre and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), p.136. Michael Bird, *Bourgeois Babes, Bossy Wives, and Bobby Haircuts: A Case for Gender Equality in Ministry* (Zondervan, 2012). Even Peter M. Head, "Named Letter Carriers among the Oxyrhynchus Papyri," *JSNT* 31.3 (2009), p.279-300, who doubts that letter carriers read the contents of their letters aloud, concedes that Phoebe would have at least been called upon to interpret its contents. See discussion by Marg Mowczko, (3) "Phoebe: Deacon of the Church in Cenchrea"; November 14, 2014; <https://margmowczko.com/phoebe-a-deacon-of-the-church-in-cenchrea-part-3/>

<sup>41</sup> Hippolytus of Rome, *Refutation of All Heresies* 8.12

11. 4<sup>th</sup> century: The Council of Laodicea, a group of about 30 bishops, gathers in Asia Minor. They meet sometime between 360 and 364 AD, perhaps on multiple occasions. Among the matters they discuss is the role of women in church leadership. They agree to prohibit women to be ordained, or to approach the altar during the Eucharist celebration. While they might have heretical movements in mind, they seem to be seeking to adjust longstanding community practices to the organizational hierarchy that the church has developed.
  - a. The final version of Canon 11 states that ‘those who are called presbyteresses or presidentesses should not be ordained in the church.’ The older version of Canon 11 states, ‘Widows called presidents shall not be appointed in the churches.’ At the very least, this attests to the church community practice of having some designation to women with leadership roles – perhaps older women who mentored younger women – which was to continue, but without the official designation of being ‘ordained’ as the priests and bishops were, who were by then, male.<sup>42</sup>
  - b. Canon 45 ruled ‘women should not approach the altar.’
  
12. 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> century: John Chrysostom (c.349 – 407 AD), priest in Antioch from 386 – 397 and archbishop of Constantinople from 397 – 404 (by exile), named one of the three holy hierarchs of the Eastern church, believed that there used to be women prophets. It is true that Chrysostom believed that leadership of congregations were to be entrusted to the best of men, while women could do various functions under that structure of authority. However, note that John Chrysostom’s exegetical position on Genesis and 1 Corinthians 11 is challenging for complementarians who want to read ‘authority’ into Adam’s relationship with Eve prior to the fall:

‘Their women used both to pray and prophesy unveiled and with their head bare, for then women also used to prophesy, but the men went so far as to wear long hair as having spent their time in philosophy... You see that some obeyed, whom he praises; and others disobeyed, whom he corrects by what comes afterwards (11.2.2).’ [Then he adds some very intriguing commentary on the Genesis narrative, which he does not attempt to completely reconcile with his observation that women used to prophesy but apparently do so no longer:] ‘For with us indeed the woman is reasonably subjected to the man: since equality of honor causes contention. And not for this cause only, but by reason also of the deceit which happened in the beginning. Wherefore you see, she was *not* subjected as soon as she was made; nor, when He brought her to the man, *did either she hear any such thing from God, nor did the man say any such word to her*: he said indeed that she was bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh: [Genesis 2:23] but of rule or subjection he nowhere made mention unto her. But when she made an ill use of her privilege and she who had been made a helper was found to be an ensnarer and ruined all, then she is justly told for the future, your turning shall be to your husband. [Genesis 3:16].’<sup>43</sup>

- a. This would make Chrysostom’s argument for male leadership in the church reflective of a final leadership, but not an exclusive leadership. It also shows that Chrysostom cannot bring all his exegetical observations into a consistent framework. He believes that women prophesied in the earliest, apostolic church, yet has no explanation for why that practice appears to have stopped. He believes that the order of creation in Genesis does not support the principle of male authority simply because Adam was created first, yet seems to rely on the fall as his explanation for why

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<sup>42</sup> The editors of the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ‘Notes on Canon 11 of the Council of Laodicea,’ in NPNF II, 14:130, argue for a more restrictive meaning: Women had never been allowed to serve the eucharist at the altar, but were only deaconesses appointed for certain tasks; and even then, ‘superior deaconesses who were the overseers (προκαθήμεναι) of the other deaconesses; and the further words of the text may then probably mean that in future no more such superior deaconesses or elders were to be appointed, probably because they had often outstepped their authority.’ Their opinion is difficult to justify, however, rooted as it is in one citation of Epiphanius of Salamis, who exhibits his own guess about the difference in meaning between ‘presbytides’ and ‘presbyteresses.’ Epiphanius, speaking against the Collyridians (*Against Heresies*, lxxix. 4) says that “women had never been allowed to offer sacrifice, as the Collyridians presumed to do, but were only allowed to minister. Therefore there were only deaconesses in the Church, and even if the oldest among them were called ‘presbytides,’ this term must be clearly distinguished from presbyteresses. The latter would mean priestesses (ιερίσσαις), but ‘presbytides’ only designated their age, as seniors.” It should be evident that Epiphanius speaks as one who is trying to interpret words in such a way as to fit those words into a framework of meaning he approves of, but he is not a witness to historical practices. That by itself is telling. How the editors of NPNF go further to find indication that ‘no more superior deaconesses should be appointed’ is based on even more speculative logic.

<sup>43</sup> John Chrysostom, *Homilies on 1 Corinthians*, Homily 26 on 11:2 – 16 intriguingly admits women did prophesy at one time but does not offer an explanation as to why that practice changed

male authority exists, without explaining simultaneously why Christ would maintain a social order that comes from the fall.

- b. That is an unusual position. If you were to map John Chrysostom onto the map of complementarian – egalitarian, it is not entirely certain how he would fit. He seems to be a ‘complementarian’ but because of the fall, not because of the creation. His position, however, is inconsistent: Jesus redeems us from the conditions of the fall and renews our intended path of growth from the creation. Also, John Chrysostom does not explain why the earliest church had women pray and prophesy in the congregation, where almost four hundred years later, the Christian community he knows does not.
- c. How would I explain the difference in opinion between John Chrysostom of Antioch/Constantinople and Origen of Alexandria?
  - i. Origen preceded John Chrysostom by ~150 years. One would expect the earlier source, Origen, to be more accurate than the later one, John Chrysostom. However, location matters. Antioch and Constantinople had stronger Christian traditions of historical-grammatical exegesis as opposed to the Alexandrian tradition of allegorical interpretation, although these were tendencies and not mutually exclusive emphases.
  - ii. Both Alexandria and the Asia Minor region had large Jewish communities. But the Alexandrian community showed marked tendencies that they were influenced by the Greek Neo-Platonic philosophy of the day. Two examples:
    1. The Septuagint (LXX): There was a tendency of the Jewish scholars who translated the Hebrew Bible into the Greek Septuagint translation to feel discomfort with anything which can be considered divine ‘emotions’ because of the Platonic/Stoic presumption that a change of emotional state meant imperfection.<sup>44</sup> The Torah section of the Septuagint translation, which has many of these anthropomorphic emotion passages attributed to God, dates back to the early third century BCE.
    2. Philo Judaeus of Alexandria: This writer produced commentaries on the Hebrew Scriptures using Neo-Platonic philosophy as an interpretive tool. Philo lived c.25 BC – c.50 AD. Origen of Alexandria was very influenced by Philo and this strain of Neo-Platonic thought.
  - iii. By contrast, in Asia Minor throughout this time, there is evidence of a very strong Jewish community which maintained greater distance from Greek philosophy and Greco-Roman culture. The following segment (including footnotes) comes from Mitchell Stephen, ‘Jews in Asia Minor (Antiquity),’ *Encyclopaedia of the Hellenic World, Asia Minor*, 2002; also found here:  
<http://asiaminor.ehw.gr/Forms/fLemmaBodyExtended.aspx?lemmaID=4150>  
  
‘At Apamea the importance of the Jewish community is illustrated by coins of the city, struck between AD 200 and 250, which depicted the story of Noah’s ark and the flood.<sup>45</sup> A local Jewish gravestone indicates that the man buried there had adhered to the Law of Moses.<sup>46</sup> Inscriptions from the neighbouring city of Eumeneia refer to the worship of angels, a characteristic of Asia Minor Judaism,<sup>47</sup> and also show close links between the local Christian and Jewish communities during the third century AD. In the mid 4th century a church council held at Laodicea anathematized heretical Christians who followed Jewish ways.<sup>48</sup> On the other hand in Smyrna in AD 250 the Jews of the city at the festival of Purim joined with pagans worshipping Dionysus in attacking and reviling the Christian bishop Pionius, as he was arrested and put to death by the Roman

<sup>44</sup> Paul Gavrilyuk, *The Suffering of the Impassible God: The Dialectics of Patristic Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.37 – 46

<sup>45</sup>E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175BC – AD 135)*, English edition revised and edited by G. Vermes, F. Millar and M. Goodman vol. III.1 (Edinburgh 1986), p.28 – 30.

<sup>46</sup>Akmonia MAMA VI, 231; Sardis, P.R. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor* (Cambridge 1991), p.44.

<sup>47</sup> L. Robert, *Hellenica* 11/12 (Paris 1960), p.429 – 435; A.R.R. Sheppard, ‘Pagan cults of angels in Roman Asia Minor’, *Talanta* 12/13 (1980-81), p.77 – 100; S. Mitchell, ‘The cult of theoshypsistos between pagans, Jews, and Christians’, in P. Athanassiadi and M. Frede (eds.), *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford 1999), p.102 - 104.

<sup>48</sup> S. Mitchell, *Anatolia. Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor II* (Oxford 1993), p.35 n. 201.

proconsul.<sup>49</sup> Thus the relationships between Jewish, Christian and pagan groups in the period before the 4th century were fluid, and depended on local circumstances.

‘Some of the most important evidence for Jews in Asia Minor dates to the 4th and 5th centuries AD. Excavations at Sardis have shown that one wing of the city gymnasium was converted into a basilica for Jewish worship, thus creating one of the largest synagogues known from antiquity, capable of holding up to a thousand persons. The interior building was elaborately decorated with marble paneling and mosaic floors, which had been paid for by individual worshippers. These include both Jews and God-Fearers (theosebeis). The latter were sympathetic non-Jews who attended worship in the synagogues. There is evidence for several building phases at the Sardis synagogue, which were originally dated by the excavators between the late second and the fourth centuries AD.<sup>50</sup> More recent studies indicate that the wing of the gymnasium was not converted for use as a synagogue before the fourth century.<sup>51</sup>

‘The most important Jewish inscription yet found in Asia Minor comes from Aphrodisias in Caria.<sup>52</sup> Two related texts have been carved on a tall marble slab, which served as the door-jamb at the entrance to a building. The inscription is hard to interpret but the earlier inscription appears to be the dedication of a memorial building by ‘the members of the dekhany of the students of the law, also known as those who continually praise God’, a select group of members of the community who sang the praises of the dead. The longer second text simply consists of a list of names, possibly those who contributed to the cost of the building. The most striking thing about both lists is that they contained both Jews (Ioudaioi), and God-Fearers (theosebeis), the same categories as are found at the Sardis synagogue, and clearly distinguished between the two groups. God-Fearers are also associated with Jews in Syria, Asia Minor, the Black Sea and the Aegean regions as early as the first century AD. We thus see that the Jews attracted many non-Jewish worshippers to their synagogues and there was a significant common ground between Jewish and gentile religious beliefs. The Aphrodisias inscription provides a total of ninety Jews and sixty-five God-Fearers, listing their names and often their professions. It is thus by far the most explicit documentary source for the social composition of a Jewish community in Asia Minor. The date of the texts are controversial, but strong arguments favour a date in the 4th or 5th rather than the 2nd or 3rd centuries.’<sup>53</sup>

- iv. Another paper is very informative and helpful: Pieter Williem van der Horst, ‘Jews and Christians in Aphrodisias in the Light of their Relations in Other Cities of Asia Minor’ ([https://www.academia.edu/1606535/Jews\\_and\\_Christians\\_in\\_Aphrodisias\\_in\\_the\\_Light\\_of\\_Their\\_Relations\\_in\\_Other\\_Cities\\_of\\_Asia\\_Minor](https://www.academia.edu/1606535/Jews_and_Christians_in_Aphrodisias_in_the_Light_of_Their_Relations_in_Other_Cities_of_Asia_Minor))
- v. Many scholars now recognize that John Chrysostom’s preaching in Constantinople implied and required a strong Jewish community also present. Given that Constantinople was the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, it should not be surprising to find a strong Jewish community there.
- vi. The messianic movement led by Moses of nearby Crete, who persuaded many Jews of Crete that he would lead an overthrow of the Roman Empire, arose in 440 – 470 AD. This was remarkable given the massive defeat of the Jewish Bar-Kochba revolt by the Romans at Masada in 135 AD. It is suggestive of the vitality of the Jewish community just off the coast of Asia Minor.
- vii. The Dura-Europos synagogue in Syria, on the banks of the Euphrates River, was dated to 244 AD by an Aramaic inscription. Although it was on the frontier of the Eastern Roman

<sup>49</sup> *Life of Pionius* 3.6 (ed. H. Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs*). See R. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (London 1985).

<sup>50</sup> G.M.A. Hanfmann, *Sardis from Prehistoric to Roman Times* (Harvard 1983); P. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor* (Cambridge 1991), p.40 – 54.

<sup>51</sup> H. Botermann, *Zeitschrift für neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 81 (1990), p.103 - 121.

<sup>52</sup> J. Reynolds and R. Tannenbaum, *Jews and Godfearers at Aphrodisias* (Cambridge Philological Society, Suppl. Vol. 12, 1987).

<sup>53</sup> See M. Williams, ‘The Jews and God-Fearers inscription from Aphrodisias – a case of patriarchal interference in early 3rd century Caria?’, *Historia* 41 (1992), p.297 – 310.

Empire and the Persian Empire, and not in Asia Minor proper, it is important to consider what the significance is of a vibrant Jewish community in a less politically stable, border area.

13. 5<sup>th</sup> century: Brigit of Ireland (born around 453 AD, died between 524 and 528 AD) is abbess of an abbey for both monks and nuns. Many semi-legendary tales are told about her in surviving literature, making it difficult to completely sort out fact from fiction. But she was clearly important and held in high esteem. This is the account of her ordination to the office of bishop:

‘Brigit went, with some other young women, to Bishop Mél, in Telcha Mide, to take the veil [i.e. to become a religious sister]. The Bishop was happy to oblige and Brigit stayed behind out of humility, so that she might be the last to whom the veil should be given. A beam of fire rose from her head to the ridgepole of the church’s ceiling. Bishop Mél asked: “Who is that woman?” MacCaille answered: “She is Brigit.” “Come, O holy Brigit,” said Bishop Mél, “that the veil may be imposed on your head before the other women.” Then it happened, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, that the prayer that was read over Brigit was the form of ordination for a bishop. MacCaille said: “The order of a bishop should not be [conferred] on a woman.” But Bishop Mél declared: “This lies outside my power because it was through God’s doing that this honour that transcends every woman was given her.” That is why the men of Ireland give the honour of bishop to Brigit’s successor.’<sup>54</sup>

From that point in the story, Brigit appoints her own bishops in Kildare, in northern Ireland, and in the area roundabout. Kildare Town is considered to be one of the three most important centers of Irish Christianity.

14. 9<sup>th</sup> century: T.F. Torrance continues in the same article referenced above, ‘In a mosaic still extant in the Church of Santa Praseda in Rome, built by Pascal I toward the end of the ninth century in honor of four holy women, one of whom was his mother Theodora, we can still read around her head THEODORA EPISCOPA! And so we have papal authority for a woman bishop and an acknowledgement by the pope that he himself was the son of a woman bishop! The word episcopa was evidently used at times to refer to the wife of a bishop, as presbytera was sometimes used (and still is in Greece) to refer to the wife of a presbyter, but that does not seem to have been the case in this instance.’<sup>55</sup>
15. 10<sup>th</sup> century: Atto of Vercelli (885 – 961 AD), who was bishop of Vercelli in northern Italy, Grand Chancellor to two kings of Italy, in his letter *Epistle to Ambrose*, states his belief that the church addressed by the Council of Laodicea did indeed ordain female presbytera and diacona: ‘One understands this because then, not only men, but also women were in charge of churches (*praeerant ecclesiis*), to be sure, for the sake of great efficiency. For women, long accustomed to the rites of pagans, instructed as well in philosophical doctrines, were converted more readily for these reasons, and were more easily instructed thoroughly in the worship of religion. Canon 11 of the Laodicean Council later prohibits this practice when it says that it is not allowed for those women who are called “priests,” or “those presiding,” to be ordained in the Churches.’<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> *Leabhar Breac – On the Life of Brigit*, translated from the Gaelic by Whitley Stokes, in *Lives of the Saints; From the Book of Lismore* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), p.188; <http://www.ministryforwomen.org/latin/brigit.asp> (accessed July 19, 2013).

<sup>55</sup> T.F. Torrance, ‘The Ministry of Women,’ *Touchstone*, Fall 1992, p.7

<sup>56</sup> Atto of Vercelli, *Epistle to Ambrose*, found in *Patrologiae Latina* volume 134, column 114 here: [https://books.google.com.au/books?id=to9BAAAACAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com.au/books?id=to9BAAAACAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false). Thanks to Marg Mowczko, “Atto of Vercelli On Female Priests in the Early Church,” *Marg Mowczko*, June 30, 2020; <https://margmowczko.com/atto-of-vercelli-female-priests-elders-early-church/>; see for more discussion.

## Appendix A: Paul's Use of the Word 'Nature'

On the surface, there seems to be uncertainty, if not outright discontinuity, between the uses of the word nature (*physin*) in Paul's letters, along with two uses in James and one in 2 Peter. But the solution is found by comparing the thought categories of Hebrew and Greek. To begin with, the Hebrew language had no single word equivalent to the Greek term *physin*. In the Hebrew worldview, reality was fundamentally relational, constantly referencing God as Creator and extending into relationships. So the Hebrew language spoke of 'the creation' regularly but not of 'nature' per se, or of the 'nature' of something as an independent thing. Greek philosophical thought, however, moved in the opposite direction. And thus in Greek, to speak of 'nature,' or the 'nature' of something, immediately abstracted it from the Creator-creature relationship that the Hebrew worldview held so tightly. Aristotle, for instance, believed that to understand the essence of an object, you had to isolate it from all other relationships, and only once you had done this were you able to comprehend an object truly.

But this foundational maxim in Greek thought had to be explicitly rejected in the Trinitarian debates because the Christian Nicene theologians of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries understood that God was fundamentally and indivisibly relational, and that the Hebrew mind was correct in perceiving ontological matters in a relational way.

Relationships, they concluded, were fundamental to reality, and not incidental. Hence, theologian Thomas F. Torrance, after carefully studying the patristic sources, and following the great theologian Karl Barth in his own return to those sources, developed the phrase 'onto-relational' to say that ontological reality itself, as designed by God, is a relational reality.

Thus, when we are dealing with the term *physin* in the Greek New Testament, we must attend to the immediate context in which it is being used. For the translation of a fundamentally Hebrew thought about 'nature', or the 'nature' of a particular object, into the Greek language involves relational categories by necessity. The questions we must attend to whenever a Hebrew writer uses the Greek word *physin* are: The nature of something with respect to what other being, thing, or question? What relationships are being discussed here? This immediately renders the mere 'word study' method of approaching *physin* in these three New Testament locations, or in other locations, to be inappropriate. Failure to do this lands everyone in vague puzzlement about 'nature and sexuality' (Romans 1:26 – 27, Romans 11:17 – 24) 'nature and hair customs' (1 Corinthians 11:2 – 16), 'nature and circumcision/Jewishness' (Romans 2:27; Galatians 2:15), what is 'human nature' (Ephesians 2:3; James 1:23; 5:17), what is 'angelic nature' (Galatians 4:8), and what is 'divine nature' (2 Peter 1:4).

The word *physin* by itself does not simply mean 'the order of creation' in every single context it is used. After all, in Romans 11:17 – 24, a wild olive tree does not differ from a cultivated olive tree in a biological sense, in the 'order of creation.' An olive tree is still an olive tree in that biological sense. Notice that other attempts at translating *physin* like 'cultural custom' or 'descent' wouldn't even be apt translations here either, for the wild and cultivated olive trees cannot be said to differ by those categories. But if Paul is using *physin* to describe, not some sort of 'absolute intrinsic difference' but the particular relationship between the two olive trees with respect to one's wildness and the other's cultivatedness, then there is no confusion or awkward translation at all.

Similarly, when Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:14 uses *physin* with respect to how men and women culturally present themselves in hairstyle and dress, he is not making an awkward appeal *in that regard* to an 'order of creation.' Paul read as well as we do that Adam and Eve were initially naked, and certainly without hats and scissors. Nor is he making an appeal to some absolute 'custom' or 'descent' of dress and hairstyles, since fashion has never been a particularly stable facet of human life, with clear lineage and such. Paul is simply saying that when men and women pray and prophesy, they should look like men and women, respectively, with respect to each other in their cultural context. There were those who believed women needed to appear as men in hairstyle and dress, on the Greek conviction that women were defectively made men, a thought which shows up in the Gospel of Thomas verse 114 where that document says that women will become men in the soulful realm after death. But Paul was firmly against that Greek gnostic view because he was a Jewish creational theologian who believed that male and female represented God in some particular way. So women should not appear as if they were men because God's eschatological affirmation of women as women was clear in the Old Testament; Simon Peter in Acts 2 quoted Joel 2 about the Spirit speaking through both men and women, without collapsing women into men, or vice versa. Incidentally, I think this is why women's appearance as women represented the 'authority' (not subjection) given to them (1 Cor. 11:10): God gave them as women authority, like a crown, which was typically denied them in their cultures, to deliver His word in prayer and prophetic utterance. Notice that women's hair coverings did not connote 'authority' in pagan Greek culture, whereas taken up into the Christian argument for the equality of the sexes, it does

in a general sense. That is, the particular form that women's dress or hairstyle took was not the precise issue, but rather its difference from men's dress and hairstyle. Men and women are to appear with respect to their genders as men and women – and that general difference is quite understandable across all cultures – for it plays a theological role in presenting God's redemption for both men and women equally, His missional-prophetic use of men and women as such in their gendered beings, especially God's granting women authority as women.

For the sake of thoroughness, I'll comment briefly on the New Testament's uses of *physin* in other places (four more in Paul, two in James, and one in 2 Peter) to show that the relational or conceptual context matters in determining what *physin* is referring to. Paul in Galatians 2:15 refers to those who are Jews 'by nature': that is, nature with respect to the covenantal difference between Jews and Gentiles because of circumcision and upbringing in the Sinaitic Law, not with respect to there being some genetic difference between Jewish humanity and Gentile humanity. And so in Ephesians 2:3, Paul refers to all human beings – both Jew and Gentile – being 'by nature children of wrath': nature with respect to being now corrupted by sin internally, despite the difference between Jews and Gentiles. This shows that Paul uses *physin* in ways that highlight the relational issue or context that he is talking about at the time. Similarly, in Galatians 4:8, Paul refers to 'beings that are by nature no gods at all': nature with respect to the intrinsic difference between the angelic, elemental powers and the one true God known in and through Jesus Christ, a discussion which seems to encompass origin, essence, status, etc. This usage is present in James, who speaks of our 'natural face' (Jas.1:23), and of Elijah being a man with a 'nature like ours' (Jas.5:17), which speaks of our humanity as both a relational reflection of God, dependent on Him, and yet sinful. So, the New Testament writers use *physin* as meaning *nature with respect to* a larger relation. It does not always mean 'essence' nor 'cultural custom' but must always reference a larger question or framework. This makes the biblical usage of the term different from the Hellenistic philosophers' usage of the word, which proceeded along the Aristotelian premise of compartmentalization, atomization, and intrinsic separation from all other things. With the exception of Peter's reference to 'the divine nature' (2 Pet.1:4), *physin* does not refer to a stand-alone essence. (And even in the case of the divine nature, God's nature is still intrinsically relational, which is discussed even in 2 Peter by God the Father sharing his glory in the transfigured Jesus (2 Pet.1:17 – 18) and then with us (2 Pet.1:2 – 9), promises that were made and fulfilled by the Holy Spirit operating in human beings (2 Pet.1:21). Thus, the Nicene theologians realized that they had to use the Greek word *ousia* to refer to 'a relational essence,' not simply 'an undifferentiated essence' when used in reference to God. See T.F. Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith*.)