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Last consultants/CTCR meeting regarding male/female relationships
September 29-30, 2008

After three meetings I was asked to offer my ‘Thoughts, Suggestions and Concerns’ at our fourth and final meeting,

[For the reader of this text, be aware that this was originally intended only as *my* material for a one hour verbal presentation. Topics are greatly condensed and do not adhere to standard written paragraph form or even standard outline form.]

OUTLINE/TEXT

I. Quotes from my September 3, 2005, October 8, 2007, April 25, 2008 letters to the CTCR

September 3, 2005 ”Because Scripture is a living breathing document to the people of God every day of life, the psycho-sociological understanding of Scripture cannot be immutable. As society comes to new understandings through science and research, we must look at how the Bible speaks to these issues. I believe that sometimes we reactively find *not that Scripture was wrong and society is now right, but that we were incorrect or incapable of understanding what God has been saying to us.* We read Scripture through our own limited psycho-sociological perspective of the time in which we live. (I am aware of the furor over the historical critical method of years ago as I say this.)”

October 8, 2007 Three of us addressed a letter to the CTCR and the consultants about several concerns. “These concerns originate specifically in two emphases of Resolution 3-10: that the study be on the Scriptural relationship of man and woman and that men and women ‘competent in the area of theology’ be part of the study process.” The letter went on to say that minimal Scriptural study had taken place; that Res. 3-10 was drafted and passed with the intent that the differences in theological perspectives be addressed through further Biblical study; and that the disparity in the level of theological education achieved by the men chosen and the women called to the table may contribute to reinforce the pre-consultation relationship of man and woman, a system of patterned dominance.

April 25, 2008 I again wrote to all concerned stating that I did not believe a rewrite of the first paper was possible. “Any one paper would, in the end, be a false statement of two views with opposing theses. If any one truth has resulted from the consultations it is that there are two very distinct interpretations of Genesis 1 and 2 and subsequent New Testament statements in regard to God’s intent for the relationship of male and female. . . . Let us be honest then and present the rationale for the alternate interpretation along with the statement that these views also result from respect for Scripture and its truth. Consequently, respect is due to the study being done by theologians and Bible students of the LCMS who are not comfortable with the order of creation dictates regarding male/female relationship as an over/under relationship.” I then suggested that

appropriate study guides be offered to clergy and laity for further study outlining the opposing interpretations.

I said I was continuing to study Roman, Greek, and Jewish thought in regard to male and female and of the Genesis 1 and 2 debates by the early church fathers. I also attached my own study of various texts in I Corinthians and I Timothy and of Eph. 5: 21 ff earlier.

I am going to devote the rest of my time to sharing glimpses of 25+ resources I have read on Jews in the Roman world, women and religion in the first century churches, marriage and family in the middle ages, the life of St. Paul, challenges to the translation of St. Paul's Greek and the traditional understanding we hold, and just what is it that makes a marriage Christian.

II. Further study of the Greek, Roman, Jewish cultures before and after Christ

A. Why is it important to understand these cultures?

1. It is not possible to discuss the interpretation of subordination, dominion, and meaning of "head" which are put forth in 6 of the 11 Resolution 3-10 questions unless we understand how these ideas evolved and were practiced worldwide in ancient society.
2. Only in the cultural context can Christ's interaction with and statements to or about women be understood. Only in cultural context can Paul's supposed incongruent and therefore "difficult" texts be studied.

B. Why have the "difficult" passages caused such cognitive dissonance for so many?

1. Because the actions of Jesus and Paul speak louder than the traditional interpretation of some selected words - some Bible students eventually hear these actions as shouts.
 - a. communication is only 7% words, the rest is body language and tone
 - b. tone in writing is intended to show a certain attitude on the part of the speaker – in the written word this means paying close attention to context
 - c. interpretation and translation is slanted by the belief system of the interpreter whether in the early church or now

An example of this: homunculus – the belief that the seed of the male contained the complete human in miniature and that it was simply "planted" in the womb of a woman. (Greek explanation – 525 B.C.)
1678 Anthony Leeuwenhoek, inventor of the microscope "saw"

miniature humans in sperm. For 200 more years this was accepted until in 1900 human chromosomes were detected.

III. Two Resolution questions challenge our understanding of “the image of God”

- A. Even the question itself has little meaning unless one knows how the early church fathers spoke to this issue and where they got their ideas.

Tertullian (160 – 225 A.D.) born less than 130 years after Christ’s ascension reflects the downward slide for women from their active involvement in Christ’s ministry and being co-workers with Paul in spreading the Gospel. “Do you not believe that you are [each] an Eve? The sentence of God on this sex of yours lives on even in our (2nd century) times and so it is necessary that the guilt should live on also. You are the one who opened the door to the Devil, you are the one who plucked the fruit of the forbidden tree, you are the first who deserted the divine law, you are the one who persuaded him whom the Devil was not strong enough to attack. All too easily you destroyed the image of God, man. Because of your desert, that is death, even the Son of God had to die.”

This was only the beginning. It was argued by John Chrysostom “golden mouth” in the 300’s that I Cor. 11:7ff was proof that woman was not made in the image of God but rather the image of man. This passage says in part, “but woman is the glory of man”. He said in answer to why is the man said to be in the ‘image of God’ and the woman not? Because what Paul says about the ‘image’ does not pertain to form, it pertains to authority, and this only the man has. He is subjected to no one, while she is subjected to him. “Therefore the man is in the ‘image of God’ since he had no one above him, just as God has no superior but rules over everything. The woman, however, is ‘the glory of man’, since she is subjected to him.” He concludes that women are distinct from men in that through her disobedience she no longer shares God’s image.

In the 13th century, Thomas Aquinas wrote that woman was spiritually inferior, not made in God’s image and in fact not even human. Aristotle’s writings had been translated into Latin at this time and Aquinas read and found a great kinship to his thinking. This is the man whose theological writings are foundation to Catholic theology still.

IV. The Jews, Aristotle, Plato, and Post-Modern thought

- A. Accusations are made against challengers of traditional interpretation that they have succumbed to secular *post-modernism which accepts no absolutes*.
- B. What of *pre-modernism* which succumbed to secular, pagan thinking, practice, and philosophy? [To the reader of this text - Premoderism as it is defined by scholars may have a different meaning than I gave it here.]

1. How do we explain the Jews 2000 years before Christ, represented by Abraham and his descendants, and their practice of polygamy, few sexual boundaries or restraints for men, freedom to divorce at will, and believing that a wife, like a slave, is property? It came in large part due to their interpretation of Genesis 1 and 2 in light of the revelation to Abraham that he would be the father of many nations. The emphasis “to be fruitful and multiply” was regarded as the ultimate message of Genesis. If it took multiple wives to do so, then so be it. When the 10 commandments were given to Moses, the command against coveting included property and because the wife of another was included in the list, it was reasoned that she too was property. Property can be used as one wishes, so slave or legal wife, she could be used sexually. Men were not expected or believed to be able to control themselves sexually. In order for the inheritance to go to the first born son and only to the legal heirs it was the woman whose sexual activity must be controlled. The woman must be a virgin until marriage. She was to be put to death for adultery. This was the way of the world at the time. A study of O.T. Jewish law, however, actually includes some laws about humane treatment of women and individuals whereas the laws of the surrounding nations at the time are almost totally devoid of this kind of recognition of the individual.

Between 1000-750 B.C. the Greeks adapted the Semitic alphabet by adding vowels and developed a written “literature” (the Iliad and the Odyssey). Homer’s poems which extolled the deities became the “Bible of the Greeks”. Apollo, the sun god, his sister Artemis (Diana) who eventually became the guardian of mothers giving birth, and Aphrodite, goddess of love were among the Greek gods. Physical science, philosophy, music, mathematics, and geography all progressed as did the demand for democratic self-rule. The fifth and fourth centuries B.C. belonged to the greatest writers of Greece, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle among them. The Greek culture was held in high regard.

Place into this framework of time, the first dispersion of the Jews (700’s B.C.) by Assyrians which marked the end of the 10 tribes. The Babylonian conquest in the 500’s B.C. resulted in three more exiles to hither and yon during this time of Greek cultural expansion. In 338 B.C. Philip of Macedon defeated the Greeks and made himself the champion of Greek interests everywhere. In 334 his son, Alexander, who had been educated by Aristotle and was steeped in Greek thought, philosophical as well as political, carried the Greek language, traditions, art, and ideas to the borders of India through his further conquests, including Asia Minor, the Syrian and Palestinian coast, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Babylon, Media, Parthia, and Bactria. The next 300 years are known as the Hellenistic –or even the Alexandrine – age.

Political tides turned during this time, however. By 264 B.C. all south Italy and then by 241 B.C., all of Sicily, became Roman territory. By 148 B.C. Rome had made Greece a Roman dependency. Greek teachers were brought to Rome because of great respect for Greek learning and they strongly influenced important circles of the nobility with their philosophy.

C. Though Jews were seen as separatists and reviled for it, the reality was that Greek and Roman thought and practice strongly influenced the Jews also.

1. The language in the synagogue services was Greek

2. The O.T. Scriptures had been translated into Greek in Alexandria between 275 and 150 B.C. and is known as the *Septuagint*. Schools were established for the cultivation of Greek learning by Jews.
3. Philo, a Jewish scholar in Alexandria at the time of Christ sought to harmonize the teaching of Aristotle and Plato and other Greek philosophers with the teachings of the O.T. He imposed the Greek disdain for women onto his interpretation of Scripture.
4. Some Jewish men who wished to take advantage of the Greek gymnasium for social, professional and commercial connections along with the opportunity for recreation, physical education, and literary education in classical Greek philosophy actually underwent operations to disguise their circumcision. In Jerusalem they appealed to the king to grant them liberty to build a gymnasium according to the custom of the gentiles.

V. Classical Greek philosophy and Women

A. Greek Women

Treatment of women due to Greek thinking was an abomination of submissiveness and exclusion. Marriage was held in very low regard. In 300 B.C. marriage was a rite highly restricted. At this time in Athens with a population of 515,000, only nine thousand were entitled to marry. A sexual attachment between a master and a young slave boy was not only permissible but praised as a high and pure form of love. Demosthenes is quoted as saying, "Mistresses we keep for pleasure, concubines for daily attendance upon our person, wives to bear us legitimate children and to be our faithful housekeepers". Women were treated with open contempt by the philosophers, Aristotle and Plato among them and most well known. Aristotle believed man was born to rule and woman to be ruled. The male was defined as normative, the female as defective. Men, often slaves, rather than women were responsible for the education of sons after the age of seven. As is often true in societies, lower class people were exempt from expectations of the upper class. Thus poorer women would have had more visibility in the marketplace and interaction with men.

B. Roman Women

A Roman woman during this same time (300 B.C.) lived under the Twelve Tables of the Law which put their lives completely under the control of a male figure as women were believed to be incapable of managing their own affairs. However, by the second century B.C., though women operated from the centrality of home, they were able to cultivate and develop interests outside the home. Noble women educated their children, sons included, which by implication reveals

they themselves were educated. The wars took heavy tolls on the lives of men which diverted wealth to widows. There was a law passed in 215 B.C. which limited the amount a woman could hold. It was in effect for 20 years but was met with such strong resistance that women actually protested in the streets of Rome and outside the Senate to get it repealed. Cato the Elder is quoted as saying in regard to laws in effect to control women, "Even with these in force, you can still hardly control them. Suppose you allow them to acquire or to extort one right after another, and in the end to achieve complete equality with men, do you think you will find them bearable? Nonsense. Once they have achieved equality, they will be your masters." This seems to reflect the thoughts of many men throughout history.

There is written record that though the pater familias was very powerful, many fathers did not attempt to force a daughter to marry a man she did not want by this time. Due to the wars, there were more marriageable women than men which required the woman's family to provide a dowry to induce a man's family to arrange a marriage. By the 3rd century B.C. legislation was passed that allowed women to divorce, return to her own family and retain her own property. Among the nobility multiple divorces were not uncommon. This was without precedent in the ancient world. The writings of the day reveal many men deeply resented losing control of the wife's wealth and of her.

For freedwomen and slaves life was very different. They may have been employed as hairdressers, for massaging and beautification, apprenticed to local craftspeople or for trades. They may have earned a living in entertainment, serving in taverns or restaurants and these jobs likely included prostitution. Though in contrast to Greek society, women had more freedom of a type, it was still within a patriarchal structure. In Rome at this time there were 21 million slaves to 7 million citizens.

VI. Paul,

A. The Jewish, Greek Speaking, Roman Citizen, raised in Tarsus and taught by Gamaliel.

1. His father was of the tribe of Benjamin and like his father he was a Pharisee. How his father received Roman citizenship is not known but it was passed on to Paul.
2. His Roman citizenship means he was very familiar with the greater freedoms of the Roman women and the attitudes of the Greeks toward women.
3. Tarsus, was a cosmopolitan city of more than a half million inhabitants including Egyptians, Ethiopians, Arabs, Babylonians, Greeks, Romans, and Spaniards. It was the site of a university where Stoic philosophy was taught. It was the perfect birth place for a man chosen by God to be missionary to the Gentiles.

4. His teacher Gamaliel is believed to have been an indication that not all Jewish scholars agreed with the Aristotelian view of womanhood nor welcomed the Greek attitude toward females. There is a story told about Gamaliel's defense of women. He told this story. An emperor said to a Jewish sage, 'Your God is a thief, for to make a woman, he had to steal a rib from the sleeping Adam.' The wise man did not know how to reply to this criticism of God. But the wise man's daughter heard and said to the emperor, 'we demand justice.' 'What for?' the ruler asked. 'Thieves broke into our house in the night. They took away a silver ladle and they left a gold one in its place.' The emperor laughed and said, 'I wish I could have burglars like that every night.' The young woman responded, 'that is what our God did. He took a mere rib from the first man and in exchange for it he gave him a wife.' (What Paul Really Said About Women, p. 27)

5. His primary language is Greek and the usage of the Septuagint is significant to his usage of Greek.

B. With Paul's background in mind, and a better understanding of Greek philosophy and women and Roman culture, let us examine two of the Res. 3-10 questions, one of which challenges the meaning and implication of "head" in Eph. 5: 20-33 in relationship to Eph. 1:22 and the other the understanding of submit or subordinate in Eph. 5:21-33.

1. Eph. 1:22 reads, "And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all."

In John Temple Bristow's book "What Paul Really Said About Women" he says this:

"In English, the word *head* means literally the physical head of one's body and figuratively the leader of a body of people. The two meanings are intertwined.

"Not so in Greek, where two different and distinct words are translated "head." One of these is *arche* (pronounced ar-KAY). It means "head" in terms of leadership and point of origin. It was used to denote "beginning" in the sense of the first or point of inception (and we use this Greek word as a prefix in words as archaeology, archetype, and archives, all relating to old or first things). Just as it was used to denote point of origin, so we use *head* that way in the word *headwaters* (of a river). Arche was also used to denote "first" in terms of importance and power (and we use it as a prefix in such words as *archangel*, *archbishop*, *archenemy*, *archduke*, and so on, all relating to the head of a group in terms of leadership). Forms of arche are used throughout the New Testament, including the writings of Paul to designate the head or leader of a group of people. These forms are translated "magistrate," "chief," "prince," "ruler," "head," and so forth.

" . . . if Paul had believed as Aristotle taught, that the husbands should command their wives and rule over them, then Paul could have made a pun out of the word *arche*. He could have written that the husband is the *arche* (head) of the wife, and in that one sentence he would have meant that the husband is to rule over the wife and at the same time have reminded his readers how man (Adam) was the source of woman (Eve, who was formed of Adam's rib). Both senses of *arche* (ruler, and point of origin) would have been invoked.

"However, Paul did not choose to use the word arche when he wrote of how the husband is head of his wife. He was well aware of that word, but he deliberately chose a different term. (emphasis mine).

“Instead, Paul used the word *kephale* (pronounced kef-ah-LAY). This word does mean “head,” the part of one’s body. It was also used to mean “foremost” in terms of position (as a capstone over a door, or a cornerstone in a foundation). It was never used to mean “leader” or “boss” or “chief” or “ruler.” *Kephale* is also a military term. It means “one who leads,” but not in the sense of “director.” *Kephale* did not denote “general,” or “captain,” or someone who orders the troops from a safe distance; quite the opposite, a *kephale* was one who went before the troops, the leader in the sense of being in the lead, the first one into battle.

“Therefore, two words in Greek can both be translated into the one English word *head*. One word means “boss,” the other means “physical head” (or, sometimes, “the first soldier into battle”). Unfortunately, an English-speaking person who reads that the husband is head of his wife will normally conclude that this means the husband is to rule over his wife. This is what Aristotle taught and what most Hellenized people thought. The husband is an *arche* to his wife, head of the household and ruler over all his family. **Paul deliberately chose the other word. But people who depend on the English translation cannot know that. (emphasis mine).**

“Can one be certain that *arche* and *kephale* were so different from each other in meaning? Could *kephale* not sometimes mean “boss” or “ruler”? One way to be certain is to note how these two words were used in the Septuagint. The Old Testament, except for a few portions, was written in Hebrew. But by the age of Paul, few persons could read that language. Instead, they depended upon a translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek, which was called the Septuagint. Paul was familiar with this translation and quoted from it.

“Now, in the Hebrew, just as in English, one word means both “physical head” and “ruler.” The word is *rosh*. If *arche* and *kephale* were more or less synonymous and could be used interchangeably, then when the seventy scholars who wrote the Septuagint came to the Hebrew word *rosh*, they could have used either Greek word as they wished, or instead just used one of the two all the time. However, they were very careful to note how the word *rosh* was used, whether it meant “physical head” or “ruler of a group.” Whenever *rosh* meant “chief” or “ruler,” they translated it *arche* or some form of that word. Every time, this distinction was carefully preserved.

“Paul was certainly familiar with both words. He knew the language, he read and quoted from the Septuagint, and he used both words in his own writing. The difference between the two would have been obvious to him. Modern readers, however may misunderstand Paul, assuming that the word for head that Paul used also carried the figurative meaning of “boss” or “ruler.” **Paul in fact took great care not to say that.” (emphasis mine).** (pgs. 35-38)

2. In regard to “submit” in Eph. 5:21-33 there are three instances of submission given. We are to be submissive to one another, wives are to be submissive to husbands, the Church is to be submissive to Christ.

“Now, if the word translated “head” meant “boss,” then husbands are to rule their wives; and the word translated “be subject to” would naturally mean “to obey.” But since *kephale* does not mean “ruler” or convey any sense of leadership (aside from meaning “the first into battle”), then perhaps the word Paul used that is translated “be subject to” does not convey a sense of obedience. In fact, the use of that word in verse 21 (“be subject to one another”) clearly demonstrates that it does not mean obedience, for it would be as impossible for a group of people to be obedient to each other as it would be for a group to follow each other.

“Now, in Greek there is a word that means “to obey”. It can be translated “be subject to,” but it carries the idea of dutiful obedience. It is *hupakouo* (pronounced hoop-ah-KOO-o), a word that a parent might use regarding a child or master might use regarding a slave. And Paul knew this word. In fact, he used it a few sentences later in reference to children (Eph. 6:1). But while Greek philosophers would place wives under the tutelage of their husbands, and while the custodianship of a Jewish girl was passed at the time of her marriage directly from her father to her husband, Paul had no thought of wives being like children to their husbands, so he did not use this word. It is not the word that is translated “be subject to.”

“Moreover, in Greek there is another word that means “be subject to” and “obey.” It is *peitharcho* (peith-ar-KAY-o), one of the words built upon *arche*, “ruler.” This word is found only three times in the New Testament, twice in Acts (5:29 and 27:21) and once in Titus (3:1). There, and in other writings outside the New Testament, it describes obedience to someone who is in authority. When Peter and the other apostles were arrested for disobeying their Judean rulers who had ordered them not to teach in the name of Jesus, they used *peitharcho* in their courageous response: “We must obey God rather than men.” But Paul had no thought of husbands governing their wives.

“When referring to wives, Paul used a form of yet a different Greek word, *hupotasso* (hoop-0-TASS-o). It is not a word one would normally use regarding children or slaves. In its active form, *hupotasso* might be used of a conqueror concerning the vanquished. It means “to subject to,” “to subordinate.” But Paul did not use *hupotasso* in its active form to describe any person. He used it only to tell what God does. He did not tell husbands to *hupotasso* their wives.

“Instead, Paul used this word in addressing wives only in its imperative, middle voice form (compare Col. 3:18). By writing it in the imperative mood, he was instructing wives. He was not describing them (as Aristotle did when he claimed that “the male is by nature fitter to command than the female”). Instead of describing them, he was appealing to them. And in writing the word in the middle voice form, he was emphasizing the voluntary nature of being “subject to.”

“. . . *Hupotassomai* means something like “give allegiance to,” “tend to the needs of,” “be supportive of,” or “be responsive to.” Perhaps the best meaning of *Hupotassomai* is found in a German translation of that word, *sich unterstellen*, “to place oneself at the disposition of.”

“There is, in addition, another meaning to *hupotassomai*. It also served as a military term, referring to taking a position in a phalanx of soldiers. In this sense, there is no reference to any idea of rank or status – it was an equal sharing of the task for which the soldiers were ordered. If a soldier failed to join the others, or held back during an advance, a captain might use a form of the verb *hupotassomai* to order him to return to the line, join his fellows, be supportive of them, fulfill his part of the assignment.

“In that sense, Paul could tell all the members of the Church to be subject to (*hupotassomai*) one another, and he could also tell wives to be subject to their husbands. For *hupotassomai* is not a ranking of persons as ruler and ruled. It is a concise appeal for the Church to have its members live out their call to be “the body of Christ and individual members of it” (1 Cor. 12:27; compare Rom. 12:15; 1 Cor. 10:16-17; Eph 2:16, 3:6, 4:4,16; Col. 1:18), to be willing to “bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2). What is true of the Church, Paul added, is to be true of a marriage. (Bristow, p. 38-41).”

VII. And what of Jesus?

A. When one reads the Gospels, Jesus’ actions become a shout which eventually becomes a roar. Some examples of this:

1. In the context of the times, Christ’s response to the Pharisees when they ask him for what reasons a man can divorce his wife is even more masterful than might first be recognized without a cultural understanding. The Jewish men looked for every possible legal reason to divorce. In the surrounding Roman cultural at the time, multiple divorces were legal and common among the rich – for females as well as males. Christ speaks to it all when he says, “This is not what my father intended. Moses allowed divorce because of the hardness of men’s hearts” (in our day and time we assume this also speaks to females as well as males, yes?)

It was not by the way, until the age of Constantine that adultery became an *equal* crime for either man or woman and the death penalty for homosexuality with slave boys or to women who misused slave girls was invoked. This was 318 A.D.

2. In Matt. 5: 28 when Jesus is teaching and says, “But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart”, he is speaking to the patriarchal beliefs about women and about themselves as men unable to control themselves, as well as to the Greek culture which separated women from men because they were believed to be the cause of men’s lust. Though it is likely that Greek women at the time of Christ lived a freer life than 300 years B.C., through the Gospels we can see the powerful social constraints of male/female interaction. The Jewish rabbis and the early church fathers constantly blamed women for being the temptress and the cause of their lustful thoughts. This Matthew passage very specifically speaks to men about this wrong thinking.

3. Though upper class Roman women were educated and even some Jewish fathers saw to it that their daughters were educated, the general thinking still was that women were incapable of rational thought and learning. Yet, Jesus commends Mary sitting at his feet (this posture denotes a student learning from the teacher) and choosing that which is best.

4. It is Martha who upon meeting Jesus at her brother’s death, declares understanding of who he was when she says, “You are the Christ, the son of God.” She too had been a student and she listened, she did not just hear. This is the nearest equivalent to Peter’s confession as there is in the Gospels.

5. Have you noticed that the parables and the miracles have gender balance i.e. one is told with a man as the main character and then another with a woman as the main character.

6. He disregarded other rabbinical thinking that to even talk much with a woman was an invitation to lust and is not concerned about ritual impurity by including women as his friends and disciples.

7. This is only a smattering of examples of Christ’s counter-cultural behavior.

B. Was this not the man who Paul came to accept as his Savior? Was it not Christ’s gospel he was declaring?

1. Is it really a wonder then that of the 28 personal greetings in Romans that 10 of them are to women?

2. He sought out women to start the house churches.

3. He recognizes Priscilla's capability in teaching Apollos.

4. He commends Junia among the apostles ("Only with the thirteenth century Aegidius of Rome, and especially with Martin Luther's translation, did the view arise that Junia was in fact a male, Junias p. XI Junia The First Woman Apostle by Eldon Jay Epp)

5. He does not hesitate to claim the woman, Lydia, as his first convert.

6. He is concerned for the disagreement between two women leaders, Euodia and Syntyche. He does not consider it a silly women's squabble. He identifies them as having struggled beside him in the gospel.

7. He identifies Phoebe as a deacon of the church in Cenchreae and uses *the same word* he uses for the men elsewhere in the New Testament for the position she holds.

8. He speaks of women prophets and of the authority women have.

C. In the light of all this, is it not reasonable to question why he would say women should not teach or that they should be silent? Let's examine this in the light of other competing practices and belief systems.

1. Corinth was the center of Roman imperial culture in Greece which we have established was philosophically Greek.

2. In Greek society, religious observance was the only activity where women could publicly participate, in some cases alongside men. In some of these cults, gods were closely associated with goddesses and had ceremonies designed to encourage women to be uninhibited. The cult of Dionysus, the god of wine, had the reputation of debauchery and women's ecstatic rites. Women wore their hair loose and wild in contrast to the controlled coiffure of dignified Roman women.

3. The cult of Isis was popular among all classes of Italian women in the 1st century A.D. The Greeks identified Isis with Aphrodite, goddess of love. This cult included and explored the notion of immortality along with everlasting love between a man and woman. With Christianity's focus on eternal life, some may have intertwined their cultic beliefs with the message of our immortality in Christ.

4. Some cults were counter examples to the expectations for women like the followers of Sappho, a poet who was a unique female voice representing the interests of women. Sappho also became associated with the cult of Aphrodite. The island of Lesbos is associated with Sappho. (This is where the name

lesbian comes from.) Remember how the Greek men believed that sex with a young boy was the greatest expression of pure love? Wealthy women with slave girls were also known to use girls sexually.

5. Ephesus was known for its worship of Diana (Artemis), who is portrayed with multiple breasts indicating her role as mother and foster-mother. Her massive temple at Ephesus was one of the Seven Wonders of the World. She was a patron/defender of women and women's fertility. Because many died while giving birth in those days, women looked to Artemis for safety in childbirth. In the local tongue, her name meant "safe." This may help us understand Paul's statement "women will be kept safe through childbirth, if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety" (I Timothy 2:15 NIV). He may be assuring women that they don't need Artemis – they should look to Christ for safety in childbirth.

Ephesians believed the women of the city descended from powerful, warlike Amazons who made slaves of the men they captured. If men at worship were accompanied by unconverted wives (I Timothy 2:10 –“women who profess to worship God”) who dressed ostentatiously like those who worshipped Diana, it's likely those women would have followed their usual customs and been disruptive during the service. Thus Paul says they are to be peaceful. They certainly should not teach nor should they have authority over a man, as the Amazon descendants did. Paul's reference to “myths and endless genealogies” in I Timothy 1:4 lends further support to this understanding.

6. Gnostic beliefs had crept in as well. Gnostic writings taught that Eve came first and that her maternity included both gods and men without male assistance and that she instructed Adam in the mysteries that she knew. The Gnostic myths may have appealed to some women and they needed to be corrected. “I am not permitting women to teach” very well could be referring to the women who were perverting apostolic doctrine with these Gnostic myths or their Greek and Roman cultic practices.

Apollos may have been facing the infiltration of these beliefs even feeling a kinship to Gnosticism because he had come from Alexandria where these beliefs originated. Remember it was Priscilla who gets him back on track.

VIII. Who changed the Gospel message?

A. Why do we not question the early church fathers interpretation regarding women?

1. Church fathers twisted many concepts out of their own upbringing and educational experiences.

2. The church fathers did not question some understandings of the Jewish scholars. Philo, a Jewish scholar during the time of Christ, took Aristotle's teachings and made a synthesis with the Jewish Scriptures.
3. The church fathers misunderstood marriage and its value. Celibacy was considered the preferred way to serve God.
4. They declared the sinfulness of the sexual relationship within marriage.
5. Attitudes toward women were based on projection of their own life experiences, sexual thoughts and behaviors. Augustine is an example of this. He was wracked by a sexual addiction introduced and encouraged by his own father. He left behind a woman who meant nothing to him but was the mother of his son. His writings are clearly reflective of Aristotelian philosophy as are Tertullian, Jerome, Chrysostom and others.

This is also true of Thomas Aquinas. As stated, the writings of Aristotle were rediscovered during Aquinas' lifetime (1225 – 1274 A.D.) and he liberally included this Greek philosophy into his writings.

6. There are many other examples of early church fathers disdain for women, marriage, and the service of women. One of the authors said that by the beginning of the 2nd century, the women who had opened their homes and provided money and leadership in the house churches were relegated to entering church buildings by the side door and made to sit apart from the men in silence.

IX. The Catholic Church

A. Since the Catholic church considers Aquinas' theology to be the most influential even to this day, we see how strongly the modern church continues to be influenced by pre-modern, pagan philosophy and teaching.

Yet, from the beginning, Christianity, bit by bit, exerted an influence on pagan thinking and practice in regard to moral behavior. Polygamy and concubinage were not permissible to Christian men and divorce was highly restricted in sharp contrast with Roman law. However, it was not until the 8th century that the principle of one wife at a time had gained substantial acceptance.

Just as dramatic as Rome becoming officially Christian in A.D. 380 was the conversion of the Germans (barbarians). In A.D. 311 -383 a written language was devised by the Ulfilas to translate the Bible. The barbarian culture was equally and even more family governed and male dominated than was Roman. Like the Romans, Germans practiced infanticide until the 7th century and only modified as the voice of the Christian church

made itself heard in some regions. As opposed to Roman, Greek and German culture, Christianity was seen as being inclined toward equality of the sexes.

The Rev. Dr. Martin Marty (Lutheran theologian and author) entered into a discussion the summer of 2008 in a publication called “Sightings” in which reference was made to the oft repeated statement that Rome does not change. He quotes another in saying, “New questions arise, and new horizons open, cultures themselves are transformed, and the fund of human knowledge changes . . . He then said, Rome “has changed dramatically, in ways that could not have been foreseen. . . . on slavery, women’s inferiority, the divine right of kings, the uses of torture, the status and dignity of the Jewish people, the execution of heretics, the idea of religious liberty, et. al”.

Though difficult and painful, sometimes taking even thousands of years, Scripture challenges us to have new minds in Christ (Romans 12: 2). We are transformed by God’s word – even in the Catholic Church. Martin Luther knew the church had to be reformed in its understanding of God’s love for us as his children. He tackled the issues of grace alone and restoring marriage and the relationship of husband and wife to His male servants. I believe the issue of His female servants being truly free to use their gifts in the church and for their distinctly female voice to be heard is the reformation needed for the 21st century.

The Catholic Church puts tradition on a par with Scripture. Lutherans do not. In some ways it should be easier for us as Lutherans to open our eyes to new understandings. So, let us as Lutherans go back to Scripture and examine what Christ and Paul might really have intended for all of Christian society for all time. Let us study Genesis 1 and 2 for God’s intent refusing to accept a distorted view of the worth of his creation, the woman.

Having presented one of the keynote essays, I was asked to conclude with my thoughts and concerns. The above is reflective of my concerns and thoughts. We did not **study** the Resolution 3-10 challenges. Other women and men have. These are some of the things that have helped us to continue to gain insight, knowledge, and understanding of God’s Word to all people in all times. This struggle to better understand does not discount His Word and His wisdom.

In spite of the valiant effort to rewrite, we end up with a paper that expresses none of this struggle to understand by some of us. We have missed the point and the truth of the divergent understanding of Scripture among us.

My suggestion is that which I stated in my April 25, ‘08 letter that we must reveal the opposing stances as the outcome of our meetings and that we present the rationale for the alternate interpretation along with the statement that these views also result from respect for Scripture and its truth.

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