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Commission on Theology and Church Relations
The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
1333 South Kirkwood Road
Saint Louis, Missouri 63122-7295

Dear Dr. Lehenbauer and Members of the CTCR:

The essay, *The Creator's Tapestry* (8-11-09 revision), was shared with me, and after reading it several times over Christmas I am not clear as to what the document — and, indeed, the whole process — intends to accomplish. I do understand that it is not in final form, but what limps in the beginning will stumble at the finish.

Without going into a full response, I highlight several concerns:

■The doctrine of the Trinity is used as a model of understanding “human personhood” and relationships (“to know the three Persons in the Holy Trinity enables us to understand something vital about the meaning of human personhood” [p. 51]). What is drawn from this is that “we reflect God in other ways specific to human nature” (p. 50), one conclusion being that “Man in the image of God is male and female” (p. 50).

What I miss, though, is the use throughout the essay of the Trinitarian doctrine and/or model as a lens for unpacking implications of what it means to be created in the image of God. The Trinity is where we find differences (Father, Son, Spirit), but still unity (one God) and equity (where “no one is before or after, greater or less than the other” [Athanasian Creed]). If the Trinity is the model for understanding “the meaning of human personhood” it can become the hermeneutical key to explore further understanding of how male and female “in the image of God” relate in terms of “subordination” and “submission” and “headship.”

The Creator's Tapestry does not pick up this clue and use this model to follow through.

The Creator's Tapestry does note that “human personhood draws meaning from divine personhood, and not the reverse, lest we try to make a god in our image” (p. 52, fn. 60). But, again, *The Creator's Tapestry* doesn't quite get that done. What happens instead is the subtle shift from drawing meaning from “divine personhood” to finding it in “order of creation” concepts of “headship” and “authority” and “submission.”

When this is followed, moving in this direction, the result can be a justification of hierarchy and subordination relationships by developing a new understanding of the Trinity: that the Son is eternally subordinate to the Father. Earlier the first edition of *Women Pastors? The Ordination of Women in Biblical Lutheran Perspective* (2008 edition) was withdrawn — rightly so —

because two essays promoted this very heresy of the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father, a way, then, of theologically justifying women's subordination in church and family. So one wonders why the Trinity model/hermeneutic was not used throughout as an interpretive lens.

■What does drive and shape the argumentation of this document is the author's use of the teaching of the "order of creation." The author recognizes this, and states that the

term "order of creation" may be used in various ways, some of which are objectionable from a Lutheran theological perspective. The understanding herein is no more than the Biblical view that God's original creating work has constituting significance in the lives of men and women today. (p. 65, ftn. 79)

Yet the very version which undergirds this document is an objectionable version, a "static" understanding introduced more recently into the LCMS theological portfolio. It was not used in LCMS convention material until 1956; a year earlier Zerbst's *The Office of Women in the Church*, translated by Merkins, had been published by CPH. This is spelled out in Ed Schroeder's article, "The Orders of Creation — Some Reflections on the History and Place of the Term in Systematic Theology" (*Concordia Theological Monthly*, Vol. XLIII, March 1972, Number 3, pgs. 165-178).

Schroeder draws the distinction between the fluid nature of the Creator's "orderings" (which involve no ranking and no hierarchy) and the static understanding in "order of creation" thinking which requires one to be "first" and the other "second," etc. "Orders" as used here in *The Creator's Tapestry* are seen as permanent ("part of God's creative intent", [p. 29, lines 6-7]), static, unbending: the male is always first, the female always second. In the Creator's "orderings" who's first and who's second is not an issue. "Orderings" have to do with what Luther calls vocations, where God calls a person in the specifics of his or her history and locale: and these do change as one's life situation changes (e.g., a husband is brain injured: the wife then certainly leads in the marriage; a woman is widowed: her "ordering" has changed; a slave is freed: he or she is no longer bound to a master; a child grows and the parent sinks into dementia: respect is still there, but decisions are made by the child). *The Creator's Tapestry* says that oneness in Christ "does not change our gender, stations in life, or ethnicity" (p. 27, lines 1-2). Gender and ethnicity are intrinsic and do not change, for sure. But one's "station in life" — an extrinsic factor — can — and often does — change. The CTCR consultation needs carefully to consider the historic development and understanding of what it terms "the order of creation" and how it has morphed. Einar Billings' extended essay, "Our Calling," is helpful as well.

Much of the thinking in *The Creator's Tapestry* seems to be influenced by George Knight's *New Testament Teaching on the Role Relationship of Men and Woman* (Baker, 1977), a seminal work for those who espouse a hierarchal social order based on the order of creation, with

women's roles assigned by God based on gender, applying to home and church. Much the same way, the CTCR's 1985 *Women in the Church Scriptural Principles and Ecclesial Practice* depended heavily on Stephen Clark's "static" version in *Man and Woman in Christ* (Servant Books, 1980). "Order of creation" thinking suggests one's identity is based on one's sexuality plus ranking (p. 65, line 18), where the Creator's "orderings" would drop any ranking as part of a person's identity and focus on the Spirit's gifting of a person.

■The use of "order of creation" in *The Creator's Tapestry* lays an interpretive grid that requires a certain strained exegesis. As in much of LCMS exegetical literature regarding women's issues, discussion of relevant texts in Ephesians 5 begins with verse 22. But the verb usually translated "submit" is not found in verse 22! It is found in verse 21 where the inspired writer says, "Be subject to one another" (NRSV), a mutuality in relating, the verb *hypotasso* modified by "one another." There is nothing in verses 1-20 that speaks of submission or yielding in Christian behavior, so why connect verse 21 to the preceding rather than letting its organic connection remain? Structurally and grammatically verse 21 is connected to verse 22 and following.

Verse 21 is not just "one additional example" (p.29, line 14). Paul's letters are problem solving literature (1 Corinthians 7:1). Whatever the underlying problems and sins between husbands and wives in Ephesus, Paul uses the term *hypotasso*, as well as *kephale*, as pastoral correctives to abuses. The *Concordia Self-Study Bible* (p. 1811) puts it this way:

5:21 *Submit to one another.* Basic to the following paragraphs. Paul will show how, in each relationship, each partner can have a conciliatory attitude that will help that relationship. The grammar indicates that this mutual submission is associated with the filling of the Spirit in v. 18.

The discussion of "submission" with regard to husbands and wives in *The Creator's Tapestry*, pages 29 and following, seems an effort to downplay a mutuality so a point can be made about "an ordered place or arrangement" (p. 29, lines 25 and 26). A *static* "order of creation" mentality controls the exegesis and maintains a certain "patterned dominance." The *mutual* submission words of St. Paul helpfully could be unpacked with a Trinitarian model, where "no one is before or after, greater or less than the other."

■What trips up a mutuality understanding is the use of "head"(*kephale*) mixed in with "authority" and an "order of creation" hermeneutic. If "headship" is understood to mean "ruling" and "authority" (p. 32, lines 3,11), and since the Father is the "head of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:3), certainly to maintain equality in the Trinity the word *kephale* needs to be opened up more fully and thoroughly, with dimensions other than (not including?) "authority" and "subordination."

Paul says, "For the husband is head of the wife" (Ephesians 5:23). What is the content of

“head”?

The word ‘head’ in the Bible is never connected with intelligence...the intellectual powers were believed to be situated in the heart....From the idea that the heart is the center of intellectual life it is a natural step to the thought that it is the center of the will and hence of the moral life... (IDB, Vol. 2, pages 541, 550)

Also,

In Greek usage the word [κεφαλή], when metaphorical, may apply to the outstanding and determining part of a whole, but also to origin...That this is the sense of the word here is strongly suggested by verse 8f. Paul does not say that man is the lord (κύριος) of the women; he says that he is the origin of her being. In this he is directly dependent on Gen. ii. 18-23... (Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 248)

If Christ is head of the church and that relationship has parallels in the husband as head of the wife, then Christ himself is the provider of definitional content for head: savior, love, self-giving, cherishing, self-sacrificing, nourishing; not exercising domineering authority and rule. Christ does not force or coerce obedience. The husband is not compared to Christ’s power and glory, but to Christ’s self-emptying. The head, in biblical times, does not make decisions and give orders to the nervous system; the *heart* is where thoughts issue from (cf. Romans 10:9, Matthew 15:19).

The Creator’s Tapestry connects “head” with “authority,” almost a necessary corollary if one carries through in using a “static” approach. The problem with saying the male has “authority” in a relationship with woman (e.g., p. 31, lines 8-13) is that nowhere in Scripture does Scripture assign authority to males or say that males have this kind of authority. There “is no authority except that which God has established” (Romans 13:1). Government has it (Romans 13:1); there are “authorities and powers;” the apostle has “authority” (1 Thessalonians 3:9) which at least occasionally he declines to use. The ones who ought to have “authority” on the head, Paul says, is woman (1 Corinthians 11:10)! Paul does not connect “authority” and “head.” [Is the discussion on pages 39-40 of the head cover and veil suggesting this practice for today?] Instead of authority, Paul speaks of mutuality.

The specifics of that mutuality and how it works out under Paul’s guidance will be determined in the specific cultural and family context as given in verses 22 and following. Paul takes a cultural norm of his day and redefines it.

The culture of that time already perceived the husband as head of the wife. “The Greek husband had nearly absolute power over his wife....he erred in precisely this area — the misuse of superior power by degrading and misusing his wife.” Paul redefines headship for the husband in terms of ἀγάπη and uses the example of Christ himself for the husband’s model. (Gritz, *Paul, Women Teachers, and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus*,

University Press of America, 1991, p. 91, quoting Gundry, *Heirs Together*, Zondervan, 1980, p. 96)

And,

...the concept of Christ's voluntary self-emptying of the privileges of divinity was precisely the model being offered to Christian husbands in Eph. 5:25. This model was not offered to women because they had no patriarchal privileges and power to surrender in the first place. (Mollenkott, *Emancipative Elements in Ephesians 5:21-23*, p. 49)

And,

...women of New Testament times had very little choice about who would be their husbands. Men, who possessed the power of choice, are enjoined to love; but it would be unfair to tell a woman she must love a person whose partnership she perhaps never wanted in the first place. It is impossible genuinely to love without respect, but it is possible to respect without the presence of love. (Mollenkott, p. 47)

Seen through a Trinitarian hermeneutical key, where "no one is before or after, greater or less than the other," a wife's willing deference to her husband does not give the male "ranking" or "control" or "authority." Rather the deference speaks to the mutual seeking together after Christ-motivated relationship.

Just as Christ is the source of the church because there could be no church before there was a savior, so the husband who empties himself of patriarchal privilege is the source of Christian marital structure.... (Mollentkott, p. 51)

The use of *kephale* suggests that in such a patriarchal culture the husband is to take a leading role in breaking with the norms of the culture in establishing a household where mutual deference and love is the dynamic.

In Lutheran two-kingdom thinking, structures like family and government are aspects of God's left handed work, one of the functions of Law, in maintaining God's good creation. That governments exist is God's left handed activity (Romans 13:1) but the forms (monarchy, democracy, socialism, communism, dictatorships [Nero was Caesar]) change. That families exist is also God's left handed activity but the forms (e.g., levirate, polygamy [never explicitly forbidden in Scripture], single parent, "sandwich" families, arranged marriages, remarriages) have changed. Family structure ("Who's in charge? Who's the boss? Who has what responsibilities in daily life? Mr. Mom?") will change. The Christ-faithful aspect, how the relationship is "oiled," will always be agape, forgiveness, faithfulness (no divorce, no adultery, fornication, etc.), self-sacrificing, and a mutual deference which "does not think of oneself

more highly than one ought to think" (cf. Romans 12:3).

In considering Ephesians 5, we need to question what is cultural form and what is the Christ-like dynamic. When using a static "order of creation" ranking approach and without stressing the mutuality underlined by 5:21, the relationship will fall into a "patterned dominance" (the term is from the CTCR, *Racism and the Church* statement).

■But then what do we do with *hypotasso*?

Hypotasso is a good term, a Christ-inspired virtue, what one does from faith and not what one does because she is female or, conversely, male, or because of some ordered structure.

"*Hypotassomenoi allelois*" — why? — "out of reverence for Christ" (Ephesians 5:21).

In Ephesians 5, as we said, the verb in verse 21 laps over into verse 22 (only one verb) underlining a mutuality of relationship of one to the other, as to Christ, even recognizing Christ in the other (see the same usage in 1 Peter 5:5).

The verb "subordinate" (*hypotasso*) occurs 23 times in the Pauline epistles. When used in the active, God is the subject who subjugates principalities and powers. But when applied to "members of the church, saints with prophetic gifts, or wives, or children, and slaves," Paul uses the "middle or passive indicatives, participles, or imperatives." Such subordination "describes a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden." It concords with the virtues of Ephesians 4:1-3: "total humility, gentleness, mutual bearing, love, unity, peace. (Swartley, *Slavery Sabbath War & Women*, Herald Press, 1983, pgs. 263-264, quoting Barth, *Ephesians* [Anchor Bible], Vol.11, p. 605)

■So what about *hypotasso* in terms of twenty-first century culture? Without uncritically adopting first century patriarchal cultural attitudes? Understanding contemporary usage would be helpful as well. What does one today hear when he or she hears the word "submit"?

A recent dictionary says

Submit suggests full surrendering after resistance or conflict to the will or control of another...**Defer** implies voluntary yielding or submitting out of respect or reverence for or deference and affection toward another... (*Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1989, p. 1175)

Which word and definition might Paul use in a gospel motivated approach? Or,

Defer can mean either giving way to authority or changing one's stand as an act of courtesy, respect, or recognition of another's superior knowledge, judgment, or the

like. *Submit* implies giving way out of necessity after opposing unsuccessfully... (New College Edition American Heritage Dictionary of the American Language, 1980, p. 1484)

Although “authority” in the Scriptures is never given to the male or husband, “authority” is used in *The Creator’s Tapestry* a number of times for the male’s role. It is defined (p. 31, line 12) by what authority is not: domination, ruling harshly, exploiting, embittering. Yet what is the obverse, the positive aspects? Is one to understand “authority” as it is understood today, the “right and power to command, enforce laws, exact obedience, determine, or judge” (New College Edition The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 1980, p. 89)? What is it, not just what is it not?

Paul’s exhortation to children (Ephesians 6:1) and slaves (Ephesians 6:5) uses a stronger verb, *hypakouo*. He is saying something different to wives. Should one assume that because one is told to “submit” or “defer” or “yield” — however one translates *hypotasso* — that the other has “authority,” power to command, exact obedience, status, control, over the one who “submits” or “defers,” or the right to demand that she do it? I don’t think so. That’s saying more than Scripture is saying. Never does Paul state that a male should order a woman to “submit.” Should we say because Paul says that husbands should “love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for it,” therefore the wife can demand that he “give himself up” as Christ has given himself up, namely lay down his life, he must do so? That would be equivalent of saying that because one is told to “submit” the other must have authority. I don’t think so. That doesn’t necessarily follow logically.

One “defers” or “respects” not because of a patriarchal cultural norm where one has some traditional authority, but “out of reverence for the Lord.” In a culture where male patriarchy dominates Paul does not question the patriarchal norm but wants such a witness from the Christian community “that the Word...not be discredited” (Titus 2:5) — an evangelistic motive — and “that...they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior” (Titus 2:9). Paul is not saying males should have authority; he is saying the Gospel should “have free course.” When one uses a concept of authority in interpersonal relationships, one enters into a whole new realm. This is where an “order of creation” with ranking hermeneutic leads.

Paul takes for granted that patriarchal domination and slavery are norms in his culture of that day. Those are not the norms today. If one bases an exhortation to women to “submit” on an unchanging social order established at creation, then one logically could say that slavery is a socially normative order (Genesis 9:25ff was long used to support this understanding). Would Paul support slavery today and say the same words to those caught by human trafficking? Consider *Philemon*. “All Cretans are liars” (Titus 1:12) — is that doctrine? No, that is Pauline personal pastoral opinion in that situation, a cultural reference that needs unpacking. And, true, the Scriptures *are* God’s Word not just *containing* God’s Word (p. 67, lines 5-6), but it is through culture that the Word is given. Paul’s words must be understood as pastoral advice

given in that time and place so that the Gospel not be compromised (e.g., Titus 2:5, 9).

Our task is to understand Paul's pastoral process and cultural presuppositions and translate them in terms of today's cultural realities. Vss. 21ff need to be unpacked from the cultural and historical realities found in Ephesus in Paul's day, first a "then" followed by a "now." The question is, what is Paul's pastoral method, not what he "recognizes as typical masculine and feminine traits" (p. 54, lines 20-21). Giving Paul a "patient and understanding ear" (p. 44, lines 8-12) doesn't mean not going into the cultural context and find meaning for "then" before we apply the eternal truth to "now."

In a culture of exploitation of sex in advertising, spousal and sexual abuse, different pay schedules for women, glass ceilings, human trafficking, and other cultural realities of our time, what do people hear when the church says women should "submit" and "be subordinate"? How do we address a culture which is entirely different than when these words were first spoken? How is the Gospel to be heard? Does "submission" glorify Christ? Or is the Gospel more clearly heard in a faith community where "no one is before or after, greater or less than the other"? Does a woman's submission to man really emphasize the church's submission to Christ (p. 30, lines 19-22) to the community? Ask a hundred women church members this question and see what you find. How does a Trinitarian hermeneutical key speak to this? "Christian reflection on these passages clearly sees the doctrine of the Trinity as the basis for God's unity in plurality and plurality in unity" (p. 51, lines 2-3).

The exegetical case can be made to translate Paul's *hypotasso* not with words like "submit" but with a twenty-first century translation of "defer" and "deference" and "respect." "Submit" and "defer" refer to two different stances. Talking about "submission" is not talking about mutual deference or love. Is Paul talking "submit" (control) or "deference" ("do not count another more than your self.....")? Which is it? Which of the two is the Christ-like way? If "negative thoughts of inferior human ability or worth, of lesser intelligence or competence" are "foreign to this good and common word in the Scriptures" (p. 29, lines 26-27), how is the Gospel heard by contemporary women? (That this consultation was requested certainly has some implications for an answer.) "Deference" is not tainted with "full surrendering after resistance or conflict" overtones. Nuances of language are significant especially here since this document is addressed to "a person without formal training in theology" (p. 2, line 15), but who certainly has a feel for his or her own language usage.

Understanding *hypotasso* as "defer" and "yield" fails only if one insists on an "order of creation" hierarchy model. Deference and yielding come from the heart of a person strongly grounded in knowing that Christ loves her or him. Such a person does not need to fit into an "order of creation." She already "fits" in with her Lord.

■Also integral to this discussion is the question of what motivates a Christ-like response?

Note how Paul amplifies and modifies *hypotasso* in other texts:

Eph. 5:22: "... as to the Lord"

Col. 3:18: "...as is fitting in the Lord..."

Titus 2:5: "...that the Word...not be discredited"

Titus 2:9: "...that ... they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior"

1 Peter 2:18: "...that you may follow in Christ's steps"

1 Peter 3:1: "...so that they may be won"

Paul is appealing to a faith-motivation, a yielding, a deference. Not conflict, but confident faith. He is not talking of "surrendering after resistance or conflict" or "giving way out of necessity after opposing unsuccessfully."

Is not our motivation the we are "bought with his own blood" (Acts 20:28)? And, "For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that...he died for all..." (1 Corinthians 5:14); and "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love; make every effort to keep the unity" (Ephesians 4:2-3); and "Perfect love drives out fear" (1 John 4:18); and "We love because Christ first loved us" (1 John 4 :19). That's how we "submit" to Christ.

"Women must not be permitted to exercise authority over man..." (Ft. Wayne Exegetical Department, 1976, [an all male faculty, note!] quoted on page 200 of the LCMS *Pittsburgh Convention Workbook*) — offers a "submit" approach — pressure from without instead of a faith-inspired motive from within, the kind of understanding that violates a Christian's desire "in humility [to] count others more significant than yourselves" Phil 2:3). The Scriptures never say a man is to make a woman submit. However one understands 1 Timothy 2:12, Paul is not saying "men must silence women and must make women submit." He is again applying pastoral practice to a situation where some women are "muscling in," "usurping" positions.

■ In the same vein, this leads to another question: Does spousal unity come from hierarchy/structure or from *agape*? Which is the motive? One has the impression that *The Creator's Tapestry* struggles mightily to fit marriage and spousal unity into "order of creation" and "headship" and "authority" and "submission" models (perhaps an agenda to undergird thinking for an all male clergy?). But what comes through again and again is the word "submission" but without the glue of mutual care and love and deferring (yes, there are phrases to that effect, but the tone is not there). What people hear is a "...patterned dominance..." (CTCR, *Racism and the Church*, page 14).

What leads to a more honest "deferring," one based on "authority" with a "must" or a deference that stems from a Christ-like heart? Is an "order of creation" structure going to prevent "self-serving chaos" (p. 65, line 19), or is *agape*?

If this a "foundational document for laity without theological sophistication" then these terms need to be carefully unpacked and illustrated. These sections seem to be written by a theologian trying to squeeze the toothpaste (unity) back into the toothpaste tube

(hierarchy/headship). This suggests again beginning with the human side and working upward rather than with the divine side and working downward. Any pastoral counselor will tell you that the more deeply intimate a couple's love for each other is, the less struggle for turf, control, and hierarchical issues, and the less need for "authority" and "the right and power to command"; in love, *agape*, there is mutual care and mutual deference to each other. This section would have much more import if written by a parish pastor or pastoral counselor who is not trying to defend a specific exegetical construct.

Jeffery Gibbs, in arguing that the image of God is "antithetical to the Gospel itself" when used as motivation for "human worth and ethics" writes,

When men insist that they themselves are of special worth because they possess, even in the fallenness of sin, the divine image, the anthropocentrism of such a view inherently seeks to assert itself idolatrously. Even though the divine image is originally God's gift, nevertheless, "it belongs to me." (Gibbs, "The Grace of God as Foundation for Ethics," *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, 1984, no. 2-3, p. 190)

Cannot the same be said that if we "insist that males are of special position because they possess, even in the fallenness of sin, a divine position, the anthropocentrism of such a view inherently seeks to assert itself idolatrously"?

Gibbs, again,

It is the grace of God, not the creative power of God, which provides the rationale for Christians ethics. Just as men must receive an "alien righteousness" through faith in Christ in order to be saved, so has all mankind received an 'alien value,' coming from the outside, by being the objects of God's love in Jesus. This is the plain teaching of the New Testament. (pg. 194)

■ So what do we do then with Paul's statement that "Adam was formed first, then Eve" (1 Timothy 2:13)? Does he not use this as an "order of creation" theology and motivation?

The one text most often chosen historically as the lodestar to undergird "order of creation" thinking is 1 Timothy 2:13. Someone somewhere has remarked that this is the most elevated ("sacred"?) of all texts when it comes to evangelicals holding the line against women's roles in the church community. *The Creator's Tapestry*, too, depends on 1 Timothy 2:13 to underscore the point that sequence means priority (p. 64, lines 13-14; p.65, lines 18-19).

★ If we understand the words, "for Adam was formed first, then Eve" in vss 12-13, to say God mandates "sequence determines priority" in the church, an exegetical consistency would require that we understand as mandated also 1 Timothy 2:8-10 as well. And also for 1 Timothy 5:3-16.

★ Since the context is an Ephesian congregation in whose community the worship of Diana/Artemis was dominate and where Diana theology said that Eve was prime, could not the words of vs 13 be a chronological/historical corrective by Paul to mistaken theology held by new converts to the Christian faith who claimed a priority of Eve because of what they held from Diana worship? Isn't he offering a corrective by arguing that "Women should not claim priority because Adam was created first and need to learn first before they teach lest they be deceived like Eve"? Compare, for example, among others, Gritz, *Paul, Women Teachers, and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus* (University Press of America, 1991).

★ *Authentein* does have a history of meaning "abusive power" or "usurping authority" (acknowledged at p.42, line 6; p. 57, line 1?); but even if one sees it as neutral in flavor, context would suggest that there is a negative tinge about it; something disruptive was occurring; some sin that needs addressing. It is not Paul's normal word for "authority." That Paul issues this command suggests that disruption was taking place, women were doing something that was negative.

★ Is not this text a Pauline pastoral instruction/advice for the specific needs of that congregation at that time? Given the (temporal) cultural context of 2:13 ("...not with hair braided...", etc.) could we not suggest that what Scripture is trying to teach at this point and what we could learn from this inspired Word is *Paul's pastoral method* in a specific congregation in a specific cultural setting and not a mandated doctrine for eternity?

In his Corinthian correspondence Paul lists one problem in the congregation after another, in each situation giving solid law/gospel pastoral advice. That's his approach; he does the same here: he is picking out examples in his congregation in Ephesus of specific problems there, not giving a divine-inspired mandated description of the sexes. Paul warns angry men (1 Timothy 2:8) against being over bearing regarding wives and church responsibilities and instead "ruling" in a spirit of love (Ephesians 5:28-29). Pastors will tell us there are overbearing women who rule their homes autocratically and infect congregations with dysfunctional behavior. Pastors also will tell us that males have come into congregations and usurped authority by "muscling in." And there is merit in warning women against focusing too much on outward beauty and dress (1 Tim. 2:9-10), but any pastor can tell us that there are vain and "macho" men as well who give less than a stellar witness to Christ. Are men and women deceivable in some ways that other is not? Is there some sin of which I as a male am not subject to its captivity? If these sins are gender specific, this would say that some persons are not capable of all sins. But sins are not gender based. Any male and any female are susceptible to any sin. As we memorized in high school Latin class, *Nihih humanum a me alienum putare*.

This understanding and the fact that Paul addresses women in regard to certain sins and men in regard to certain sins indicates that his focus is on specific problems of that congregation. Paul is addressing specific local problems in Ephesus.

■So, then, why the heavy reliance on a brief, cryptic sentence in 1 Tim 2:13? Does it really support the ranking required by a static order of creation interpretation? To aver that this passage equates “sequence” with “priority” stumbles when compared with the rest of Scripture: Esau is first, but Jacob receives the blessing; Jacob himself favors his younger sons, Joseph and Benjamin; Abel, the younger, has his sacrifice chosen; the elder brother in Jesus’ parable falls flat; James and John seek high positions but are told they have to drink the cup of servanthood first; Paul considers himself the “least of all the apostles” and “chief of sinners”; God shows no partiality (Romans 2:11, Acts 10:34, Ephesians 6:9, 1 Peter 1:17). John Calvin in his *Second Epistle of Paul* questioned whether sequence demands priority, noting that John the Baptist came before Jesus. A child of God does not insist on “rights” and “position” but willingly regards such grounds as immaterial when there is a need to defer to and care for those “for whom Christ died” (Romans 14:15; 1 Corinthians 8:9); Jesus talks about the “first being last” and those who “seek leadership” as going to the foot of the table, and demonstrates his teaching in that he “did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but emptied himself.” Jesus washes his disciples feet (John 13:14-15). These are examples of where “no one is before or after, greater or less than the other,” where one’s chronological order grants no priority and is inconsequential to God’s economy. Chronology does not necessitate priority. It is not about who’s first and who’s second, ranking.

Genesis itself when recording the acts of creation does not make priority an overt point. The point in the creation of Eve in Genesis is not priority but Adam’s need not to be alone, a need for companionship which animals cannot supply. Adam is help-less without another. He needs community in which to understand himself better (p. 15, lines 20-21). In a “one flesh” commitment, is not Adam in mutuality to be a helper and companion for Eve and “devoted to her good”? (*The Creator’s Tapestry* seems to swing just one way, p.4, lines 13-14.) That is also partially the meaning of “one flesh.”

“Apparently, the key mark of Jesus in the image form of God is that he did not grasp after equality with God but became obedient. God is the one who does not grasp. And human persons in his image are those who do not grasp. Grasping power cannot create. Grasping power cannot enhance creation.” (Walter Brueggeman, *Genesis Interpretation*, pg. 35)

What about Galatians 3:28 or 1 Corinthians 11:11-12? Why not use these as the significant lenses through which we approach the issue, both more in keeping with the Trinitarian model, where “no one is before or after, greater or less than the other” ? In the light of these texts, is 1 Timothy 2:12-13 really the clearer text? This is not “pitting one text against the other” (p. 6, line 5) but suggesting that all of Scripture applies. In 1 Corinthians 11:11-12, what is it that the Gospel changes? What is Paul saying has changed? What, for the consultation presenters, does the Gospel change?

★And a careful reading of Paul's theology of gifts in 1 Corinthians 12, 13, 14, and Romans 12:3-8 and Ephesians 4:11-12 shows no gift discrimination in the Spirit's dispensation. Two statements in *The Creator's Tapestry* do speak about the gift of spiritual leadership in women,

A man is ordained, not because He [*sic*] is necessarily able to function more competently than a woman could, but simply because the Word of God requires it, based upon God's created design (1 Tim 2:13). (p.62, lines 12-14)

And

...the spiritual authority and responsibility which may well come more easily to them...
(p 62, line 1)

If this is the Spirit's gifting, why do we say that the Spirit cannot choose this woman to minister in Christ's church? Does not the Word of God require this, based on the Spirit's gifts? A static "order of creation" can lead to quenching the Spirit's gifts. Why quench the Spirit?

Page 6 talks about the faithful reading of the texts of Scripture, noting that "we also tend more readily to accept some texts but view others as less important, even pitting one passage against another." But voicing that statement does not mean *The Creator's Tapestry* has honored that statement.

"Learn to think in terms of the world that is to be, he [Paul] is saying, and of the people you will be within it, and then you will see clearly who you must be in the present time" (Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, p. 288, in discussing Paul's ethical thought in 1 Corinthians). Martin Scharlemann often would quote Bishop Nygren's example of people in the northernmost villages of Norway after D-Day in Europe, where Nazi authorities might be persuaded that the decisive battle had been won.

"In view of this prospect these foreign overlords would return authority of government back to the Norwegian officials...It is most unlikely that the Norwegian people living in such a liberated village would continue to live as they had conducted themselves under Nazi oppression. Their whole quality of life would change. That is precisely what will take place in the life of Christians when they become aware of their real situation and status. Their whole outlook and interpretation of life produces a new quality of living. (Scharlemann, *Toward Tomorrow*, CPH, 1960, p. 19)

The Body of Christ is indeed the "new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17), then in the present time we model — as much as humanly possible under the power of the Spirit — the life that is to come. Not what we are because of sin (Genesis 3:16), but what we can become under grace and the Spirit's direction.

■The above comments do not cover all the issues, but are suggestive that other legitimate exegetical and theological perspectives do exist. And all of this connects to what I now say regarding how the “consultation” was conducted.

Significant LCMS women met with Pastor Kieschnick to express concern about Missouri’s posture regarding women in home and ministry. As a result this consultation was planned. But the very dynamic of this consultation raises questions about that definition. A “consultation” implies there are points of view. Yes, “...the CTCR was able to assemble individuals with various expertise and interest in this topic...” (p. 1). But all the presenters were males with known previously published positions.

The choice of the presenters determined that it would not be a free exchange of ideas, but that a single point of view would be presented. *The Creator’s Tapestry* talks about how the LCMS has opened up many avenues for women in ministry (p. 55). And the authors give lip service to the understanding that “There is a legitimate frustration that women’s theological questions, concerns, and insights have often been treated disrespectfully or as illegitimate” (p. 55). Regardless of how one reads such texts as 1 Timothy 2, women still need to be heard for the insights they bring to the discussion. There are women in the LCMS with advanced degrees in New Testament studies as well as women who have spent time studying these issues, *yet when it comes to the consultation none of these women were invited to give major presentations*. And I have been given to understand that none of the original seven were included in the writing of the drafts and *The Creator’s Tapestry*. To list all the items on page 55 and say that the “rights and responsibilities of women...have been ignored or implicitly denied” and then to enact this denial by not involving women in major presentations or the writing of this draft is condescending. What you decry is what you have done. To the women involved, the message clearly is “Listen closely, because we males have the truth.” So what we are really working with here is not women’s roles, but “**men’s issues** about women’s involvement in Christ’s body.” And then we wonder why women are frustrated?

Christian women theologians do have insights to Scripture. If we characterize them as “feminists” and dismiss them because they are women, what additional legitimacy are we trying to claim for masculine, male theologians? We all approach Scripture through our lenses. Is it really true that “all the necessary exegetical work has been done”? The women who asked for this consultation were asking that this exegetical work seriously to be revisited. Were other voices even heard?

Once when serving a parish in Alabama I had a discussion with a fellow Lutheran who firmly believed in segregation. I quoted Galatians 3:28, and his response, “But that doesn’t talk about us Whites and those Negroes!” He went on to talk about the need for a “separate but equal” approach. “That passage is spiritual; even the slaves sitting in the balcony heard the Gospel!” Yet if the Gospel does not infuse the hearts of Christians and transform all relationships, including slavery and segregation and “separate but equal,” if it does not lead to slaves being

released from shackles of chains as well as shackles of sin, and if Galatians 3:28 is limited to a “spiritual realm,” then we as Christians still are able to justify sinking back into segregation as well. After all, didn’t Paul say, “Slaves, be obedient...”?

What underlies this consultation is a “subordinate but equal” thinking, which, as one Afro-American woman — a professional educator — pungently puts it, “smells like ‘separate but equal’.” Again, the word “subordination” in English clearly implies “inferior, placed in or occupying a lower class, rank, or position” (*Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1989, p. 1175). To speak of “oneness in Christ” and in the same paper to emphasize “subordination,” “submission,” and male “authority,” is either Orwellian “new speak” or a complete insensitivity to English language nuances. It is inconsistent (p. 56, line 11) to permit leadership in one area but to deny it in another.

Theology to support apartheid in South Africa referenced the rainbow, also a creation of God: “The colors are separate; if not, there would be no rainbow; so God intends the separation of the colors.” And the Bible is quoted: Acts 17:26. “Different ‘colors’ have certain boundaries.” That’s an “order of creation” argument as well. “The theology privileged those who devised it.” And LCMS argues this, that the Order of Creation is the “particular position which, by the will of God, any created object occupies in relation to others.” Did the consultation even address the premise that males are qualified for leadership simply because they are born male? What is it in being born a woman — what in her essence or ontology — that places her in a lower “order of creation” and disqualifies her even if and when God gifts her? Is “created identity” really equal to a ranking in the “order of creation” (p. 65, line 18)? Order of creation thinking is, historically, designed to maintain separateness and create dependency. What is a woman going to hear about a connection between her submission to her husband and her connection to her Lord (p. 63, lines 1-11)?

So what is *The Creator’s Tapestry* trying to say to males and females sitting in the pew? And what does a woman hear when reading it? That is for women to answer.

But for me, reading *The Creator’s Tapestry* feels as if what permeates this document and the process that produced it is some Missouri chromosomal predisposition toward a sentiment where the “highest excellence of a Christian woman is that of following her calling in the quiet seclusion of the home” where she “should be in the relation of dependency to the man” and, as those who “have breasts and wombs” (p. 60, line 19), be concerned about the “gift of babies” (Kretzmann’s *Popular Commentary of the Bible*, Vol II, pages 377-8).

Luke 13 holds the account of Jesus meeting the bent over woman:

Jesus called to her and said, “Woman, you are *freed* [lit. untied] from your infirmity.” The head of the synagogue was angry because Jesus had “worked” on the sabbath. Jesus responded, “You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or

his ass from the manger, and lead it away to water it" (v. 15). His point being: Today, on the sabbath you untied an *animal*. I "untied" a *woman*. How can you blame me? The text reports that "all his adversaries were put to shame" (v17). (Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, pages 30-31)

Doesn't Jesus in his ministry "untie" those who are bound and bent? We males included?

May the Lord of the Church guide us into all truth!

Blessings!

Arnold J. Voigt

cc: Pastor Jerry Kieschnick