

Purpose for Paper

Purpose. This research team was asked by the congregation and elders of New Song Church to present a position paper to bring clarity to New Song's position on the issues surrounding a woman preaching and teaching—whether alone or partnering with a man—in the Celebration Service.

Occasion. New Song's stance in the past has both implicitly and explicitly allowed for a woman to teach from the pulpit, whether alone or partnering with a man. However, questions from members in the congregation suggested the need for further clarity in accordance with this issue. In addition, well-reasoned support became needed regarding New Song's position. Some people being new to the church were unaware of the church's position, others merely had not known or not sought further understanding of the church's position. Still others were researching the issue for themselves; consequently, their journey and questions have coincided with other New Song member's pursuit for clarity on this issue.

Goal. The goal of the team and this paper is precise in its scope. We were commissioned by the elders of New Song (via request by the voting membership at New Song Church, San Dimas, CA) to bring clarity on New Song's position regarding the allowance of women teaching from the pulpit. We are not commenting or arguing for or against other (possibly related) issues such as whether or not women can be elders or the scope or breadth of women in ministry in general. It is with due humility we accept the scope, bounds and integrity of this project entrusted to us by the congregation and representative elders. We have stayed within the boundaries provided.

Doctrinal Affirmation. All the members of the research team affirm, support and abide by the doctrinal statement of New Song Church, adhering to the essentials of the historic, orthodox Christian Faith and the final authority of the Bible. Copies of the doctrinal statement can be obtained through the church office.

Composition of Research Team

The team consisted of (in alphabetical order) Craig Anderson (pastor of Cell Ministries at New Song), Joey Coffman (former Elder at and member of New Song), Paul Kaak (Leadership Institute, former pastor and a current member of New Song), Tim and Patricia Lentz (facilitators of Family Life equipping at and members of New Song), Dr. Sarah Sumner (professor of Theology & Ministry at Azusa Pacific University and member of New Song) and George Haraksin (research team leader and pastor of equipping at New Song). Team members held various views on the issues discussed in the paper. The diversity of the team intends to provide a fair representation of New Song Church. We make note that there was a spirit of Christian unity, collaboration and respect given to and by each member. We humbly thank the Lord for the grace provided throughout this project and the prayers of New Song Church.

Duration of Research Team

The team met approximately once a month from September 1999 through May 2000 to go over research findings, present and discuss various viewpoints, and solidify conclusions for this paper.

Outlined Position

Conclusions and Recommendations of Team

We maintain that under the accountability of the elders a fittingly gifted and trained man or woman may preach and teach the Scripture, as authoritative, within the context of the general, public (mixed group, where men and women are present) assembly of New Song Church.

The gifted teacher—whether a man or a woman—is personally, spiritually and doctrinally accountable to the elders of New Song Church, San Dimas and is functionally given this opportunity through the leadership and guidance of the Celebration Arts Team of New Song Church, San Dimas. All gifted teachers are held to the high moral ground spelled out in the whole counsel of Christian Scripture.

Reasons in Support of Position

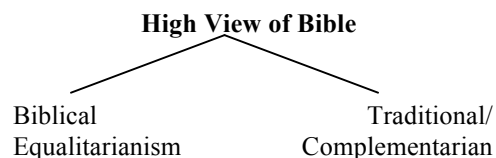
Framing the Issue

The Big Picture. A “position” like a roof is in need of support in order to stand. A roof without support is of no use and a “position” or “conclusion” without support or evidence is of little use for the person who holds it. We desire to provide some reasons, evidence or “pillars” which will support our position—our “roof”. But before providing these reasons in support of our position we want to offer some parameters in thinking about the issue of women teaching in the general assembly. We hope to provide some categories to help focus and frame this issue. It is well known that there is a diversity of opinion on women’s roles in ministry and even diversity on how one supports a particular position. We believe it is important for the reader to briefly understand the discussion over women’s roles in the church as a whole. We will then proceed, in particular, to support the claim outlined above.

Three Main Positions. There are three main categories we can detail and distinguish when it comes to women’s roles in the church.¹ We can outline the positions as follows:

Highly Critical View of Bible
Anti-Evangelical Feminism

Critical View of Bible
Evangelical Feminism



¹ These categories are adapted from Ronald Nash’s book *Great Divides: Understanding the Controversies that Come Between Christians* (Navpress, 1993), p. 40. We have adapted Nash’s categories but choose to emphasize each position’s view of the Bible. We make note that both Equalitarians and Traditionalists/Complementarians maintain a high view of the Bible adhering to its authoritative nature as the Word of God.

Traditionalists or *Complementarians* (see below) maintain that men and women must always exist in a hierarchical relationship in which men have authority over women. On this view, male headship is God's plan in both the home and the church. God's will for this is normative for all times and situations; therefore, women must not occupy positions of authority over men or preach to men. It is important to note that contemporary traditionalists affirm that the distinction among men and women is one of *function* or *role* not of inequality in one's essence/humanness or of value. In other words, both men and women are created in God's image and have equal value to God and equal access to salvation. Men and women's roles differ at home, in the church and in the world yet complement one another. This is why some that hold this position refer to it as a complementarian or congruent creationist view.² For our purposes, we will use the labels of *Traditionalist* and *Complimentarian* as basically synonymous.

Biblical Equalitarians affirm that men and women are both created in the image of God and are gifted by God to serve the *whole* of the congregation. This view maintains men and women are to serve according to their giftedness and can, according to giftedness, carry out leadership roles in the church. This view, accordingly, does not preclude gifted women from teaching or leading men. *Biblical Equalitarians* hold the same high view of Scripture as traditionalists (meaning *equalitarians* do not deny any essential Christian beliefs/doctrines and do not impute error to the Bible). *Biblical equalitarians* also recognize that all hierarchies need not be expunged. There is nothing wrong, for example, with having hierarchies based upon superior qualifications or experience. It would be nonsense, they say, to oppose the consummate parent-child relationship. Hierarchies are opposed when they are based on *irrelevant* considerations.

Evangelical Feminists maintain Christian orthodoxy on most essential Christian beliefs, yet hold that the Bible may be erroneous in what it teaches on the issue of female, church leadership. For example, it is pointed out that Paul's teaching on this issue is either contradictory in his statements about women's roles in the church or reflects his earlier rabbinic training stating that women should be subordinate to men.³ A major difference between some Evangelical feminists and Biblical equalitarians is that the former deem it necessary to criticize or revise the Bible in order to defend their positions about women's roles instead of seeking to make sense of, cohere or harmonize an *apparent* disagreement in the text of the Bible. Put another way, *Biblical equalitarians* and *Traditionalists* place themselves "under" the Bible, while Evangelical feminists place themselves "over" the Bible.

Anti-Evangelical Feminists maintain that while the Bible contains God's words, on the whole, it must not be identified as the Word of God.⁴ Those who hold to this view usually offer their own version of Christianity. Consequently, their theological positions fall outside the realm of the evangelical camp. While still identifying themselves as Christians, issues in the Bible such as patriarchy and references to God as "father" or "he," come under serious attack. Beyond

² See, respectively, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Crossway Books, 1991) chapter 1; and *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15* edited by Andreas Kostenberger, Thomas Schreiner, and H. Scott Baldwin (Baker Books, 1995), p. 263.

³ Nash, pp. 42-43.

⁴ Nash, pp. 43-44.

this position are those who might be called “Anti-Christian Feminists” who think that Christianity is a sexist religion and should be dispensed with altogether while opting for other female-friendly religions such as neo-paganism or nature mysticism.

Central to Christian Evangelicalism is its high view of Scripture as authoritative for Christian belief and practice.⁵ The *traditionalist* and *equalitarian* both hold to the authority of Scripture as a central feature of evangelicalism. Both *traditionalists* and *equalitarians* are represented within the congregation of New Song Church. Both positions, it should be noted, hold to a high view of Scripture and should not be misrepresented. These two positions set the boundaries for the purposes of our discussion. (Interestingly, both the *equalitarian* and *traditionalist* positions include scholars who are in favor of appropriately gifted women teaching in the congregational setting.⁶)

To begin our discussion we wish to explore *how* (meaning ontologically or what is central or foundational to one’s “being” or “existence”) men and women are created and *how* they both are gifted to teach.

Created in the Image of God and Gifted

By and large both *traditionalists* and *equalitarians* agree that men and women are created in the image of God.⁷ Both have intrinsic and equal value stemming from God’s image and can equally share in God’s salvation as a free gift by faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, both are co-laborers with Christ in God’s kingdom. Genesis 1:26-28, declares, “Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.’ So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” (NRSV)

When Genesis describes the woman as an appropriate “helper” (Genesis 2:18) it refers to a person who can be a suitable partner “corresponding to” the man unlike the animals. In the

⁵ While Inerrancy is not central to evangelicalism, the authority of Scripture is central to evangelicalism. Inerrancy is the hallmark of fundamentalists and conservative evangelicals such as Aida Spencer, Walter Liefeld, and others who affirm women in leadership. Inerrancy is also the stance of New Song Church and the team who served. See also, Brad Kallenberg in *Virtues and Practices in the Christian Tradition: Christian Ethics after MacIntyre*, p. 202ff. Kallenberg lays out an interesting system of categorizing Evangelicals. He uses commitment to Scripture, the character of the church and Christian life, and a teleological approach to human life as a framework to understanding the bound of Evangelical thought as a framework for ethical considerations.

⁶ See, Robert L. Saucy, *Women’s Prohibition to Teach Men: An Investigation Into Its Meaning and Contemporary Application*, for a complementarian view which affirms that gifted women may teach the church in relation to the ministry of the Word. See also the article in *Christian Research Journal Volume 22 Number 4 A Woman’s Place: The Evangelical Debate over the Role of Women in the Church*, p. 12ff.

⁷ In the history of the Church some theologians have argued that women have weightier judgement upon them. For example in *On the Dress of Women* Tertullian writes, “. . . and you know not that you [women] also are an Eve? God’s judgment of this sex lives on in our age; the guilt necessarily lives on as well. *You* are the devil’s gateway; *you* are the unsealer of that tree; *you* are the first forsaker of the divine law; *you* are the one who persuaded him whom the Devil was not brave enough to approach; *you* so lightly crushed the image of God, the man Adam; because of *your* punishment, that is, death, Even the Son of God had to die. And you think to adorn yourself beyond your ‘tunics of skins’ (Gen. 3:21)?”

Old Testament the word “helper” (‘ezer) when used of a person regularly refers to God (in 29 places), except for one reference to David. The word “helper” should be understood in reference to the woman as one who serves God *with* the man not as “an expression of submission and service to man.”⁸ The woman is said by man to be “bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh” and the one suitable to assuage his aloneness.

Both male and female, created in God’s image, are given the same mandate to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, subdue it and rule over every living thing. A relationship of mutuality, partnership and ontological equality is present in the creation account of man and woman. It is only after the fall in Genesis 3:1-7 that this relationship is marred by sin.

In the New Testament we see the relationship of mutuality, partnership and ontological equality again in Acts 2 where, quoting the prophet Joel, it announces, “‘And it shall be in the last days,’ God says, ‘that I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all mankind; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even upon My bondslaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit’ And they shall prophesy.” (NASB) In addition, the apostle Paul proclaims in Galatians 3:28, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Both *traditionalists* and *equalitarians* agree God pours forth His Spirit on both men and women. At this juncture a key question is: In the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, how are both men and women gifted?

We believe the testimony of Scripture supports the view that the Spirit distributes His gifts to whomever He pleases “in Christ.” Certainly the gift of teaching is not exclusively given to men, but is also bestowed upon women as the Spirit sees fit to give. In Titus 2:3-4 older women are to be “reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, *teaching* what is good so that they may encourage (or train) the young women to love their husbands, to love their children...” (NASB, emphasis added). “Teaching” in this text should be taken in a straightforward manner whether it is formal or informal. One could respond to this by maintaining that in this verse “teaching” implies merely being a good model and what is meant here is “teaching” through the example of the way older women display their lives. Certainly “modeling through one’s life” is in the mind of Paul for in the same verse he gives the outward example of not being “enslaved to much wine.” Nevertheless, the instruction to “encourage” the younger women involves the idea of speaking to the younger women with the intention to “instruct” them—with the result of good behavior. Paul does not preclude formal teaching for in subsequent verses—Titus 2:6-8—he instructs Timothy to exhort younger men to show “integrity” in their teaching and be “sound” in speech. Paul uses the same Greek word when instructing both the men and women to “teach” with no apparent difference in meaning. Hence there is no indication from this text that Paul’s instruction to “teach(ing) what is good and true”, such as loving one’s husband, instead of speaking against one’s husband (i.e. gossiping), excludes any particular kind of teaching. Paul’s statement in this verse surely includes “teaching” both as modeling (through one’s life) and in a straightforward verbal manner.

⁸ See, David M. Scholer, *Women in Ministry A Biblical Basis for Equal Partnership: Women and Men in the Ministry of the Church* pamphlet (Covenant Press, July 1996 & January 1997), p. 2.

In Colossians 3 Paul is providing general instruction on how we ought to live our lives as those who have been “raised up with Christ.” Verse 16 exhorts us to “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts.” (NASB) The writer to the Hebrews admonishes the people for still needing someone to *teach* them the elementary principles of God, when by this time they should *all* be teachers (Hebrews 5:12). I Corinthians 14:26 advises that when the church assembles “each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.” (NASB) When Paul lists the gifts (Romans 12:6-8; I Cor. 12:8, 28-31; Ephesians 4:11) he does not suggest that the gifts are restricted or given solely to a specific gender. Rather, God gifts women in the same way he gifts men. In opposition, some traditionalists see a different kind, level or degree of “teaching” in these verses but there is no indication of a differentiation in levels or degrees of teaching provided by Paul in these texts between male and female.⁹

In Acts 18:26, Priscilla and her husband Aquila heard Apollos teaching about Jesus. Upon hearing Apollos they invited him to their home and “explained” or “expounded” to him the way of God more adequately. Here we have a husband and wife team teaching another man. Additionally, the order of names in the ancient world often signified order of ranking and importance. Priscilla is named, and thus ranked, first in Acts and Romans 16:3 signifying her prominence or at minimum equality and co-laboring. In I Corinthians 16:19, Paul makes mention of the church meeting in their home saying, “Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house” affirming again their co-laborship in the household of God. In sum, we find that both men and women are gifted to teach and are instructed to learn the ways of God (see I Timothy 2:11).

However, the argument is raised that women may teach but only other women (and children perhaps) as I Timothy 2:12 seems to suggest. This is the next issue we will address.

Can Women Teach Men?

The main text traditionally seen, as forbidding women from teaching men is I Timothy 2:11-15. The main issues involved with this text involve the meaning and application of: “be silent”; “not permitting a woman to teach or exercise (“have” in the NIV) authority over a man”; should “woman” be more accurately translated “wife”; and whether these injunctions should be understood as referring to a specific, historical situation or better understood as referring to a general, universal principle or rule. We will address each of these issues. However, these are not the only issues to consider when interpreting and understanding this text.¹⁰

Silence? Paul writes, “Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness.” (I Timothy 2:11 NASB) Did he intend that women should remain “forever quiet” in the household of God? In I Corinthians 14:34-35 Paul writes, “As in all the congregations of the saints, women

⁹ For example, see Saucy, *Women’s Prohibition to Teach Men: An Investigation Into Its Meaning and Contemporary Application*, pp. 96-97.

¹⁰ There are at least 11 major interpretive decisions to be made concerning I Timothy 2:11-15, see Linda L. Belleville, *Women Leaders and the Church: Three Crucial Questions* (Baker Books, 2000), pp. 164-65.

should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.” (NIV) When Paul instructs women to be silent here he uses a stronger term than in the First Timothy passage.

If Paul means for women to “forever be silent” in the church this would seem to be inconsistent with what he permits in I Corinthians 11:5. Paul unequivocally *assumes that* a woman will pray or prophesy in the church. With that, he provides instruction on *how* she should conduct herself while doing: “And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head--it is just as though her head were shaved...” (NIV). The issue here is not *what* women are doing but *how* they are doing it. The context in chapter 11 of I Corinthians is concerning one’s *conduct* in the church, so it is reasonable to reconcile the two passages by assigning something else to Paul’s meaning besides “absolute silence” in the church worship context. There are a number of other possibilities given the cultural context, which help harmonize both of the Corinthian passages and help bring clarity to the I Timothy 2 passage.

First, when Paul admonishes the Corinthian women to “learn quietly” in the church he may be saying, “learn the basics before challenging your teacher.”¹¹ It is quite possible that the admonishment of “silence” from Paul in I Timothy 2 is representative of the spirit of quiet submission that was normally appropriate for novices in Paul’s day. Silence was an appropriate way to learn, in Paul’s day, until one had a thorough knowledge of the subject and was purportedly used as a form of moral discipline.¹² This is certainly consistent with Paul’s admonishment to not hastily appoint a new believer a position of leadership.

In the Corinthian passage silence is required because of disruptive speaking. This is supported by the fact that Paul states, “Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. But let all things be done *properly* and in an *orderly* manner” (I Corinthians 14:39-40 NASB, italics added). In addition, those doing the disrupting are married women—not single women—for they are to ask “their own *wives* at home” (14:35 NASB, italics added). To see this as a universal restriction to all women one would have to overlook this verse. As one writer notes it is not just inquiring women Paul enjoins to keep silent but unordered prophets and unintelligible speakers (I Corinthians 14:27-30).¹³

Secondly, in I Timothy 2:2 Paul exhorts the whole church to live in a “quiet” lifestyle or manner “in all godliness and dignity.” Paul uses the same Greek word, *hesuchia*, in the same chapter and context when referring to women in 2:11. The Greek word Paul uses for “silence” or “quietness” refers to respectful attention, a quiet demeanor or to maintain a state of silence, with a possible focus upon the attitude involved.¹⁴ This would not imply a complete and absolute silence for women (or the whole church) but rather a kind of attitude to be displayed while learning.

¹¹ Craig Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives: Marriage and Women’s Ministry in the Letters of Paul* (Hendrickson Publishers, 1992), p. 107.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 107-108.

¹³ See Belleville, *Women Leaders and the Church*, p. 162.

¹⁴ Louw & Nida *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains Volume I* (United Bible Societies, 1989), p. 402.

Paul may be said to be enjoining women to not disrupt the assembly with uneducated questions or with a disruptive attitude but rather to learn with the proper attitude. This fits well with the context described later in I Timothy 5:13 where young women were “idle” going around talking foolishly and “gossiping” about things which they did not really understand and which were “not proper to mention.” The reason these women should be quiet is that they were as yet unlearned and untaught or even disruptive to the learning environment.¹⁵

In summary, the injunctions of silence in both passages are meant to assuage improper attitudes and uneducated or misdirected questions and are meant to counter specific situations in the churches Paul addresses. Paul means to exhort the church as to *how* they are to learn and to not put up with unsound teaching (cf. I Timothy 4).

Teaching and Authority. We have already stated that men and women are each gifted by God and that God gifts men and women equally, meaning that the Holy Spirit may bestow the same spiritual gifts on both men and women. Men and women can both be given the spiritual gift of teaching and can be in positions of teaching to equip the church. Paul makes no distinction between men or women in Ephesians 4:11-12 when he states that “He [Christ] gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service...” (NASB). There is no distinction in the passage concerning whether only men serve in these roles. A Traditionalist might suggest that this text *assumes* men only hold these positions. However, Scripture lists both men and women as prophets (see Ex. 15:20, Judges 4:4, Lk. 2:36, Acts 2:17-18), why not then assume that women could be in some of the other positions listed in this passage. While most Traditionalists will acknowledge a woman prophetess or women as prophets in the church, a traditionalist might argue that only men could be “pastor/teachers”. This passage, though, does not offer such a distinction so another verse will have to be presented to buttress such a claim. At this juncture most Traditionalists will offer I Timothy 2:12-15 in support of the prohibition of women being teachers of men. The relevant question for us is, “Does I Timothy 2:12-15 prohibit women from teaching men in the public assembly of the church?”

The context and purpose for writing I Timothy is put in view when Paul reminds Timothy of why he was urged (by Paul) to remain in Ephesus. Paul forgoes his normal letter-writing conventions (such as a thanksgiving section and closing greetings) quickly getting to the point in 1:3-4 reminding Timothy that he is to stay in Ephesus to “instruct certain people not to teach any different doctrine, and not to occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies that promote speculations rather than the divine training that is known by faith” (NRSV). While part of Paul’s concern is “how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God,” the broader interest is the occasion of false teaching, which, roughly, absorbs 35 percent of the letter. These false teachers are motivated by greed (I Tim. 6:5), pay attention to deceitful spirits (I Tim. 4:1), forbid people to marry (I Tim. 4:3), and indulge in controversy and quarrels (I Tim. 6:3-4). Many assume men were the false teachers but while they may be the prime offenders, women may have become “eager followers” who spread some of the false teacher’s esoteric instruction

¹⁵ See, Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), pp. 70-73, for an excellent reference as to the historical context.

(I Tim. 5:13, 6:3-5).¹⁶ This, in part, can explain why women (possibly *wives*, see below) come in to particular focus in I Timothy 2:12-15 as men are singled out in 1:20—i.e. *Hymenaeus* and *Alexander*. We would maintain that I Timothy 2 may be rightly understood in light of Paul’s instruction to the situation of false teaching and disruption of the church at Ephesus. The overall tone is one of correction and of setting things in order in God’s household.

I Timothy 2:11-12 states, “Let a woman quietly receive instruction with all submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.” (NASB) The word “teach” in Greek is the infinitive *didaskein* in the present tense, which means to teach continuously. The word translated “exercise authority” is *authentēin* in the Greek. This is the only instance of this word being used in the entire New Testament. Louw & Nida’s Greek Lexicon of the New Testament define *authentēin* as “to control in a domineering manner, ‘to control or domineer.’” They explain, “‘To control in a domineering manner,’ is often expressed idiomatically, for example, ‘to shout orders at,’ ‘to act like a chief toward,’ or ‘to bark at.’” Other legitimate meanings for *authentēin* range from “to control, to dominate,” “to compel, to influence,” “to assume authority over,” and “to flout the authority of.”¹⁷ Various translations, from the New English Bible (“women teaching in a domineering fashion”) to the New International Version (“women teaching in an authoritative manner”) offer different translations and therefore different meanings. “Teach and exercise authority” is linked here by a *neither/nor* construction in Greek.¹⁸ What this means is that in biblical Greek (and Hebrew) this construction places two or more groupings of words, clauses or phrases in parallel. In I Timothy 2:12 “teach and exercise authority” is such a grouping. The issue is whether the word grouping, “teach and exercise authority,” is to be taken in a positive sense or negative sense and in what *way* are they grouped together.

In the time surrounding the writing of the New Testament the noun form of *authentēin* is somewhat common but the verb is particularly rare. If Paul wished to communicate the usual sense of “to have/exercise authority” he could have chosen from a number of other words, the most common being *exousia/exousiazo*. But Paul neither uses this one nor any of the other common words used to mean “rule over” or “have authority over” in a positive sense (e.g. *krino*, *kyrieuo*, *katakryrieuo*, *archo*, etc.). Since he did not use the usual terms for “having authority” the reason why he did not must be that there was something particular to the Ephesian situation that he chose to address (possibly the false teaching). Paul, starting in I Timothy 2:8 begins *positively* requesting men to pray lifting up holy hands and not (*negatively*) without wrath and dissension; in verse 9 Paul begins in a *positive* sense requesting women to clothe themselves modestly and not—here in a *negative* sense—with braided hair or costly garments; in verse 11 he begins *positively* allowing a woman to learn in a quiet manner but not, (in verse 12) *negatively*, allowing a woman to teach or have authority over a man; in verse 13 Paul affirms *positively* Adam was created first but (in verse 14) Eve in contrast, *negatively*, was deceived and fell into transgression. There seems to be a pattern to what Paul is, in a positive sense, affirming and what he is, in a negative sense, not allowing. We advocate that Paul is affirming that the women

¹⁶ Belleville, *Women Leaders and the Church*, pp. 167-8.

¹⁷ Kostenberger *Women in the Church*, pp. 78-80.

¹⁸ For detailed treatments of the neither/nor construction of this passage and others see, Belleville, *Women Leaders and the Church*, pp. 176-77f; and Kostenberger, *Women in the Church A Fresh Analysis of I Timothy 2:9-15*, chapter 4.

in this Ephesian situation should and can learn, in appropriate fashion, but that in verse 12 the word grouping “teach and exercise authority” should be taken in a negative sense meaning that the women should not be permitted to “continuously teach” and “have sway” or “domineer over” “or to have one’s way over” a man, which seems to provide a good fit to pattern we see. While it is difficult to determine with certainty what this phrase means, “have authority” in the positive sense seems less likely.¹⁹

In biblical Greek the *neither/nor* (Gr. *ouk/oude*) construction is used as a poetic device. In Galatians 4:14 Paul says, “you *neither* despised *nor* loathed, but you received me as an angel [messenger] of God.” In the Galatians verse the pairing is of synonyms. Other pairings include antonyms, closely related ideas, a related purpose or goal, to move from the general to the particular or to define a natural progression of related ideas.²⁰ To move from a purpose to a goal fits I Timothy 2:12 meaning “I do not permit a woman to teach to gain mastery over a man,” or “I do not permit a woman to teach with a view to dominating a man.”²¹ In this case Paul is not restricting teaching in general but teaching that attempts to dominate or gain some kind of upper hand or control. This fits well with the broader context where Paul is attempting to correct improper behavior in men (wrath and dissension) and in women (inappropriate dressing and teaching).

Arguably, from the context of I Timothy 2:12, Paul may be opposing unsound teaching in Ephesus.²² Part of the influence perhaps came from the cult of Artemis in Ephesus, where the female was given priority and was exalted and considered superior to the male. In addition, there was a belief that Eve was intellectually superior to Adam in this understanding. The women at Ephesus could then appeal to this teaching for their superiority. In Acts 19:24-34 we see that Artemis is renowned throughout the province of Asia and the people chant for 2 hours, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” It was believed that Artemis was the child of Zeus and Leto but because of the severity of her mother’s labor she herself never married and instead turned to a male consort for comfort (this made her superior to men).²³ This would help explain Paul’s engaging reference to Adam and Eve and to women being saved through childbearing in verse 15. Paul is correcting a fact of history recounting the Genesis story stating, “For it was *Adam* who was first created, and then *Eve*.” (NASB) In addition, Paul asserts that it was Eve who was deceived so how could women claim intellectual authority. It may also be noted that Paul uses Eve in 2 Corinthians 11:3-5 to stand for the *whole* of the Corinthian church stating, “But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough. But I do not think I am in the least inferior to those ‘super-apostles.’” (NIV) Paul uses Eve as a

¹⁹ There is still much debate on the word *authentēin* in the literature today. Many journal articles and whole chapters in books are devoted to the discussion of the meaning of *authentēin*. For a different rendering of *authentēin* see, H. Scott Baldwin’s treatment in, *Women in the Church*, chapters 3 & 5.

²⁰ Belleville, pp. 176-77.

²¹ Ibid.

²² See Bruce Barron, *Putting Women in Their Place: I Timothy 2 and Evangelical Views of Women in Church Leadership* *JETS* 33, 1990, pp. 451-459, for a discussion on the situation.

²³ Belleville, pp. 177-178.

polemical device to stand for one who is deceived and in this case uses it to stand for both men and women.

Paul in both instances is using a counter-argument to rebut specific teaching that has gone awry. Artemis is also the protector of women in childbearing. So in I Timothy 2:15 Paul may be said to be countering the trust in Artemis by exhorting the women that they will be “saved” or “kept safe” in child-bearing not by trust in Artemis but by following their proper Christian devotion and attitude. Hence, Paul is not arguing for a timeless hierarchy that is based on the order of creation, rather he is countering a specific problem.

Some *Traditionalists* argue that Eve’s deception is a built-in weakness, a feature of women in general, or women are generally more susceptible to temptation through deceit. Robert Culver affirms, “The deception [of Eve] indicates a lesser ability in comprehension, and so this limitation is why it is not allowable for a women to teach.”²⁴ Thomas Schreiner contends that “Women are prohibited from the teaching office not only because of the order of creation but also because they are less likely to preserve the apostolic tradition in inhabiting the teaching office.” Explaining further he states that women have different inclinations, “women are more relational and nurturing and men are more given to rational analysis and objectivity. Women are less prone than men to see the importance of doctrinal formulations, especially when it comes to the issue of identifying heresy and making a stand for truth.”²⁵ Schreiner holds that women are less likely to draw the line on “doctrinal non-negotiables” and would let false doctrine enter the church more easily and are therefore not allowed to hold the teaching office.

Similarly, Daniel Doriani contends that women have different inclinations. He states, “God created women with an orientation toward relationships more than analysis” and that is why God created men to “lead in the church and that includes the defense and proclamation of the gospel.”²⁶ Doriani believes women have “enough ability” to teach privately but not in the public assembly. It does not make sense to allow women to teach at all, either publicly or privately, if false doctrine could creep in because of their special “proclivities”. Nor does it makes sense to entrust to them the enormous responsibility of publicly and privately teaching children, the future leaders of the church, if the women teachers themselves are likely to be unsound. Jesus himself gave a weighty warning to those who lead people astray in Matthew 18:6. Robert Culver states, “Eve was deceived by a flashy half truth; [and] her man was persuaded by a tie of affection. She was deceived, but he was not,”²⁷ consequently, it is inconsistent to say that women are unreliable because they are more easily deceived, yet men are reliable, in spite of the fact that they are easily persuaded away from God. Such appeals are ad hoc and do not take into account for weakness in men. They do not display God’s impartiality (Romans 2:11), nor do they account for all the contextual evidence and the historical situation (if correct Culver’s interpretation would have far reaching effects in education as a whole in the culture which he does not consider in our estimation). Consequently, as we argued above, both men and women are gifted or endowed by God to teach in the church assembly.

²⁴ Robert D. Culver, *Women in Ministry Four Views*, edited by Clouse and Clouse (IVP, 1989), p. 37.

²⁵ Schreiner *Women in the Church*, pp. 145-146.

²⁶ Doriani *Women in the Church*, pp. 266-267.

²⁷ Culver, *Women in Ministry Four Views*, p. 36.

Woman or Wife? A further complication for the *Traditionalist* view of I Timothy 2:11-15 is raised in the translation of the Greek word *gune*. *Gune* can be used for a woman, a wife, or even a bride. When translating the Greek word *gune* into English one must make a decision from the context whether *gune* indicates a “woman” generically or is it speaking of a “wife”. The proper place to start in interpreting I Timothy 2 is in verse 9 not 11. Paul here entreats women to “adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments; but rather by means of good works, as befits women making a claim to godliness.” (NASB) The operative term here is the word “discreetly” which the closest English idea to the Greek word *sophrosune* is “sober mindedness”. In Christianity women became free, equal to their husbands, which is in contrast to some of the cultural views of women as second class citizens. However, the danger was that they might misuse their new found freedom in Christ and take it beyond the proper limitations that God had placed in appointing man as head over woman in the marital relationship.²⁸ While Paul declares in Galatians 3 that there are no distinctions in Christ, there are differences among the sexes that should be maintained—appropriate dress being one of them. These differences should be recognized by the “sober minded” person. The whole intent or thesis by the Apostle Paul is “that women should not try to look or act like men and not attempt to usurp the position of their husbands in the home and in the church, thus maintaining the parallel of the Church as the bride of Christ.”²⁹

This does not imply that women are inferior to men but that to function properly everything needs a “head,” even a family. Paul affirms in I Corinthians 11:3, “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.” In marriage two people constitute a unit but within that one “flesh” relationship there are two personalities. If the two are to be a united whole they must have a headship, and that head is the man according to God’s creation and ordinance. Paul’s primary concern is that “a woman should not dress in such a way as to attract and lure men other than her own husband. A Christian woman should not be *a* man’s woman, but she should be *her* man’s woman (I Tim. 5:9), the same way as an exemplary Christian man should not be a lady’s man (I Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6). The relationship expressed in this passage is not that of women being inferior to men, but of a wife in her proper relationship to her husband.”³⁰ (emphasis in original)

In I Timothy 2:11-12 does not say *women* but *woman* and can reasonably and legitimately be translated *wife*. I Timothy 2:12-15 in the NIV reads:

“I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through childbearing--if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.”

Taken at face value this would place every man—or even the lowest man in the pecking order—above the highest woman, such that there are no women that are in any position of authority over any man. We do not know of any church that is willing to take this verse at face

²⁸ See, Spiros Zodhiates, *The Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible New American Standard Bible* edited by Spiros Zodhiates (AMG Publishers; 1984, 1990), pp. 1598-1600, for a discussion on I Timothy 2 and comments on the Greek translation of *gune*.

²⁹ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible*, p. 1599.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

value. In contrast, these verses read more sensibly and coherently with *gune* translated as wife not woman and the Greek word for man, *aner*, translated as husband (which it can also be legitimately translated as given the context of the passage. One author observes, “In the case of the word *aner*, which occurs something like 150 times in the New Testament, fully 40 times that it occurs, it is translated "husband." In other words, "husband" is a legitimate translation of the word depending on the context. When you look at the context, virtually every single time that it wasn't absolutely clear that the woman with the man in the context was his wife, it is almost always translated "husband" and "wife." So this (I Timothy 2:11ff) really is an unusual translation, given the pattern in the rest of the New Testament.”³¹

When you translate this text as husband and wife it reads:

“Let a wife quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a wife to teach or exercise authority over a husband, but to remain quiet. For it was Adam who was first created, *and* then Eve. And *it was* not Adam *who* was deceived, but the wife being quite deceived, fell into transgression. But *wives* shall be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.”

This we believe is a legitimate translation of the verse and coheres nicely with Paul’s other statements concerning husbands and wives and their relationship. It also coheres with other New Testament statements regarding husbands and wives (cf. I Cor. 14:35; Eph. 5:22-28; Col. 3:18-19; Titus 2:4-5; 1 Peter 3:1-7). The point of the passage then is that a wife should not be the teacher over the husband but rather, the wife in under the teaching authority of her husband who is, spiritually speaking, the head of the household. We believe this rendering fits better the larger context of the New Testament teaching.

In support of this rendering, there appears to be a progression in I Timothy 2 where verses 1-8 is one grouping and verses 9-15 is another. Paul begins in verse 1 by appealing for prayers for all people and in verse 2 he implores prayers for kings and all who are in authority. Verse 8 exhorts men to pray without wrath. The second grouping begins in verse 9 where Paul addresses women to be “sober minded” and dress “modestly.” The progression moves from all people, to kings and all who are in authority, to men, to women, and finally to the more foundational relationship of a man and woman—which is the marital relationship of husband and wife. Verse 11 then continues the progression to the wife in receiving instruction with proper attitudes, ending in verse 15 with the admonishment to continue in “faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.” (NASB) In the estimation of one New Testament commentator, “It is because of the mistranslation of these passages that the Christian world has had so much difficulty in understanding the proper position of a woman in the Christian Church.”³²

³¹ Gregg Koukl *Women Teach in Church?*, article at <http://www.str.org/free/commentaries/theology/wom-tch.htm>, p. 1.

³² Spiros Zodhiates, *The Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible*, p. 1599. While this rendering of I Timothy 2:11-15 is still under some debate we maintain it does shed light on a legitimate and reasonable way of understanding this text.

Complementarian Divide. As noted earlier, New Song Church contains both Traditionalists/ Complementarians and Biblical Equalitarians. Those who maintain women cannot teach men generally reside in the Traditionalist/Complementarian camp. However, even those who are Complementarians disagree over the application of I Timothy 2:11-15—among others.

Complementarian Dr. Robert Saucy, professor of Theology at Talbot Seminary, comments on a woman’s role in the ministry of the Word in a way that should make us reflect deeply on our church practice. He submits:

“The Pauline prohibition of women teaching or exercising authority over men must be understood in harmony with the Biblical picture of the significant ministry of women in the church, which includes the ministries of speaking in relation to the Word. While there is strong emphasis on these being directed toward other women, they also include participation in the gathered community with men...The complementary nature of man and woman may also indicate that the Church could be enriched by a greater participation of the woman’s voice in relation to the ministry of the Word...If the wife can at times lead family devotions even with her husband present (and we might add to his blessing and edification), is it not possible for women to have something of a corresponding ministry in the Church family? [Paul’s] prohibition must not be interpreted and implemented to the diminution of the Biblical picture of the significant ministry of women in the Church including the ministry of speaking the Word, a diminution that in my opinion is present in many churches today.”³³

In addition, complementarians Lucy Mabery-Foster, professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, and Jeram Barrs, of Covenant Seminary, “have no problem with women teaching men, even teaching theology at a seminary level.”³⁴ For some complementarians, “Acceptable female teaching does not involve ‘church discipline’ and is ‘subject to further authority of the elders.’”³⁵

With such disagreements even among the traditional/complementarian camp we offer our recommendations as a team with due humility. While those participants on this Research Team held various views to start, a unified conclusion was reached with gentleness and respect maintained throughout the discussion process. While there is still the possibility of disagreement within New Song over this issue, we maintain that it is not an *essential* of the faith. We have faith in the co-existence among those who disagree and echo the attitude, spirit and sensibility of St. Augustine affirming that in “Essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, but in all things charity.”

It is our hope that the reasons and conclusion offered in this paper will stimulate others into reading, writing, research and a careful, prayerful examination of the Scriptures as to their meaning and application. Despite the disagreements with others over certain Scriptures “the interpretive problems arise,” as one researcher observes, “not because of the Bible’s lack of clarity but because of human tendencies” whether due to the “inclination to color God’s word to fit our needs and desires”³⁶ or from our own limitations of knowledge and understanding. We affirm that Scripture is clear yet requires ongoing study for “All Scripture is God-breathed and is

³³ Saucy, *Women’s Prohibition to Teach Men*, pp. 96-97.

³⁴ Roland Cap Ehlke, *Christian Research Journal Volume 22 Number 4, A Woman’s Place: The Evangelical Debate over the Role of Women in the Church*, p. 19.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 20.

³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 20-21.

useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (II Timothy 3:16). What's more, we concur with the posture of St. Augustine when he stated, “In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, and in all things charity.”

We maintain that both men *and* women are to follow Paul’s charge to “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.” While both women *and* men may have faults, blind sides, and weaknesses (whether due to the creation or the fall) each as teachers are accountable ultimately to the One who has all authority—Jesus Christ—(Matt. 28:18) and secondarily, in the context of New Song Church, responsible to the governing elders of the church which are appointed by the congregation as representatives to our congregation. This, then, does not assuage fittingly gifted and trained men and women from preaching and teaching in the congregational setting.