

ROLES OF MEN AND WOMEN  
IN  
CONTEMPORARY CULTURE AND CHURCH:  
MODELS OF CHANGE COMPATIBLE  
WITH SCRIPTURE

MODELS OF CHANGE III

Friday, April 26

Kenneth Shrable, Ph.D.  
741 Beaver Court  
Discovery Bay, California 94514  
FAX/Phone: 510-634-2769  
e-mail: kshrable@inreach.com

Pepperdine University Bible Lectures  
April 24, 25, 26, 1996

Copyright © 1996  
by Kenneth Shrable

## LECTURE THREE

Friday, April 26, 1996

In this third lecture, we need to survey briefly the foundation which we have laid and pursue some additional issues in this complex topic concerning *models of change in the unchanging gospel*. We have been using the topic of change in male-female roles in church and society as a backdrop for pursuing this important aspect of Christianity. In the prior lectures, we have accepted the position that the plain teaching of the New Testament and the instruction of the Apostle Paul, in particular with regard to male-female roles, is in accord with the hierarchical model of the ancient world which is usually characterized as Patriarchal. In the Patriarchal model, the male is considered the head of the woman and the female is in a subordinate role.<sup>1</sup> There is widespread consensus that male headship and female submission in home and society was pervasive in the ancient world of the Biblical period. This model is characterized by cultural anthropologists as world-wide and history long.<sup>2</sup> It is not exclusive to the Judeo-Christian strand of human history. Since this seems to be a reasonable generalization, it is possible to ask what is the unique contribution of Christianity to the issue of male-female roles.

In order to pursue the Christian facet of social roles it is useful to look briefly at the historical context focusing particularly on the period just prior to the life of Jesus and the first century story of the church. This is a narrow focus but even with this limitation we must deal in generalities in order to cover this limited portion of history. In brief, scholars point to the prominence given by Jesus and Paul to an enhanced role for women in their respective ministries.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the heightened profile given to female participation by Jesus and Paul does not significantly disturb the Patriarchal model of male headship and female submission which characterized the ancient world before, during and after Jesus life.<sup>4</sup> Again, it must be noted that cultural anthropological studies indicate that this pattern is pervasive and not confined to the Judeo-Christian stream of human history.

### Cultural Anthropology and Male-Female Roles

Archival data of the cultural-anthropological studies of approximately two-thousand cultures now available to scholars in our universities documents the patriarchal nature of ancient societies.<sup>5</sup> One reading of the grounding for the Patriarchal model of social roles for men and women interprets it in terms of acculturation practices. Though there is overlap in what men and women do in various societies, a broad generalization seems to hold to the effect that at the extremes in role

assignments no society treats males and females alike. All societies use gender in task assignments. In general, the tasks males perform have tended to carry higher status. Men have characteristically been the leaders of the society. One interpretation of male leadership predominance is that it reflects the differential social conditioning experiences for males and females which cultures have followed down to relatively recent time. In the ancient cultural situation, the female was deeply involved in childbearing and child rearing tasks for much of what was often a short adult life. Consequently, women were restricted with regard to breadth of social experience in the culture. Males typically were accorded the wide social experience in the extended community and breadth of social experience is associated with leadership. Furthermore, males were engaged in the major cooperative community tasks, such as building ships and carrying on warfare. Moreover, ancient cultures, as is the case in modern communities, tended to associate prowess or skill in war with political leadership. These factors may account for the finding that in most cultures only men engaged in political activity. Women, on the other hand, were confined to more communally-limited, domestic activities of child care, food preparation, and providing clothing for the family. These tasks, of necessity, kept them near the home, allowed them to interrupt their activities and be readily available to the children.<sup>6</sup> The resultant role restriction is interpretable as having led to a self-perpetuating, self-fulfilling prophecy, namely that women, as a group, were inferior to males with regard to leadership in the public domain involving men. The perception was a simple pragmatic fulfillment of itself.

#### Social Roles in the Roman Empire

In Rome, before and during the New Testament era, it was generally considered shameful for women to speak out in public assemblies. They were to be subservient to males, and to communicate their wishes to and through their husbands.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, in the ancient pattern of social conditioning, the older men were the model for the role behavior of the younger men and the older women would teach the younger women in the acculturation process. This pattern reflects the pragmatic realities of the dissimilar social experience of males and females and the expertise which would result from this differential treatment accorded to men and women. At this juncture, we can recall that in the second lecture we set the background for the specific Pauline instruction on the role of women (1 Co 11:3-16; 1 Co 14:34-35; 1 Tm 2:11-15) by noting that social acculturation practices were such that it would have been inappropriate in the ancient world to utilize the older women to teach in the public domain involving men, either young or old. One interpretation noted above is that the pragmatics of the acculturation process, coupled with the concern over cultural "shame" and "status" or "honor" issues,

made it socially incorrect to utilize the female in public teaching roles.<sup>8</sup> Paul's instructions are simply in accord with the realities of the historical situation and reflect proper judgment with regard to the capabilities of ancient women as a group coupled with propriety in respect to the social submissiveness generally required of females in the Empire.<sup>9</sup>

It should be obvious that any racial, ethnic or gender group deprived of the relevant social experience would consequently prove to be inferior in public roles. Any group not permitted the appropriate education and training for such activities would be inappropriate and inadequate in such endeavors. Education and experience do not constitute the only causes for the role restriction of women. It would be necessary to consider other factors, such as the bias against females coupled with the "status" concerns which accrued to males in controlling the dominant roles in the culture.<sup>10</sup> In any case, ancient societies, as viewed by the cultural historian, confined the woman, frequently considered her the property of the male, and legitimated their practices with appeals to the ordering of the gods or with an appeal to the inferred inferior nature of the woman. It is important to repeatedly note that this was the historical context already in place before Jesus or Paul began their teaching. Just as Paul did not invent the patterns of parent-child relations in Rome, or the master-slave roles, neither did he invent the patterning of male headship and female submission which he found in place and which had been in place throughout the ancient world both Judeo-Christian and otherwise.

#### Slavery in the First Century Biblical World

The generally passive role of women in relation to male leadership was paralleled in the social models of "master-slave" and "parent-child." The authoritarian world of the Roman Empire, which provides the context for the beginning of Christianity, was with few exceptions consistently Patriarchal. This way of ordering human social roles would probably have seemed "natural" or, at least, the way things had to be short of a revolution. It is usually unthinkable to moderns to find that slavery, as a social institution, was not viewed as a clear evil even by those who participated in it. This seems evident in the fact that the slaves who became "freedmen" seemed to consider it of major importance to obtain slaves for themselves.<sup>11</sup> They apparently thought of slavery as unfortunate, if you were the one filling the role, but not evil, if you happened to be the master. Slavery seemed to fall into the category of "fate" rather than that of a moral evil that must be stamped out. This should give us a clue as to how this authoritarian world of Roman times would view the power of the parent over the child or of the man over the woman.

## The Unique Essence of the Christian Gospel

In pursuing the "additive" factor of Christianity, we are forced back to our prior lecture which dealt with the issue of the UNCHANGING SUBSTANCE of the gospel versus the CHANGING FORMS of the expression of our DISCIPLESHIP. It is necessary to understand the essence or core of the Christian message in order to appreciate what it contributes to the dialogue over male-female roles today.

It has been argued that the primary uniqueness of Christianity is not found in its ethical and moral positions. Much of the ethics and moral teaching of Christianity can be found in pre-existing philosophical and religious traditions.<sup>12</sup> The uniqueness of Christianity as seen by Paul is God's self-disclosure in Jesus. The statement in the Hebrew letter with respect to the fact that God has now spoken to us in his Son (Heb. 1:2) is in conformity with Paul's conceptualization of our experience of faith. Christianity is not viewed as a new Sinaitic Covenant based on law (Rom. 3:21-26). The good news or gospel is the lived and living story of Jesus, his life, his death and his resurrection for our redemption (1 Co. 15:1-8). Jesus has imaged God to us in that he is the living word and in him we see exemplified the two great commandments on which all the law and the prophets are grounded. *In him is seen the life given over to God and thus the fulfillment of the first great commandment.* He came not to do his own will but the will of God who sent him into the world. In the garden on the night before the cross he prays "not my will but thine be done" (Mat. 26:39). He is obedient unto death, even death on a cross (Ph. 2:8). *His is a life given "for others" and thus the living of the second great command of neighbor love.* The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for others (Mk. 10:45). This living Word is what Paul can call the good news (1 Co 15:1-8). This is the SUBSTANCE and essence of the UNCHANGING gospel. *This story is to be proclaimed to all subsequent history. This is the once-for-all event of God's self-disclosure in his Son.* Jesus calls us to make his story our story. *We are invited into the story with the words, "deny self, take up your cross and follow me" (Mt. 16:24).* Just as the young infant adopted into an earthly family will take up the story of his/her new family and live it rather than the story of the biological parent, so we are adopted into the family of God and make the Jesus' story our story.

Paul sees the calling into the story of Jesus life, death and resurrection as the UNCHANGING SUBSTANCE of the gospel and the MASTER MOTIVE and controlling vision of our earthly life. Everything in our historical existence is secondary to this "primary" and "ultimate"

vision. He can say of himself that whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, **“that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead”** (Phil. 3:7-11). To know Jesus, His life for others, His death and to participate in His resurrection, is the Central Vision, the Ultimate fact of earthly life. This is the unchanging substance and once-for-all gospel.

### Discipleship and the Continuing Story of Jesus

Our call to participate in Jesus and to make his story our story *involves living our story in all its uniqueness and historical particularity*. At the same time that we speak of the Unchanging Substance of the master story *we must live out the Changing Form of our Discipleship in our historical time*. The changing form of our discipleship, through which we express the unchanging gospel, permits the first century Roman disciple to fill the role of a "master" or the role of a "slave." This "form" of our discipleship can change rapidly as indicated in Paul's letter to the Corinthians (1 Co 7:21) where it is contemplated that one who is a slave might gain freedom from the master and fill the role of "freedman." *It is very important to take note that Paul is working within the historical-cultural roles which were in place in Roman society to teach us about the changing forms of our discipleship*. In fact, he will use not only the social roles of male-female, husband-wife, but also that of master-slave to mirror and illustrate our relation to our Lord. We are the slaves of Christ, Paul asserts. This will be the case even if we obtain our freedom as a slave from the earthly master and then become the "freedman" of the Lord.

### Paul's Use of Roman Social Roles

The use of the analogy of master-slave for our relation to Christ is an important illustration of how *Paul adapts the concepts and institutional roles of his culture*. The role of the slave to an earthly master is to be filled "as to the Lord" and not just to please man (Col. 3:22-24). On the other hand, the master is reminded to fill the role of an earthly master "as to the Lord" (Col. 4:1). The master who owns a slave is reminded that he is himself a slave of Christ when the roles are viewed from a transcendent perspective. It is critical to take note of the fact that we do not consider Paul's use of this comparison or analogy of the relation of master-slave to

illustrate our relation to Christ as thereby binding the actual social roles of masters and slaves as part of the gospel. *It would be a major error to bind the cultural roles of master-slave as part of the Unchanging Substance of the Gospel.* This cultural institution will, in time, become illegal. However, this transitory historical relationship can be used to illustrate our relation to Christ without thereby being made sacred or part of the "master story" of Christ. *Paul is showing that there are certain social roles which he will "work with" or refocus the spirit in which they are filled so as to bring them under the "redeeming" power of Christ when they are carried out "as to the Lord".* We readily accept that when these Roman cultural roles are changed by democratic governments, which not only abolish them but declare such roles illegal, the Unchanging Gospel has not been violated even though the expression of the Forms of our Discipleship will have changed dramatically. Paul can "relativize" the gospel to these transitory cultural forms of our discipleship. *We recognize that these transitory roles, though used by Paul, are merely accidents of the particularity of history.* We understand that we are not to "absolutize" these social roles by fusing them with the once-for-all gospel. This is a clear instance in which the Form of our Discipleship changes dramatically without violating the Unchanging Substance of the gospel.

In the foregoing, we have seen how that we must "discern" the difference between the "Unchanging Substance of the Gospel" and the "Changing Forms of the expression of our Discipleship." Since *this foundational principle is critical to our consideration of male-female roles*, it seems necessary to explore this matter in detail. *We are contending that the social roles of the Roman world are not necessarily part of the once-for-all gospel.* We will include the particular forms of various social roles including parent-child, male-female, husband-wife while utilizing the model or pattern of analysis we have worked out previously for the master-slave relations. *We are proposing that Paul will work with these social roles when he considers it possible to redeem them in Christ without binding the particular forms of these roles as part of the unchanging gospel.* These cultural, historical roles can allow us to reenact the pattern of the messiah in our story. However, the particular historical constitution of these roles may change or even disappear without affecting the gospel. We will simply enact our discipleship in social roles developed in our historical setting.

#### Social Roles Rejected by Paul

*It should be noted that Paul is equally clear that there are cultural roles or aspects of human society which are not redeemable.* These things he calls the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21) and the mind of the flesh (Rom. 8:7). No attempt is made to bring these under the Lordship of

Christ. They are simply unacceptable, rejected and condemned as not suitable to be named as becoming those who follow the master image of Jesus (Eph. 5:3).

### Culture and Gospel

Some believers are confused by the notion of culture and associate it as "sinful" without making the distinction which Paul illustrates for us in the foregoing argument. *Culture and gospel are not contraries.* In fact, culture includes essentially every aspect of human life above the biological level.<sup>13</sup> Human language is the most prominent aspect of culture and, of course, is the means of conveying the gospel. It is not a matter of culture or gospel but rather a problem of "discerning" which aspects of culture can be redeemed and which cannot.

### Unchanging Substance Versus Changing Form

It is the discernment of the difference between the Substance of the Unchanging Gospel and the Changing Forms of our Discipleship which enables us to know the "ultimate" vision and the secondary matters which belong to the particularities of our historical life. *This is foundational to developing criteria for discerning the will of God* and our means of approving what is excellent (Phil. 1:9-11).

It is essential that we keep separate the Unchanging Substance of the gospel and the Changing Form of Discipleship, since *Paul "works with" certain cultural forms that are clearly unacceptable for our discipleship today.* The particular constitution of *some social roles were considered by Paul as acceptable forms of discipleship in the first century Roman world which are clearly unthinkable as acceptable forms of our discipleship today in a modern, Western democracy.* We have already detailed one of these "acceptable" first century forms in the master-slave roles of Roman times.<sup>14</sup> This is clearly not acceptable to us and would be considered illegal by all and immoral by most Christians.

### Changing Cultural Forms

Because of the enlightenment which Christ has brought into the world, the concept of one person owning another as a piece of property is not morally acceptable to most Christians any longer. Paul can "work with" these difficult social institutions by enabling those who filled them to see that these burdensome *roles are not "ultimate" in our life.* Our knowing Jesus and being conformed to his image transcends the earthly, transitory social situations. He can call us to realize that *the transitory earthly roles, even that of marriage, even that of owning or not owning*



*property, even that of being a master or being a slave, all of these are transitory, secondary things (1 Co 7:29-31).* Similarly, I think Paul would consider the particular historical constitution of male-female roles, whether in a patriarchal model as in first century Corinth or in twentieth century Iran, or even egalitarian roles as in some Western democracies, as not "ultimate" but "transient" and "secondary" to our master vision of life. We are to order our life in light of the "ultimate" goal of being conformed to the image of Christ and looking toward the participation in his resurrection life. This is not to be read as support for maintaining the patriarchal model, since we are contending that both egalitarian and patriarchal models are not "ultimate." Just as Paul can argue that the kingdom of God is not what one eats or what one drinks but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17), so likewise, *we contend that the kingdom is not constituted by the forms of male-female roles even that of patriarchy.* These are matters of "indifference" with respect to the "ultimate" goal of life in Christ and, as such, should be matters of our freedom in Christ to be wrought out in "mutuality."

### The Changing Form of Parenthood

Let us consider another area of contemporary discipleship which illustrates the Changing Forms which it can take while retaining faithfulness to the Unchanging Substance. A first century Roman Christian father would be well within his cultural role to follow the practice of giving his twelve-year old female child in marriage to a male ten, twenty or even thirty years her senior. *This would not have been considered a legal, social or moral issue in first century Rome as this was the normal age for the father to do so.*<sup>15</sup> Paul's admonition that children are to obey their parents in the Lord (Eph. 6:1-2) would include the command to the twelve year old female child in the Christian home to obey her father's troth. *We, in the United States today, simply could not do such a thing in the way it was practiced in Paul's day.* I trust that it is not necessary to invoke the public response to such an event, if attempted, to say that such a thing is "unthinkable." However, along with the same Roman patriarch's control over his slaves, went this patriarch's right as a father to accept a dowry and marry his twelve-year old female child to an adult male ten, twenty or thirty years her senior and, even in the Christian household, appeal to her requirement to obey her parent in this matter. *An unthinkable event now, but acceptable then.*

### Social Roles as Historically Conditioned

Parenthood is a clear instance of the changing form of our discipleship. Paul uses and "works with" the social structures of the world in which he proclaimed the gospel. He redeems those structures which he

considers redeemable. Nevertheless, *we are not to conclude that he thereby binds these social structures from the first century Roman world as part of the Unchanging Substance of the gospel.* This is the case whether we are dealing with master-slave or child-parent social structures. *These social roles and the "form" of their fulfillment are clearly "accidents" of history, some of which Paul can "work with" and some he cannot.* For instance, as examples of the works of the flesh, the Roman world accepted the social roles involved in prostitution and homosexuality even to the point of using them as sources of revenue through taxation laws.<sup>16</sup> Paul rejects and condemns these social structures (Romans 1:24-32; 1 Co. 6:12-20; Gal. 5:19).

The changing form of our discipleship expressed in relational pairs such as master-slave, parent-child can be extended to the political area in that of the relation of the citizen to government. Here again it is necessary for us to realize that the Changing Form of the Expression of Discipleship from the first to the twentieth century will be evident. In Romans 13:1-14 and in 1 Peter 2:11-17, believers are enjoined to obey governing authorities. These instructions include specifically the command to obey and honor the emperor. The historical period in question would include the reign of Nero. The Roman Empire was essentially a dictatorship, and for the common people who comprised the early church, there was no vehicle for direct influence on the Roman administration. Obedience in the first century meant a passive acceptance of these institutional forms. To honor the emperor meant payment of taxes, observance of laws, and refraining from opposition by acts or by speech to the constituted authorities. We simply do not express our discipleship in the same fashion as this instruction would have required of a first century believer. *In a modern participatory democracy, as a citizen I am an active participant in the governing process.* I am to actively concern myself with critiquing and changing the authorities, whether governor, legislator or even president. I not only critique their behavior but I actively seek to persuade others to oppose certain governing acts and individuals. I purposefully seek to remove by persuasion and ballot those individuals involved in the governing process. In many respects, *such acts that I as a disciple of Christ can engage in today, would have been considered not only "disobedience" to constituted authority but treasonable and revolutionary behaviors in Roman times.* Our view of law can reach back to Romans 13:1-14 and first Peter 2:11-17 for the principle of "order" as God's will and the ensuring of the rights of community provided through government as an exemplification of neighbor love. However, the direct participation and the active involvement in both the establishment of order and community rights involves a dramatic difference in the way Christian discipleship will be exercised in the relationship of citizen to government today versus the first century. The shift in the governing process from

"authoritarianism" to the progressive enfranchisement of the common man changes the emphasis from "passive" acceptance of authority to that of "active" involvement and "personal responsibility" for governance of ourselves. *Once more, we simply do not obey these instructions in the same way as they would have been discharged in apostolic times.* Here again we would insist that the changes in the form of our discipleship do not threaten the substance of the unchanging story of Jesus. However, it should be evident that *we must not bind the "authoritarian" forms of the first century and the kind of obedience required to those forms in this period on contemporary disciples.* Some of the relational pairs of the first century, such as master-slave, male-female, husband-wife, parent-child, and citizen-emperor, will have counterparts in our particular history. The *general principle* that God is the God of order and that communal order requires constituted authority can be invoked as an aspect of the second great command of neighbor love. But the *specific form* of discharging these principles is vastly different in the twentieth century from that of the first century. The form of our discipleship in the instances where these roles still occur will be "changed" and will express the image of Christ in us in our time. This involves us in the process of "discernment" (Phil. 1:9-11). It also requires us to expect and express "change" in the form of our discipleship.

#### The Historical Form of Male-Female Roles

Now, with this background in mind, let us turn directly to male-female roles. Here again we find that *Paul is using structures which have been in place for centuries in the world in which he proclaims the Christian story.* In our prior lecture we cited the historical material showing that before Jesus came and even in historical situations outside the Judeo-Christian stream of history, the understanding was that males were in the super ordinate roles and females in subordinate roles in society. We noted that just because Aristotle, over three-hundred years before Christ, taught that the male was the head of the woman as the master was the slave, that females were inferior in judgment to males, were thereby to submit to male leadership and were to confine themselves to domestic roles<sup>17</sup> *we do not thereby accredit this teaching and understanding to "revelation" from the living God.* The source of Aristotle's teaching is "historical information" and not divine revelation.<sup>18</sup> Paul picks up this social context to instruct the Greek church in Corinth that would have been imbued with the ancient notion that "the head of the woman is the man" (1 Co 11:3) by emphasizing that they were to remember also that "the head of every man is Christ" (1 Co 11:3). *The Greeks knew well from Aristotle and their history that the man was the head of the woman in their culture.* Is it proper for us to fuse the ancient notion that "man is the head of woman", an idea which the Greek world accepted from their history, with

the gospel of Christ? I am convinced that this cannot be done without severely distorting the gospel and tending to lead us into “idolatry” by our “ultimizing” and “absolutizing” the very transitory roles that Paul “relativizes” and treats as part of the Changing Forms of our Discipleship.<sup>19</sup>

When Paul writes to another Greek city, namely Ephesus, and uses *the analogy that the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church* (Eph 5:23), are we to bind this social relationship of the headship of the male as part of the Unchanging Substance of the Gospel?. If we bind this analogy of the husband and wife because Paul used it to illustrate the relation of Christ and the church, *then how do we avoid binding the master-slave analogy, since Paul uses it repeatedly to illustrate our relation to Christ?* We have already seen the difficulties this raises about binding the forms derived from the Roman roles of parent-child, and citizen-emperor on Christians today. Similarly, here in the husband-wife analogy, *headship is culturally based in the ancient world even outside the Judeo-Christian stream of history.* We are contending that just as Paul makes use of the master-slave headship to illustrate our relation to Christ, and yet Christian *scholars do not infer that this “analogy” commits us to binding master-slave roles to the Unchanging Gospel,* so likewise, the use of the analogy of the Roman husband’s headship of the wife to illustrate the relation of Christ and the church would not commit us to binding the particular forms of first century marriage roles from the ancient patriarchal world as part of the Unchanging Gospel. *Paul is using the particular historical form of these roles then in effect as an illustration in his teaching the Ephesian church about our relation to Christ. He is not thereby “absolutizing” these ancient forms. It is our contention that patriarchal forms of discipleship can be replaced by egalitarian forms without disturbing the Unchanging Substance of the gospel.* The implications derived from the image of Jesus, the Christian master story, for marriage relations are not bonded to the cultural forms of these roles. The unchanging substance of the gospel will speak to the aspect of neighbor love in all our human relations and in the varied forms of the particularity of human history.

#### Male-Female Roles and the Creation Narrative

The issue can be raised as to the Biblical basis of the patriarchal form. *One contention is that hierarchical-patriarchal male-female relations are bound upon the believer from the creation narrative and are thereby “assumed” to be unchangeable.* This is one response to the argument of the present paper which is assuming a cultural grounding of the patriarchal-hierarchical ordering of the roles of men and women. It is contended by those who oppose this view that culture is irrelevant to the

whole argument in that the patriarchal form is bound by unchangeable ordinances from scripture and creation. This is apparently the stance which the Roman Catholic Church has recently taken in the Papal declaration that male headship and female submission is the infallible teaching of scripture and thereby unchangeable. Consequently, women will not serve in the role of priest in the Roman Catholic Church.

The appeal to the creation narrative by the Biblical authors and, in particular, by the writers of the New Testament documents, is a topic that is in need of a major, scholarly treatment. This type of investigation needs to be other than the citation of scripture in a proof text fashion. Exploration is required of the "intertextual" use of the creation account throughout scripture. The use of the creation story permeates both the first and second testaments. It is an aspect of the larger problem of how scripture writing reflects a cumulative process and earlier texts become part of later ones. At this point, we will confine our attention to some of the problems associated with using the creation account to contend for the unchangeable nature of scripture models of behavior. Only a cursory examination of a few examples is possible in this presentation. Our prior discussion, in lecture two, of the distinction between "brute facts" and "social facts" is considered relevant to this subject. It would be readily conceded that some aspects of creation itself are unchangeable. For example, the biological differentiation of males and females is a "brute fact" of our existence as human beings and unchangeable. Males and females differ anatomically and physiologically from creation. However, *the argument about male-female roles is about "social structures" rather than "biological structures."*

Upon inspection, it can be shown that *the New Testament references to the creation narrative* for teaching purposes do not seem to be using this story as buttressing a "brute fact" level for human behavior but rather *recognizes and incorporates the "social fact" level of teaching.* For instance, Jesus appealed to the creation narrative in responding to the question put to him concerning marriage and divorce (Mark 19:2-12; Matthew 19:3-12). What is of interest for the present paper is the fact that Jesus states the clear intent of marriage as being one-man and one-woman joined by God for life. This uniting of the male and female is recognized as a "social fact or covenant". It is not a brute fact like the "biological" level of the joining of Siamese twins. As we have already noted in the previous lecture, "social facts" depend upon "agreement." Jesus recognizes the "joining" of the man and the woman as an agreement which can be broken. Moses, as a prophet of God, had made a socially based concession of divorce because of the cultural condition labeled "hardness of heart." Jesus is clear that this "violation" of the agreement or covenant was not the purpose or plan of God for the marital union. However, he proceeds to

recognize the “social fact” nature of marriage in his statement that the social behavior of an act of “sexual infidelity” will break the bond of marriage. Marriage, for both Moses and Jesus, is one of the “personal commitment” structures cited by Bruce Malina<sup>20</sup> as those which fall within the sphere of control by the “redeemed will” of the believer. *The appeal to the creation narrative as a paradigm for marriage is just that, an “appeal” to make personal commitments that are to be considered trustworthy and life-long.* This form of appeal to the creation story lends no credence to the notion of some “unchangeable” ordinance as inviolable as the “brute facts” of biological differentiation. It is interpretable as an appeal to social facts which represent agreements and which can be violated by change in the agreement by one of the parties.

Paul carries forward the notion of marriage as a “social fact.” In the seventh chapter of first Corinthians, Paul shows clearly his awareness of Jesus’ teaching on marriage (I Cor. 7:12-16). At the same time, Paul proceeds to allow the “social fact” of a violated agreement by desertion on the part of the unbelieving spouse to be grounds for declaring the believer free with respect to the marriage union. If the unbeliever departs, let him/her depart, says the apostle, the believer is not bound for God has called us to peace. The fact that Jesus or Paul cite the creation narrative does not mean that the marriage union is an unchangeable ordinance. Both Jesus and Paul view the marriage union in “social fact” terms.

One of the puzzling usages of the appeal to the creation account is Paul’s citation of it in one of the arguments used in support of his directive that women in Corinth should wear a headcovering when praying or prophesying as a sign of respect for men. This seems clearly to be a “custom” that carries a certain meaning for this particular time and place in history. The appeal to the creation story is coupled with an argument from “nature,” from tradition and “on account of the angels” (I Cor. 11:10; see esp. vv. 7-12).<sup>21</sup> If an appeal to the creation narrative was sufficient to establish a fact as once-for-all and unchanging, why does Paul use it as only one of his four arguments to sustain his enjoining women to wear a headcovering. *It seems evident that Paul views the appeal to creation as only one of a number of “persuasive” ideas for requesting conformity to social custom in order not to cause offense (1 Cor. 10:31-11:1).*<sup>22</sup> What is even more troubling for those who would try to use an appeal to creation as a final, once-for-all argument is to find it used here in dealing with a situation or a practice that most scholars concede to be a purely cultural matter and which few today find any need to defend as an abiding principle for women to follow.

*The most striking example of the “transitory” rather than “unchanging” aspect of matters buttressed by appeal to the creation*

*narrative is the Sabbath command.* In the creation account in Genesis 2:1-3, it is stated that God finished the creation work in six days and rested on the seventh. God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of the creation. The Sabbath is the clearest of all so-called "creation ordinances." The very language from the creation account is picked up generations later when the Mosaic covenant is given and the Sabbath is included in the Decalogue (Exodus 20:8). Furthermore, the Sabbath is declared a perpetual or everlasting covenant (Exodus 31:16) and the Gentiles are included (Isaiah 56:6). *Here is an ordinance directly out of the creation narrative which is commanded and left as an example by none other than the creator. Yet this ordinance is treated as a "social fact" which will be set aside.* Jesus states that this central creation ordinance takes second place to human need in his allowing his disciples to assuage their hunger on the Sabbath and by his declaring that "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27). The early church, perhaps everywhere outside the land of Judea, dropped the Sabbath observance though there is no recorded express command to do so. Paul considers the Sabbath as a mere shadow with the substance belonging to Christ (Col. 2:16), and can declare "all days alike" (Rom. 14:5). *What is striking here is the fact that the Sabbath ordinance is one of the clearest instances of a doctrine which was grounded in the creation account and yet it is not regarded as something "unchangeable." In fact, it appears to have been changed in response to a "social fact," namely the "universalizing of the gospel" to all cultures, which called for dropping a Sabbath ordinance more readily applicable in a religiously constituted nation-state, such as Israel.*<sup>23</sup> This handling of the Sabbath creation ordinance should cause us to realize that in the "new creation," the believer is operating within the framework of the redemption in Christ. Appeals to the creation narrative or to the fall will be conditioned by the fact that all things are new in Christ.

The creation narrative provides important concepts for scripture teaching in both covenants. It becomes a primal illustration of the "two creations," as in Paul's thinking about Christ as the second Adam (Romans 5:12-21; I Corinthians 15:20-49). It is interesting to note that the first creation and its consequent narrative seems shadowed by sin, the fall, and death. Appeals to the first creation are often by way of contrast with the blessings of the second creation. The new creation is associated with redemption, the Spirit and with life. In broad brush fashion, appeal to the original creation seems overshadowed by the appeal to the new creation in Christ. Rather than appeal to the "fixity" of the first creation, it would seem that scripture focuses on the great "changes" that are possible in the second creation in Jesus as Lord. *From this, we would infer that the possibilities and potentialities of men and women should be derived from their participation in the new creation rather than a look backward to the*

*original creation which was corrupted by the fall.* In particular, the call for the submission of women to men based on Genesis 3:16 and the account of the fall seems particularly suspect in light of the work of Christ and his redemption. At any rate, the above instances demonstrate that *citation of the creation account does not allow the inference that we are dealing with an "unchangeable" doctrine*, even in instances where the implications of the creation narrative are considered transparent, which will seldom be the case. The creation account does not appear to offer some "final" criterion for our exegetical work. It seems more realistically to be one more bit of data to be fitted into the redemptive work of Christ.

### Freedom in Christ in the Modern World

*Contemporary culture allows our discipleship to be expressed with more freedom with respect to our male-female roles than was possible in ancient cultures.* With regard to marriage, Paul challenged men and women to ask first whether they have the gift of remaining unmarried (I Co. 7:1, 7, 17, 27, 32-35, 40). He considers this a gift (as did Jesus, Matt. 19:10-12) to allow one complete freedom to give "undivided devotion to the Lord" (I Co. 7:35). This seems in line with the "master motive of life" to be conformed to the image of Jesus (Phil. 3:2-16). Today's Christian woman or man is free to choose singlehood. It is clear that the "master motive," which is a call to make Jesus' story our story, will not consider the contemporary practice of cohabitation outside the bond of marriage as an option for those committed to Christ (I Co. 6:12-20).

Marriage is the common option for men and women in our society. Here again, the modern Christian man and woman has a choice not available to the first century couple, namely to choose not to have children due to the development of scientific means of birth control. In her historical study of the first four centuries of Christianity, Elaine Pagels has pointed out that the major path to freedom for the underclass in Rome was the election not to have a family, which generally meant not to marry. In the economic situation of the ancient world, choosing to marry and have a family meant acceptance of essentially total limitation on one's freedom of movement.

Couples today can marry, choose to remain childless, and then decide the kind of commitment for a career. At the university level, I saw new options emerging in that the woman would be the partner with the primary career. In instances where the woman has attained the Doctorate degree and accepted a university post, the husband will sometimes pursue the secondary career path. This is a new direction in our society where the tradition has been that the husband's career is automatically the primary one.



If the modern Christian couple chooses to have children, then the choices become more complex. Modern couples may actually achieve a "mutuality" in such matters and make decisions as to who will pursue the "primary career" and which partner will follow a "secondary career path." Normally, the woman will choose to be the primary child care partner even in the case of a couple who both have professional level training. Dual careers, equally pursued by both partners, when there are small children in the home often create problems for the couple. Contemporary studies demonstrate that modern couples are often dealing quite openly with the tension and issues involved.<sup>24</sup> As the "working mother" becomes more of the norm in our society, couples have gained awareness of the problems involved in giving adequate attention to the nurture of young children and of the fact that the demands of modern technocracy are so great that career interruption during childbearing years will normally extract a price of lowered expectations for the person who chooses either to interrupt the career or, when the opportunity is there, to drop to a part-time status.

This variety of choices and the need to think through our values in relation to the "ultimate goal of life" and the "master motive" of our life in Christ should be the focus of our concern in living as brothers and sisters in God's family. The church can be helpful, if it provides an understanding place for working through such tough questions facing believing families. Certainly, we need to shift the focus of the couple's attention away from the competitive struggle over "control" that has sometimes characterized male-female relations to that of enabling one another to live "as to the Lord."

We are not willing to decide for couples the patterning of their marital relationship. In mutuality, a couple may choose any of the models above. For example, they may choose to follow a traditional pattern of the past whereby, when children are present in the home, the husband's career is primary and the family pattern is one that has been conventional for a long time in our society. The master motive of living in faithfulness to Christ and the call to image His life in the world and in the family will be the solid ground for mutual decision making in these matters. In such an atmosphere, patriarchalism or egalitarianism will not be the central concern. Rather, in mutuality the concern will be on successful family living under the guidance of the Spirit of God.

### Mutuality in Christian Relationships

Colleen Benson<sup>25</sup> cites a trend for younger Christian families to move in the direction of "mutuality" and the issues of hierarchy, patriarchy and egalitarianism are not the major concerns. At this point we are recognizing that concerns to establish "egalitarianism" can sometimes focus

family life back upon “power” and “control” issues. Mutuality is here used in the sense of respect for each other that allows one spouse to step forward and the other to step back when the situation seems best handled in this fashion. There is no presumption that the one who yields to the leadership of the other in a particular instance is “set” in this position but rather, in recognition of differential talents, a complete reversal of the leading role in a new situation will not prove upsetting to the relationship. This kind of “serving one another” seems both functionally effective and in keeping with the Spirit of Christ (Matt. 20:25-28; I Cor. 12:12-27; Gal. 5:13-14; 6:2; Eph. 5:21). Such mutuality allows for the differential knowledge and gifts of the couple to be used without the interference of “competitive” concerns over headship-submission issues.

As we noted in lecture one, mutuality is a concept characteristic of Christian counseling with couples, especially as noted in the model by David Augsburger.<sup>26</sup> Interestingly, one could argue that the principle of mutuality allows for the proper utilization of individual gifts of the man and the woman, in keeping with what Paul calls for in first Corinthians chapter twelve, where he recognizes both the individuality and the mutuality of gifts among the members of the body of Christ. On the other hand, when we invoke the notion of observing the “hierarchical” headship of the male as some ultimate good, unchangeable from creation, this stance would seem to disregard the actual talents of the real individuals involved. To say the least, the hierarchical model seems grossly dysfunctional in contemporary life where females often have equal and sometimes greater education, training and expertise than males. Some hierarchicalists concede that women can exercise their gift of leadership in the workplace, even when that would involve teaching and directing men, but, it is contended, that they must not do so in the church and presumably in the Christian home.<sup>27</sup> This argument involves a “monastic” view of Christianity which would privatize our religious life. This is the move that secular humanists would like Christianity to make. Religion then becomes a matter of private taste exercised outside the public domain. Paul does not seem to recognize such a distinction from church to workplace in his instructions to slaves which included those who had unbelieving masters (I Tim. 6:1-2; Col. 3:22-25). *This viewpoint would require us to become a sort of “ghetto” distinguished from the larger society by our views on male-female role behaviors.* It also seems to validate the dysfunctionality noted above when we exclude the woman in the family or in the church from exercising “admitted” leadership talent.

The concept of “mutuality” allows us to refocus the issue of male-female roles away from the economic, political, legal and social concerns involved in the “competitive” views of “patriarchy” or male headship and female submission and also away from the “competitive” struggle over

"egalitarianism". We would restrict the Christian's interest in "egalitarianism" to the concern with "justice" in the public domain (Gal. 6:10). As Christians, we are concerned with "equity" (II Cor. 8:13-15) but we will have to exercise discernment on these tough social issues. We must avoid being caught up in the secular political status concerns that are characteristic of the struggle for equity in the larger society from the ultra-right to the ultra-left with its call for white power, black power, Hispanic power and feminist power. Christians will not necessarily be popular in this regard as they will not identify "justice" with secular forms of "egalitarianism." At the same time, we must not "retreat" from working for "justice" in the public domain just because there are "excesses" in each of these movements. There were no doubt many abolitionists in the United States in the era preceding the Civil War who were motivated primarily by concerns over "political power" and status rather than the humanitarian interest in freeing the slaves. Again, such excesses by individuals or even entire groups does not relieve the Christian of the responsibility of speaking out and acting on issues of human justice. We are convinced that the Scripture teaches mutuality for the body of Christ rather than forms of domination. However, mutuality in Christ will be the norm only for those who have committed themselves to the "master motive" of "knowing Jesus, being conformed in his image, and desiring to participate in his resurrection life"(Phil. 3:2-21). In a real sense, I am convinced that we believers must settle for "justice" as the highest good for the public domain, whereas Christians can be called to the higher principle of "mutuality".

### Social Roles are Influenced by the Gospel

When we look again at the New Testament view of our social roles, we can identify emphases latent in the text which would bring about radical change in the culture with the gradual leaven of the gospel of Christ having its influence on the public domain. The letter of Philemon demonstrates how the Spirit of Christ invading the Roman political roles of master and slave would set in motion influences that set the stage for the abolition of these roles in society. Mutuality in Christ became the basis for regarding master and slave as brothers and sisters in the Lord. Elaine Pagels<sup>28</sup> traces this "leavening" influence to the early church in its interpretation of the creation account as emphasizing that every person is created in the image of God. She sees this as the foundation for what would be realized centuries later, namely the Western ideas of freedom and of the infinite value of each human life.

### Social Roles as Independent yet Changed by the Gospel

When we look at the processing of the role structures of the ancient world by the *apostolic writers*, they *make a distinction between a cultural*

*role as it is expressed in the unredeemed society and that same role when enacted within the redeemed society.* The human social roles of the Roman Empire are not constituted by the apostles. *These roles represent "givens" which they will "reject" outright, as in the case of prostitution whether male or female, or ones which they will leave intact, as in master-slave.* They then proceed to direct how we are to behave in these intact cultural roles as believers. What we wish to emphasize is the fact that these social roles, such as master-slave, *remain clearly distinct from Christianity.* These roles are not brought into the church and set up as forms to be maintained as would be the case of the role of apostle, evangelist or prophet. *These roles remain part of the world of Rome.* What Paul calls for is a special behavior or attitude in the fulfillment of these cultural roles. For instance with regard to the Roman roles of master and slave, Paul gives instructions to both Philemon, the master, and Onesimus, the slave, to behave toward each other within their cultural roles, namely as master and slave, yet, to do so in the Spirit of Christ. They bring into play the "mutuality" of family and treat each other as brothers. *Again, the Roman cultural roles remain in place, and also remain outside the structure of the body of Christ,* but the exercise of these roles in the world is now brought under the Spirit of the Lord. These cultural roles can drop away, disappear or even be declared illegal by the larger society without affecting the unchanging gospel. *This is a critical distinction.*

#### The New Enactment of Social Roles in Christ

*When we turn to male-female roles, we see a similar transformation.* Paul takes up the issue of the relationship of husband-wife in first century gentile city of Ephesus (Eph. 5:21-33). He "works with" the "given," namely that in Greek and Roman culture "the man is the head of the woman." This was the social fact of Paul's world and would have been true even outside the Judeo-Christian stream of history. *Paul leaves the particular historical forms of the husband-wife social roles intact in the culture at Ephesus. We are contending also that he leaves the "actual form" of the role "outside" of the body of Christ and "works with" it to change certain behaviors on the part of believers filling the cultural role just as he does for master-slave roles.* Paul calls for a behavior and attitude change on the part of the Roman or Greek husband. This type of change will not disturb the political, legal world of Rome and turn Christianity into a revolutionary movement, but it can change the personal commitment behavior within the Christian marriage. Paul takes note that the cultural headship role of the male in the marriage is to be a specific way in which the man patterns his life in the "imitation of the messiah." He explicitly states that the husband is the head of the wife "as Christ is the head of the church." The word "as" cues us to ask about the similarities

and differences involved in the *comparison*. Interestingly, the change called for is a shift away from authority and control in the relationship to one of "self-giving" and "mutuality." Obviously, there are marked differences in the relationship of Christ to the church and that of the husband to the wife. For example, the *husband is not the savior* of the woman as Christ is the church (Eph. 5:23). Neither is the husband the *spiritual authority* (Matt. 28:18), or the *mediator* (I Tim. 2:5) between the wife and her Lord. Furthermore, the headship offered the man is not to be construed as releasing him from "mutuality" (Eph. 5:33). This can be seen readily by reviewing the apostle's teaching in first Corinthians chapter seven with regard to his extended treatment on mutuality between husband and wife. The headship depicted for the husband is a "self-giving" in the imitation of Christ's offering of himself for the church. Roman cultural issues of "authority" and "control" are overshadowed as "mutuality" moves to the fore.

The cultural roles of husband and wife, as defined in the society at large, are part of the "power structures" involving economic, inheritance concerns, political and social privileges in the empire. *Paul has no control over these legal and political matters. They will remain, but he calls for change in the personal commitment structures of marriage and sets these in place by calling on the husband to exercise his "culturally given" headship in the imitation of Christ.* This "imitation of Christ" in relation to the church is focused on the "self-giving" service of Jesus in the cross. This is opposite to the emphasis in Roman culture with its authoritarian structures. However, the manner in which the larger society defines *the marriage roles can change in history from patriarchal-authoritarian to egalitarian patterns.* Such a change is now underway in the Western Democracies. *Such a shift leaves the "unchanging gospel" undisturbed, since the Christian model of "mutuality" transcends both the patriarchal and the egalitarian model.* The "mutuality" in Christ can characterize the husband-wife, or larger social male-female roles in a political, legal and economic pattern of "egalitarianism." In Christian freedom we can "image Jesus as Lord" in authoritarian-patriarchal modes, as was true in first century Ephesus and would be true in modern Iran, or in "egalitarian" relationships as in some parts of the Western democracies.

### Our Traditioning Makes Role Change Difficult

Our analysis of Paul's statement to the Ephesian couple will be contested because of our long traditioning in patriarchal roles for marriage. *It will be difficult to back away from this historical conditioning and take a new look* in light of our analysis of roles and the way they are related to Christ. Paul does say "wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his

body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything" (Eph. 5:22-24). *There has been such a strong continuity of "headship-submission" in marriage roles in all cultures, not just those of Judeo-Christian background, that it is difficult to imagine a separation of the "form" of discipleship herein enjoined and one that embraces a non-hierarchical form.* We tend to recoil from such an idea as complete abandonment of the plain teaching of the scripture. However, we have been careful to show that Paul can use the role of "slave" to "master" as a model of our relationship to Christ without thereby bringing this role into the unchanging gospel. Paul clearly states "slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ" (Eph. 6:5). *The similarity of language and instructions to that enjoined on the husband and wife is startling.* We have been contending that the form of the social role remains clearly outside the unchanging gospel as illustrated here by the command to the slave to obey the master as one would obey Christ. *Obedience to the master was a social fact of Roman existence.* Paul simply provides the spirit in which this role can be yielded as service to Christ. We have established that this form of discipleship can disappear without disturbing the unchanging gospel. Similarly, *a wife's obedience to her husband was a social fact of Roman life in the first century.* Paul simply provides the spirit in which this role can be yielded as service to Christ. We are contending that *this patriarchal form of discipleship can disappear and be replaced with egalitarianism without disturbing the unchanging gospel.* The forms of the social roles of master-slave or male-female are accidents of history not salvation events like the cross of Christ.

We must recognize that *the illustration in Ephesians five of Christ and the church is by no means exhausted by discussing the role of husband-wife.* Christ is the head of the entire body. The church is made up of males and females. Some males and some females are in varied social roles. Just as some will be masters and some will be slaves, so there will be a subset of males who will become husbands and a subset of females who will become wives. *Christ's headship includes all males and all females both married and single.* Paul discussed the desirability of first testing whether one has the gift of singlehood in writing to the Corinthians (I Cor. 7:1-38). His appeal to the master motive as the "ultimate" controlling vision of our earthly life, namely to know Jesus, be conformed to his image and to participate in his resurrection life" (Phil. 3:2-16), is worked out to mean that all historical roles are to be regarded as "secondary" to this one goal. If one has the gift of singlehood, it should be exercised so that one can live with undivided attention to the Lord (I Cor. 7:32-35). Now, for the subset of males and females in the body of Christ who do marry, Paul is instructing them how they can function in these roles "as to the Lord." *Whether Paul had stated the matter or not, the Ephesian husband of the*

*first century would have been the head of his wife.* What Paul does with this “given” is to leave the role intact but provide a way for the husband to behave in this “social role” so as to “imitate Jesus” in his self-giving to the wife. Similarly, he accepts the “given” of an Ephesian wife submissive in all ways to her husband and instructs how that she may offer up her “social role” behaviors “as to the Lord.” Could it be that Paul is removing the favored status attached to “singlehood,” wherein the believer gives “undivided attention to the Lord”? Paul has stated that the married man or married woman will have “divided attention” (I Cor. 7:32-35). The concern for the spouse reduces time and energy for the “concerns of the Lord” (I Cor. 7:34). However, Paul can take this authoritarian social role of husband-wife and give it a direction that allows it to be seen from a new light. For example, if the husband gives his attention and care for the wife in the “imitation of Christ” (Eph. 5:22-24), then this service to each other can “count as” service to Christ. These “social roles” can be filled by the believer in such a way as to “count as” full time devotion to the Lord, *that which the unmarried believer achieves in a different way.* Given this analysis, we would argue that *Paul is not binding the form of discipleship of the Roman world for husbands and wives on believers in egalitarian societies.* There can be “mutuality” in husband-wife roles under either Patriarchal or egalitarian social systems.

We have been careful to separate all of the varied forms of discipleship in the social structures of the first century world, whether patriarchal father and female child, citizen-emperor, or master-slave from the unchanging gospel. We need to distance ourselves from the strong cultural continuity in male-female roles across all cultures from the call to imitate Jesus in our own historical time. *It is so difficult to separate out the issues on male-female roles because of the cultural continuity.* The other roles we have cited have been changed by the legal, political, social and economic shifts which have occurred in our history. *We do not practice any of these roles in the way they were discharged by first century disciples. We are not troubled by this because history has made it seem natural for us to behave differently.* We are challenged to rethink the issues of the roles for men and women in Christianity today. *We are not calling for abandoning scripture authority.* We are calling for discerning the difference between the unchanging substance of the gospel and the changing form of our discipleship.

### Galatians 3:28 and Social Roles

*The concept that Paul “works with” certain social roles by leaving them “intact” and “outside” of the body of Christ is illustrated in Gal. 3:28, where Paul speaks of our identity in Christ and the grounding of that identity. Now cultural roles are grounded in the structures of common*

understanding in the prevailing social system. In the Galatian text, Paul asserts with respect to our identity in Christ that there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave or free, male and female. *Obviously, he is not denying that these constituted roles do exist; or are of no importance in the Empire.* They indeed are significant parts of the culture of Rome. A cultural role consists of expected behaviors, along with designated status and potential privileges. In a society, *they are significant identifiers for the individual and those who interact with him/her.* In lecture two we noted that John Searle<sup>29</sup> established that social facts are constituted by agreements of the generalized form that "X," a social fact of our human existence, counts as "Y," an assigned status, in "C," a particular historical culture. In the instance of first century slavery this translates as: "X," our being owned by another person as property, *counts as "Y,"* or the status of being a slave in "C," the Roman Empire. The role of slave "identifies us" as not having the rights and privileges of a free person, but as belonging to a certain master who controls our life in first century Rome. *We are arguing that Paul is leaving the role of slave "intact" but "outside" the body of Christ.* It is intact in that it remains as a legal, economic and political indicator of Roman identity. However, Paul affirms that it is a "zero," or non-factor, with respect to our identity in Christ. *The role is intact in the empire, but simply is not "counted as" of any consequence whatsoever in Christ.*

Once more, the Galatians text (Gal. 3:28) will demonstrate how a cultural role could disappear or be declared illegal in history and yet have no impact on the believer or the gospel due to the fact that it never had any bearing on Christian identity. *Paul's assertion that in Christ "there is neither slave nor free" affirms that these roles are simply not an "identity" marker in Christ.*<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, holding the status of a free person which certainly had major status implications in Roman society is likewise a "zero" factor as an identity marker in Christ. *These Roman role "identifiers" are treated as a transient accident of human history and have no bearing on one's identity in Christ.* This stands even though Paul can admit in I Corinthians 7:17-24 that the status of a free person is desirable to the extent that a believer should grasp it if the opportunity presented itself. Notwithstanding this preferability of "free" status, it is not an "identity" indicator in Christ anymore than the cultural categories of Jew or Greek. Paul was certainly not unaware that the status indicator of being a "Jew" was highly significant in Judea, and he would himself make use of this factor (Acts 22:3). It is still categorized as a "zero" with respect to one's identity in Christ. *In this identical text, Paul will include the social roles of "male and female" in the Empire.* The roles of male and female were highly structured in first century Rome. Indeed it could be said that biology, namely being born a man or woman, was destiny in that Rome used gender to assign many legal, political, economic and social rights, privileges and status. There was a clear differentiation of both



rights and role behaviors acceptable for men and women in the Empire. Indeed these powerful indicators would control "inheritance" of earthly wealth but here again Paul can say that these are not status indicators or "identity" markers for our inheritance in Christ. Consequently, *we conclude that this text asserts that social roles such as Jew or Greek, male and female, slave or free, with their implication for status, power and rights in Rome are not brought into the family of God.* They have no bearing on our identity in Christ. Consequently, the cultural roles of Jew or Greek, male and female or slave and free can remain "intact" as parts of Roman society but clearly remain "outside" the body of Christ. *Since they are "outside" the Kingdom, these roles can change or even disappear in human history without disturbing the unchanging substance of the gospel.* Our Christian identity is unaffected by their change or disappearance since they never "counted as" any part of our identity in the first place. This allows Roman slavery to be cast into the dustbin of history as a human social role. *It likewise allows the change from the Roman authoritarian role for husbands over wives to that of mutuality and egalitarian roles for wives in Western democracies.* Nothing can be lost by these changes since they were "zero" indicators for Christian identity. *Hierarchicalists and patriarchalists today miss the power of this text in its bold statement that "identity" indicators in the Roman world of slave-free, Jew-Greek, male and female never counted in Christ then and have zero value as identity indicators in Christ now.* To generalize what we have learned, this is a powerful statement that cultural roles are outside of Christ and this includes not just the cultural roles of master-slave but the Roman roles assigned to males and females.

### The Gospel Undermines Unredeemed Social Roles

*This powerful concept of removing social-cultural roles from identity considerations is part of the "leavening" influence of the gospel that will impact the "conscience" of the persons in the public domain in history.* It will provide the soil to nurture greater freedom in the sweep of historical cultures. I concur with Pagels, in her view that these ideas from the Christian movement became part of the stimulus for modern democracy. The old authoritarian social roles from the ancient patriarchal world were undermined by the "zeroing" of their meaning for "identity." *Christians embrace this concept, not for its political meaning, though this is not despised, but because it is a "better image" of what Christ means to men and women than authoritarian social structures.* This move toward freedom in the larger culture is a move toward genuine "mutuality" which is best grounded in a personal commitment to Christ.

## SOME PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is no longer a question of will male-female roles change, they have changed and, presumably will continue to do so. Even in Churches of Christ, changes have begun to occur as documented by Robert Rowland and Carroll Osburn.<sup>31</sup> Colleen Benson<sup>32</sup> cites the statistics for 1995 on women in major leadership roles formerly held primarily by men as follows:

There were fifty-seven women in congress.

Four of fourteen presidential cabinet members were women.

Four million businesses in the United States were owned by women. Businesses owned by women employed more people than Fortune 500 companies.

Forty percent of Medical and Law Degrees are now earned by women.

In addition to these striking figures, women are airline captains, astronauts and military leaders. It is interesting that the life and death decision making accorded to the professional role of medicine will now be done by women forty percent of the time. This leadership role has traditionally been accorded the highest status among the professions. In the United States, the roles which women now occupy have changed dramatically in the last fifty years..

Today's women are increasingly combining home responsibility with careers. Studies of this changing scene record the realities of the new demands for women and for men. The recent reports of research on women in the workplace surveyed by the San Francisco Chronicle<sup>33</sup> cite the areas of tension that this change in social roles has produced. Women in leadership roles experience the same kinds of demands to balance work and personal life as men. However, for women there are added stressors. Men tend automatically in our culture to make career their first priority and family secondary. Some women in high levels of corporate leadership are also making career the first priority. Other women experience serious conflict between competing demands. One study<sup>34</sup> cites a corporate wife as stating that every single day is a hard choice between personal life and career and that there is not enough time for home duties, child care and work. She expressed the wish for a day that could be five hours longer. This study noted the fact that this "tension" now being experienced by women in leadership perhaps explained why many of the women, when asked about their next career move, sounded rather conflicted.

What the research on women in careers shows is that women are retaining their expectancies to be the primary care-giver with their children. As a result, women with careers outside the home spend more time working at "paid and unpaid" tasks than men. The indicators are that in families without children, men and women both work sixty hours per week. When children are added to the equation, the workload increases rapidly, especially for the woman. In a family with three or more children, women typically spend ninety hours a week in paid and unpaid work, while men spend about sixty.<sup>35</sup> What is surprising is that even privileged status does not change this pattern. One study of women physicians found that eighty-five percent of this privileged group still were the primary nurturing source for the children. Males should take note that women who work outside the home do not thereby give up their commitment to their children. However, this fact is distressing when we consider that same woman being asked to assume a third area of commitment, namely leadership in the church.

I am convinced that when we consider role changes for women, we are talking about a more complex issue than that of role changes for men. Even the studies conducted from a secular perspective identify the fact that marriage with children introduces factors that impinge more severely on the role of the woman than on that of the man. I believe that this strengthens the argument for "mutuality" as the proper concept for dealing with male-female role delineation today. The shift of the debate to "egalitarianism" tends to focus on a fifty-fifty division of all resources and efforts. Mutuality allows the family the privilege in a spirit of mutual respect and regard to align responsibilities according to factors of time, energy, ability, and interest. Mutuality keeps the family focused on "the problems to be resolved" rather than on "who controls what."

We can envision a situation in the church of the twenty-first century wherein the male-female roles as "culturally delineated" are filled under the master motive of the imitation of Jesus with full freedom allowed to men and women to choose the form of their discipleship. Women and men would be free to choose singlehood or marriage. If they marry, they would be left free to choose to have children or not to have children. They would be free in Christ to map out the pattern of their lives in family, church and career.

In the setting envisioned for the church in the twenty-first century, women and men who remain single should be challenged to fulfill their lives in response to vision of being conformed to the image of Christ. Career, in the cultural sense, is not an ultimate goal for the believer but a secondary one. Its importance can be recognized and emphasized but not "absolutized." Of course, the person choosing singlehood learns what Paul means when he says to those considering whether to marry or not to marry,

that he would spare them of anxieties. The single life does not face the tension of balancing family life against career commitments. Furthermore, there should be equality in opportunity for service in Christ for the single life for men and women. Singlehood allows an undistracted attention that is not possible in other forms of family life. Here we would envision the church as the extended Spiritual family, which would operate in the spirit of mutuality in utilizing the talents of men and women in its midst. Gender issues are treated in accord with their status given them in scripture (Gal. 3:28). Furthermore, concerns over power and status, namely who controls what with worldly importance, are inappropriate in Christ where we are called to imitate him in service to others.

The situation is entirely different for those who marry in comparison with those who choose the gift of singlehood. Secular culture has glamorized the act of “marrying”, though it trivializes the institution of marriage. Scripture does not glamorize marriage and family responsibility. It recognizes the serious limitations one imposes on one’s life and Jesus and Paul advised that one consider these matters before marriage, not afterward (1 Cor. 7:17-40). First, those who marry have made a commitment to a spouse and this is clearly recognized as a commitment under God to the needs of that spouse in a way that is unique in human relationships (1 Cor. 7:32-35). If you marry, you have not sinned but you have committed yourself and you must accept the limitations of marriage. In the immediate context of the twenty-first century world now upon us, mutual decision making will be required in matters of career for the two individuals in this unique life partnership in Christ. One can make choices differently in singlehood than one can make in marriage. *As we culturally abandon the ancient social form of patriarchy in the family, mutuality in Christ becomes the option which we would view as the proper one today.* Our freedom in Christ where the cultural roles of male-female are clearly not “identity” markers in Christ allows the couple the option in mutuality to decide issues of career. We have previously noted that there are already examples of the woman’s career becoming the primary one in the household. *We consider this a matter of complete indifference to the believer who is seeking first to honor Christ and is not focused on issues of headship and control.* Mutual love and respect in the household is the unchanging substance of the gospel while the forms of our discipleship are filled in our historical time. We have already seen how Paul gives these cultural roles a “zero” with regard to their importance as identity markers in the Kingdom of God (Gal. 3:28).

We turn now to consider the implications of marriage when children are present. If children are chosen responsibly, this represents a second factor to become part of the “mutual” concern of the family. Just as you can make certain choices when you are single that you can no

longer make if you marry, so additionally, the couple can make certain decisions if they remain childless that they cannot make if they have children. This is far more than an economic matter. As we have noted, *neither Jesus nor Paul glamorizes the "act of marrying."* *Our commitments are commitments under God.* Children become an undeniable commitment on time, energy, interest and decision making for both husband and wife. In a very real sense, "career" takes on a new meaning, even when we mean by "career" the work life of the person concerned. The development of the skills in problem solving through "mutuality" is not a simple process. In the marriage with children, mutuality in decision making will be challenged to its full. *I think it is not possible or even appropriate to try to legislate how couples will decide the complex of issues.* The church, as the extended spiritual family needs to offer an understanding place for support in problem solving. We will likely see couples working out their patterns of family life in radically different ways. Some may choose the traditional pattern of the household prevailing prior to 1940. Others may choose a pattern wherein the woman for varied reasons has the primary career and assumes the major responsibility for financial support. We accept such a pattern today when the male in the household is disabled or absent as a result of death or desertion. We thereby recognize that such a pattern is not sin. Neither is a pattern of the wife as full-time homemaker a sin. It may even be the preferred pattern by many women and many men. It may assume an affluence in our society that becomes increasingly hard to realize, but it should be respected when it reflects the couple's mutual decision. In Christ, family forms may take different shapes and still reflect the concern to be conformed to the image of Christ. What we are saying also is that the choice to have children does place very straightforward limitations on the husband and wife in their decision making. The church should teach and uphold these obligations. *The larger society is becoming very concerned about the begetting of children without acceptance of responsibility. This focus is largely economic in its emphasis on the problem of welfare and medical funding.* It is beginning to be seen as a serious cultural matter due to the fostering of deviant behavior as well as economic dependency. *It is, of course, a serious Spiritual concern for the body of Christ.*

With regard to child rearing, as a long-time student of human development, a professional psychologist and a Christian, I consider this to be a culture's most significant task. Christian couples choosing to have children should be taught to regard it likewise. Speaking as one who has had the privilege of a life career in public education and one who has shared it with a life companion who has likewise had a life career in public education, you learn that there is "life after career." Admittedly, it is easier in retirement on the far side of a career to look back and see our formal work life from the perspective that I think Paul envisioned all our earthly

roles. These roles are transient. *It is a mistake to constitute our "identity" solely in career terms. Paul clearly did not make this mistake (Phil. 3:7-10) and urges us to grasp the "master vision" of life in the desire to be conformed to the image of Christ in our personal journey through history.* From this perspective one can view the task of child rearing as requiring a special emphasis in what has been called by psychologists "the parental imperative." This refers to the period of life wherein parenting dictates so much of the decision making of the family. With new role options facing men and women, particular attention will have to be given to this "parental imperative" by Christian males and females. Marian Diamond,<sup>36</sup> an outstanding educator at the University of California in Berkeley, said of her own prestigious career, "my children always came first, I loved being a mother. If I had to choose, I would have chosen that." She *counsels the young women* who come to her for advice that their child bearing and child rearing years are a precious part of their life. They are encouraged to make the most of those years. At the same time that young women may well choose to place their child nurturing responsibilities first, modern technology and the rapid advance of science ensures that complex careers make no exceptions to our personal needs. The demands for mastery in a field so far exceed our human time and energy that second place attention to a field will mean a straightforward limitation on progress in a career. This is a law of life in that it relates directly to our limitations as persons in a highly complex world. This law of life is irrevocable for men or women.

As women reach out to new roles, they will experience new tensions. The realization of our life in Christ is complex. It involves choices which restrict us. In her long and distinguished career at the University of Oregon, Leona Tyler, oft considered the dean of counselors, emphasized the fact that life simply does not allow the time, energy and talent to realize all of our goals. High level achievement requires narrowing. It means making choices that shut out certain things in order for us to do some things with excellence. One does not have to be an Olympic competitor to know that single minded concentration and self-discipline is required to live life well. Since this is one of the facts of life, the church can fulfill its family responsibility by providing an understanding place for young women struggling with the decision making that will be part of the life of those now living at the turn from the twentieth to the twenty-first century. *The church family needs to cultivate "mutuality" in dealing with young women and men struggling with the change from the old patterns of a patriarchal society to the new ways of egalitarianism.* Young women in particular will face intellectual and emotional conflict as they shift their roles and find themselves in new untried pathways.

Karen Zaske has captured with sensitivity this struggle now facing young women as they look back to what has been and look ahead to what might be in her poem entitled:

“Letter to Lot’s wife”

My ancient sister  
I recognize the way you stand  
    back braced  
    against the future  
    face turned homeward  
    eyes burning for a glimpse  
    of all you’ve left behind  
    that marked the meaning of  
    your own existence

Mixed Blessing, I know,  
    to be claimed  
    rescued  
    asked to move on.

A moment of regret  
    and suddenly  
    you are without choice  
    without hope  
    immobilized  
    a faceless  
    faithless figure  
    fixed  
    for all time  
An object lesson.

Your story ends too soon.  
A moment more,  
    you might have turned  
    to face necessity.  
And what I wanted to know is this:  
    How far  
    can one travel on will alone?  
    How long  
    before the heart follows?

Copyright 1996 Christian Century Foundation. Reprinted by permission  
from the January 17, 1996 issue of The Christian Century.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cottrell, Jack. (1994). *Gender Roles and the Bible: Creation, the Fall and Redemption*. Joplin, Mo.: College Press Publishing Company. Pp. 11-12. Cottrell distinguishes "hierarchicalism" from "patriarchalism" and seeks to make the former a neutral term. His definition assumes the thing to be proved. For a review of this monograph, see the present author's paper entitled "Gender Roles and the Bible", a lectureship presentation at the Pleasantview Church of Christ, April 16, 1995. Available from Kenneth Shrable, Ph.D. 741 Beaver Court, Discovery Bay, California 94514.

<sup>2</sup> Ember, Carol R. & Melvin Ember. (1990). *Cultural Anthropology*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall. See especially pp. 152-172. Also, Light, Donald, Suzanne Keller & Craig Calhoun. (1989). *Sociology*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. See especially pp. 319-348. Some generalizations from Ember and Ember with regard to the historical situation of male-female roles are as follows: (1) ". . . no society we know of treats females and males in exactly the same way. . . all societies have some sex difference in the way they assign or divide labor. . . . The question. . . is why there are universal or near-universal patterns in the division of labor by sex . . . p. 152. (2) Various theories are propounded to account for the division of labor by sex including the strength theory, compatibility-with-child-care theory, economy of effort, and expendability theory pp. 152-154. (3) "In almost every society we know about, men rather than women are the leaders in the political arena. One cross-cultural survey indicates that in approximately 85 percent of the surveyed societies, only men were leaders. In the societies in which some women occupied leadership positions, the women were either outnumbered by or less powerful than the men leaders. Whether or not we consider warfare to be part of the political sphere of life, we find an almost universal dominance of males in that arena. In 88 percent of the world's societies, women never participate actively in war." P. 159. "Even in *matrilineal* societies . . . men held political office, not women." P. 159. "Why have men (at least so far) almost always dominated the political sphere of life? Some have suggested that men's role in warfare gives them the edge in all kinds of political leadership, particularly because they control weapons—an important resource. . . . Since warfare clearly affects survival and since it occurs regularly in most of the societies we know about, decision making about war may be among the most important kinds of politics in most societies. If this is so, it may be advantageous to have those who know the most about warfare making decisions about it." p. 160. "Finally, there is the possibility that men dominate politics because they get around more than women in the outside world. Male activities typically take them farther from home: women tend to work more around the home. If societies choose leaders at least in part because they know more about the larger world, then males will generally have some advantage." p. 160.

<sup>3</sup> Green, Joel B., Scot McKnight, I. Howard Marshall (Eds.). (1992). *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press. pp. 880-887. Hawthorne, Gerald F., Ralph P. Martin & Daniel G. Reid. (1993). *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*. Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press. p. 603.

<sup>4</sup> This picture is extensively documented in the literature which has arisen from the "feminist critique" of patriarchy. For a quick overview, the reader is referred to the article in the *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* pp. 880-881. See Note 3 above for reference.

<sup>5</sup> Ember, C.R. & M. Ember, p. 32. See note 2 for reference.

<sup>6</sup> Ember, C.R. & M. Ember (1990). Note 2 above. Also Light, D., S. Keller & C. Calhoun (1989), note 2 above.

<sup>7</sup> Green, J.B., S. McKnight, I.H. Marshall. (1992). Pp. 880-881. Osburn, Carroll D. (1993). *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity*. Vol. I. Joplin, Mo.: College Press Publishing Company, p. 231. Stambaugh, John E. & David L. Balch. (1986). *The New Testament in Its Social Environment*. In Vol. 2. *Library of Earliest Christianity*.



---

Wayne A. Meeks, (Ed.). Philadelphia: Westminster Press. pp. 123-124. Malherbe, Abraham J. (1986). *Moral Exhortation, A Greco-Roman Sourcebook*. Vol. 2. *Library of Earliest Christianity*. Wayne A. Meeks (Ed.). Philadelphia: Westminster Press. p. 83. Pp. 98-99. Keener, Craig S. (1992). *Paul, Women, Wives: Marriage and Ministry in the Letters of Paul*. Peabody, Mass. Hendrickson Publishers. Pp. 139-191. The literature in this area is vast. Many publications dealing with Biblical Teaching on male-female roles provide extensive bibliographies.

<sup>3</sup>Peristiany, John G., ed. (1965). *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson; Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1966. Midway Reprints, 1974. Crossan, John Dominic. (1991). *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*. San Francisco: Harper. Pp. 9-15. Honor and Shame are central concepts in Paul's discussion of male-female role behaviors in the Corinthian correspondence.

<sup>9</sup> Keener, Craig S. (1992). P. 164. Keener notes that "part of the male ideal of women's submission was that they be meek, quiet, and apparently what we would consider "shy" and "self-conscious" in the presence of men. . . . The most standard womanly ideal included a quiet and reclusive demeanor, and other elements were, for normal women, at best incidental. See Also Malherbe, Abraham J. (1986). P. 83 for the description of the ideal wife by Pseudo-Melissa. This document stresses that "the temperate, freeborn woman must live with her legal husband adorned modestly, clad in neat, simple, white dress without extravagance or excess. . . . She must please her husband by doing what he wishes, for a husband's wishes ought to be an unwritten law to an orderly wife and she should live by them. (See note 7 for reference).

<sup>10</sup> For a brief summary of the negative view toward women in the ancient world see the article on "Women" in *The Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. See note 3 for the reference.

<sup>11</sup> Kenner, Craig S. (1992). P. 203.

<sup>12</sup> Lewis, C.S. (1947). *The Abolition of Man*. New York: Macmillan Company. Pp. 95-121. Lewis presents the general ethical laws of human history under the concept of the "Tao". The reader can inspect these for their similarity to Biblical ethics and moral teaching.

<sup>13</sup> Light, Keller & Calhoun. (1989) Pp. 78-99. See Note 2 for reference. The gospel is a cultural document in that human language is a cultural product. Social roles reflect one of the ways that culture is expressed. Paul does not use all social structures. He condemns some and accepts others. Contemporary Christian scholarship is now exploring the role structures of the Biblical world and how these are impacted by scripture and, in turn, how they impact scripture. Bruce Malina has proposed anthropological models for the New Testament period. Malina, Bruce J. (1986). *Christian Origins and Cultural Anthropology: Practical Models for Biblical Interpretation*. Atlanta: John Knox Press. p. 138. Malina differentiates political roles from personal roles. The political roles are part of the Roman power system and not under Paul's control. The personal commitment roles are within the control of our Christian experience. Malina writes: "In Paul's view, it seems the means, structures, and institutions that fall within the power system of the Hellenistic world are to stay the same for Christians: social status (I Cor. 7:17, 20, 24), slavery (I Cor. 7:21), the ascribed, subservient role of women (I Cor. 11:2-16; 14:33b-36), and roles based on sex and ethnic origin (Rom. 10:12; I Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28) are not important. Therefore, his communities should not change or bother about these structures; they should not be actively concerned about them and need not destroy them. Rather, they ought simply to leave them as they are." Malina's position is somewhat analogous to the

---

present argument that Paul "relativizes" all things to the ultimate "master motive" of life, namely to know Jesus, be conformed to this image, participate in his life for others, and to take part in Jesus' resurrection life (Phil. 3:2-16). All transient, earthly roles are seen as "not-ultimate but Penultimate" and are to be seen as "indifferentia" in that they are to be used to secure the "ultimate" goal. Paul does not say that some of these roles are "desirable", such as slavery. He even allows us to change roles, if opportunity arises, as in the case of the slave gaining his/her freedom (I Cor. 7:17-24). If these roles are unchangeable in our present life, they are to be filled "as to the Lord" (Col. 3:18-22) and made thereby to serve us in reaching the "ultimate goal of human life (Col. 3:8), namely to be conformed to Christ and to share in his resurrection. I would contend that Malina's position is too passive in that Paul is writing in the context of the "authoritarian" Roman world where the Christian had no power over "political structures" and the consequent "social roles". We live in a "participatory democracy" and can actively take part in the governing process and effect change. We can thereby change "role structures" in our culture by our effort as in the case of slavery and also in the child welfare laws which would prohibit the practice of a Roman father marrying his twelve-year old female child to an adult male ten, twenty or thirty years her senior. Similarly, the roles of males and females are being restructured by the ballot process along new economic, legal and political lines. Christians can participate in role change in the modern Western democracies and they need not remain passive.

<sup>14</sup> See note 13 above for Malina's model of accepted roles.

<sup>15</sup> Stambaugh, John E. & David L. Balch. (1986). *The New Testament In Its Social Environment*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press. P. 111. The practice of parental "troth" and the consequent obedience required of the female child would seem to fall under the category of doctrines which are conditional and temporary but once repudiated are irreversible, as discussed by George Lindbeck. He uses the example of slavery to illustrate this principal but it would seem that the obedience to parents illustrated in the "betrothal" and marriage of a twelve-year old female child by a Roman father would parallel the change in Christian understanding and practice illustrated by slavery. Lindbeck, George A. (1984). *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press. Pp. 85-86. Lindbeck discusses slavery under the notion of doctrines that are temporarily conditional and either reversible or irreversible. Opposition to slavery, which is now the stance of Christianity, is irreversible. Though it is a conditional doctrine and was not the stance of the early church, because of the development of the human conscience as a result of the work of Christ and the cumulative development of conscience within the general human culture, Christian opposition to slavery as a human institution is irreversible.

<sup>16</sup> Pagels, Elaine. (1988). *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent*. New York: Random House. P.52.

<sup>17</sup> Aristotle. *On Man in the Universe*. Published for the Classics Club by Walter J. Black: New York, 1943. Pp. 253-257. See the section on Politics, pp. 246-417. In his discussion of the complete household, Aristotle writes: "The parts of the household are the persons who compose it, and a complete household consists of slaves and freemen. Now we should begin by examining everything in its least elements; and the first and least parts of a family are master and slave, husband and wife, father and children. We have therefore to consider what each of these three relations is and ought to be: I mean the relation of master and slave, of husband and wife, and thirdly of parent and child." P. 253. As part of this discussion, Aristotle states: "For some should rule, and others be ruled is a thing not only necessary but expedient; from the hour of their birth, some are marked out for subjection, others for rule." A little later he addressed the relation of male and female as follows: "Again, the male is by nature superior, and female inferior;

---

and the one rules and the other is ruled; this principle, of necessity, extends to all mankind." Pp. 255-256.

<sup>18</sup> Alexander Campbell made a clear distinction between the two sources of content in scripture. One source reflects reason and historical information while the other source represents matters that could only be known by revelation. For an extended discussion of this important topic, see *The Christian Baptist*, A. Campbell, ed. 1827. Vol. 4. Pp. 233-235. For a recent study which focuses on the Jewish and Gentile literature during the intertestamental period and contemporaneous with the New Testament writing, see the work by David Balch, Everett Ferguson, and Wayne A. Meeks (Eds.). (1990). *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press. This set of essays by twenty-two contemporary scholars, opens up the parallel material in both Jewish and Gentile sources with New Testament documents. The various topics treated demonstrates the way the New Testament writers make us of contemporary language and understanding in presenting the gospel of Christ. Paul and other New Testament writers bring ethical, moral teaching from the surrounding world, both Jewish and Gentile, under the control of the master image of Christ. They do not hesitate to address their audiences within the framework of the cultural images with which they are familiar. The reader who would like to test the concepts argued in the present lecture series can see further demonstration of Paul's use of the "form" of contemporary culture and even the "substance" of its moral teaching to instruct his disciples in Christ by consulting the essay by Bernard C. Lategan (pp. 318-328) on the question, "Is Paul Developing a Specifically Christian Ethics in Galatians?" Lategan concludes that Paul "apparently adopts the common values of the Hellenistic environment in which the Galatians found themselves." He demonstrates how that Paul can call upon believers to exercise discernment under the influence of the Spirit of Christ in ordering their life in this particular culture. The other essays by this group of scholars develop similar themes over a wide range of ideation in the New Testament.

<sup>19</sup> Virginia Mollenkott (*Women, Men, and the Bible*. 1988. New York: Crossroad, pp. 74-77) discusses the danger involved in absolutizing the forms of the Biblical world. She cites the example of the belief in the divine right of kings which was used as Biblical justification by those who opposed the revolution in our colonial America according to Alexander Campbell. Campbell would have agreed with Mollenkott's claim that it is a mistake to bind this notion as Scripture. He felt that Thomas Paine would have had a kindlier view of the Bible, if he had understood that this was not an unchangeable aspect of revelation.

<sup>20</sup> Malina, Bruce J. (1986). *Christian Origins and Cultural Anthropology: Practical Models for Biblical Interpretation*. Atlanta: John Knox Press. P. 138.

<sup>21</sup> Black, Mark C. "1 Cor. 11:2-16—A Re-Investigation." In *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity*. Vol. I. Carroll D. Osburn. (Ed.). (1993). Joplin, Missouri: College Press Publishing Company. P. 216.

<sup>22</sup> Fee, Gordon. (1987). *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. Pp. 491-530. Keener, Craig S. (1992). *Paul, Women & Wives: Marriage and Women's Ministry in the Letters of Paul*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers. Pp. 18-69.

<sup>23</sup> Dunn, James D.G. (1987). *The Living Word*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press. Pp. 58-59. Dunn discusses the problem of the Sabbath as a clear instance of a "creation ordinance" which is set aside without an explicit injunction to do so. He sees this as troubling for the Reformation Principle that the unclear must be interpreted by the clear.

<sup>24</sup> Maclay, Catherine. (1995). *The Lady with the Brain* An interview with Marian Diamond. In the *California Monthly*: December, 1995. Pp. 27-29. Berkeley: California Alumni Association. Clay, Rebecca A. (1995). "Working Mothers: happy or haggard?" In *The APA Monitor*. November, 1995. Published by the American

---

Psychological Association. Lewin, Tamar. (1995). "Women Earn Half of Families Incomes: Study details the new providers." In *The San Francisco Chronicle*. Thursday, May 11, 1995. Section A2. Pender, Kathleen. (1995). "Through the Glass Ceiling: The Bay Area's Most Powerful Corporate Women." In the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Business Extra. Monday, December 18, 1995.

<sup>25</sup> Benson, Colleen. (1995). "The Mindset of Women Today." In *Theology, News and Notes: Women and Ministry*. Pasadena, California: Fuller Theological Seminary. March, 1995 issue. Pp. 13-17.

<sup>26</sup> Augsburger, David & John Faul. (1980). *Beyond Assertiveness*. Waco, Texas: Calibre Books. P. 55.

<sup>27</sup> Bellizzi, Frank. (1996). "The Principle of Submission." In *The Spiritual Sword: A Review of Feminist Theology*. Alan Highers (Ed.). Vol. 27. January 1996. No. 2. Pp. 33.

<sup>28</sup> Pagels, Elaine. (1988). *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent*. New York: Random House. See especially "Christians Against the Roman Order." Pp. 32-56.

<sup>29</sup> Searle, John. (1995). *The Construction of Social Reality*. New York: The Free Press.

<sup>30</sup> For a discussion of Galatians 3:28 as establishing identity and value in Christ, see Jan Haley. "Neither Male and Female (Gal. 3:28)." In *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity*. Vol. I. Carroll Osburn (Ed.). 1993. Joplin, Missouri: College Press Publishing Company. Pp. 130-166.

<sup>31</sup> Rowland, Robert H. (1991). *"I Permit Not a Woman" ...To Remain Shackled*. Newport, Oregon: Lighthouse Publishing Company. See especially Chapter 17. Osburn, Carroll. (1995). *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity*. Vol. II. Joplin, Missouri: College Press Publishing Company. See especially the Appendices 1 through 3 for illustrations. Pp. 571-592.

<sup>32</sup> Benson, Colleen. (1995). "The Mindset of Women Today." In *Theology News and Notes*. Pasadena, California: Fuller Theological Seminary. March 1995 issue. Pp. 13-17.

<sup>33</sup> For references see Endnote 24 above.

<sup>34</sup> See Endnote 24 for references to the San Francisco Chronicle.

<sup>35</sup> Clay, Rebecca. (1995). "Working Mothers: happy or haggard?". In *The APA Monitor*. Published by the American Psychological Association. November, 1995 issue.

<sup>36</sup> Maclay, Catherine. (1995). The Lady with the Brain: An Interview with Marian Diamond. In the *California Monthly*, December, 1995. Pp. 27-29. Berkeley: California Alumni Association.