

**ARE WOMEN BARRED BY SCRIPTURE FROM OCCUPYING CERTAIN POSITIONS OR FROM PERFORMING
CERTAIN ROLES IN CHRISTIAN MINISTRY, SOLELY BY REASON OF THEIR GENDER?**

(A HERMENEUTICAL CASE STUDY FOR HEREMENUTICS STUDENTS)

I approach this paper with a great deal of misgivings. In the first place, I have no formal theological or seminary training, and am certainly not in a position to take on, in formal debate, academically educated theologians who appear to strongly disagree with my conclusions which will appear in this paper. In the second place, I have found that no matter how much I perform research and reading in my effort to set forth my positions on the question at hand, I never feel like I have done enough. I am, quite simply, overwhelmed with the amount of research and reading which I know academically trained theologians, particularly those in the so-called "academy" seem to have done in preparing for any of their writings. Frankly, I do not have the time or capacity or training to do what they appear to do. In the third place, just sitting down and starting the writing of this paper requires degrees of perseverance and diligence, which I am not sure that I possess. I have held off on even beginning to prepare an initial draft of this paper, for months. All of this said, I have decided that as some philosopher once said, "Every Journey Starts With The First Step", and that I just need to start this paper and let it go where it takes us. I just have to begin. So, Dear Reader, please bear with me, and extend to me some Umbrella of Grace.

I) **QUESTIONS AT HAND/INITIAL STATEMENTS OF POSITIONS TO BE TAKEN:**

The Question At Hand, as evidenced by the title of this paper, is this: Are Women Barred By Scripture From Occupying Certain Positions or From Performing Certain Roles in Christian Ministry Solely By Reason of Their Gender? This question can be broken down into several included questions as follows:

- 1) Does the Bible, or more particularly God speaking through the words of the human authors of the Bible, prohibit a gifted, called, competent woman from being a Senior Pastor in a Christian Church?
- 2) Does the Bible, or more particularly God speaking through the words of the human authors of the Bible, prohibit a gifted, called, competent woman from speaking from the pulpit in the delivery of the main message (i.e. the Sermon) of a Christian Church Service?
- 3) Does, the Bible, or more particularly God speaking through the words of the human authors of the Bible, prohibit a gifted, called, competent woman from occupying a position of Senior Leadership, such as an Elder on the Board of Elders of a Christian Church?
- 4) Does the Bible, or more particularly God speaking through the words of the human authors of the Bible, prohibit a gifted, called, competent woman from teaching men in large or small group

gatherings of a Christian Congregation, where parts of the Bible or Biblical Theology are the subjects at hand, or, perhaps, does the Bible permit a woman to engage in such teaching if she is accompanied by a man, meaning that she cannot teach alone without a male alongside her?

Up front, so that you will know where I am coming from and what my conclusions are, and that I will be arguing in support of those conclusions I state that my Answers to Each of the Questions raised above is NO. When it comes to each of these Positions and Roles in Christian Ministry, the Bible is “Gender Neutral”. No individual, male or female, should occupy any of these Positions or Perform any of these Roles unless he or she is a person of Deep Faith, and who has a true Calling to be in the Position or Perform the Role, and is fully qualified to and competent to occupy the Position or Perform the Role. Any individual, male or female can be disqualified to occupy any of these Positions or Perform any of these Roles for any number of reasons, including, for example, instances of lack of Christian morality or ethical failings, lack of diligence, lack of training or competency to perform properly, or simply because he or she does not know what he or she is talking about and can mislead the congregation away from proper Christian Doctrine. That said, Gender, Female Gender, in and of itself, is not a disqualification.

Now, just to keep this interesting, I want to add a caveat to my conclusions which are set forth above. I believe that the Bible, particularly the teachings of Paul’s Epistles which will be referred to below, would stand for the proposition that in some localities of the world (and maybe even some in this Country, the USA) which remain highly patriarchal, and where the occupying of any of these Positions by a woman, or the performance of any of these Roles by a woman would create such a disruption as would drive people from a given church or from hearing the Gospel, there, perhaps, God’s Wisdom as revealed by the words of the human authors of Scripture would suggest that a woman not be placed in such a Position or Role until such time as the congregation can be educated to the point where the woman’s occupancy of the Position or Role will not be disruptive of the unity of the church community. Perhaps tongue in cheek, I would also suggest that in a highly matriarchal setting (e.g. again, tongue in cheek, a society or culture of Amazons, such as those who purportedly founded Ephesus) such Godly Wisdom might well suggest that a male not be inserted into the Position or Role as doing so would cause huge disruption in the community of the congregation. Frankly, I think that a truly Biblical response to the question at hand should be far more nuanced than many folks who have tried to respond to that question have made it. There are even Christian Communities in our “enlightened” liberal thinking, feminist oriented country, the USA, where the presence of a woman Priest or Senior Pastor, or of one preaching the main homily from the pulpit would be viewed as being scandalous or disruptive. Such would be the case in most, if not all Roman Catholic parishes. There are, on the other, hand, communities where barring women from certain roles will be viewed as something which is scandalous and disruptive, and deeply upsetting to people who would otherwise be led to the Gospel. The “woman problem”, if there is one, is not one of Gender, but rather it is one of disruption of the Unity of the community, and this is the problem which the Apostle Paul zealously wanted to avoid.

By now you, Dear Reader, might have guessed that my conclusions about those passages of Scripture (primarily in the Epistles of the Apostle Paul which we will discuss below) that are most often cited in support of the positions that Women are, Solely by Reason of Their Gender, Barred from Occupying Certain Position or Performing Certain Roles (primarily the Positions of Senior Pastor, Teacher, or Church Elder, or the Publicly Speaking from the Pulpit) stand for the proposition that “Unity” in a Congregation Must Be Preserved, and that “Disruptions” of that Unity will not be tolerated, and that “Teachings of False Doctrines” and that Teachings by those who are not properly educated or knowledgeable about what they are talking about will not be tolerated, not for the propositions that the roles of women are restricted, solely by reason of their gender. So, I am fully persuaded that women are not, by reason of their gender alone disqualified from holding certain functions or performing certain roles in Christian Ministry. The Biblical restrictions, properly understood, are those which oppose actions which would cause a Christian community to be exposed to Disruption, lack of Unity, False Teachings or Teaching by individuals (male or female) who are not qualified to teach. Additionally, since Christian Churches, Christian Communities are to serve as models of human behavior for the rest of society, any actions which would cause such a Church or Community to be held in disrespect by the society at large should, in most cases be avoided; although it is recognized that, in today’s culture, the mere holding and espousing of appropriate Christian Doctrine and Beliefs can subject Christians and their churches to claims that they are “narrow minded” and “intolerant”, labels which are just going to have to be tolerated while loving efforts to teach and convince others of the propriety of such Doctrines and Beliefs are continued. Well, these are my conclusions, stated in summary fashion, of which I am fully persuaded, but humbly recognizing my lack of qualifications to reach such conclusions and the fact that many learned theologians strongly disagree with these conclusions, it now falls upon me to seek to justify these conclusions. I will try to do so in the following parts of this paper.

II) WHO AM I, AND HOW DARE I TO SPEAK OF THESE MATTERS? WHAT ARE MY MOTIVATIONS?

Now you, Dear Reader, are going to properly ask why I, an individual who is not theologically educated, and who was educated as an engineer and lawyer, and whose primary worldly experience was gained through 53 years of private law practice, would, at age 83 even want to tackle the difficult task which this paper presents. Well, there are several reasons for my doing so. First, while I am not formally theologically trained, I have done huge amounts of reading in the field of Biblical Hermeneutics. I, together with a trained pastor and theologian who holds a Doctorate, teach a class in Biblical Hermeneutics. I am always urging that our students in that class try to engaged in “Case Studies”, if you will, where they try to exegete (simple word, “interpret”) and apply to real world, current situations, pericopes of Scripture (i.e. passages or texts or parts of Scripture). How can I urge the students to undertake such a task if I don’t have the courage to do so myself? So, this paper is a “Case Study”, one which I will humbly, asking for a tender “Umbrella of Grace” submit to our students for their critical analysis and comments, and which I also submit to you Dear Reader, again asking for a tender “Umbrella of Grace”, for your critical (no matter how harsh) review and comment. So, First, this paper will serve as a “Case Study”. Second, I have a wife, a sister, and two daughters, each of

whom is extremely dear to me. Each of them, thinking that I “Know the Bible”, which, obviously I don’t (and I submit that no one fully does, although some know it better than others), asks what I think about the fact that the Southern Baptist Convention, and some other denominations and traditions, and even some local congregations located in our respective communities, have adopted rather strong, sometimes harsh positions against a Woman’s serving in any Senior Pastoral or Leadership function. I want to do my best to answer that question in a Biblically sound manner. Third, (and here I have to confess a bias based on personal observations and experiences) I find it difficult to conceive of the fact that, in the current cultures (and there are many, and they do differ) in much of today’s America, it can be reasonably (and sometimes strongly, almost hatefully) argued, that women are Biblically excluded, solely by reason of their gender, from occupying certain Positions (primarily that of a Senior Pastor or other Senior Leadership provisions, sometimes as Elders) or performing certain Roles (i.e. publicly preaching from the pulpit or teaching men or doing so without the assistance of a man) in Christian Ministry. For example, a friend of mine recently sent me an article or paper written by some fellow by the name of Jim McCraigh (April 20, 2024) in which Mr. McCraigh, argued, with great passion, and in an almost hateful manner, that women who seek to preach on Sunday are guilty of sin, and that men who allow them to do so are abdicating their Biblically assigned roles of Church Leadership. As that author put it at the conclusion of his paper: “It’s Time To Man Up Boys.” That paper elicited a large number of very positive comments from those who read it. Speaking more locally, a local couple who chose to have a wonderful, ordained woman pastor conduct their marriage ceremony were advised that they would not be considered to be married in the eyes of the church, and of God. I recently shared coffee with a friend who, unlike me, does have a seminary degree from a fine seminary. He was deeply upset that his church had chosen to receive, as a member of its senior pastoral staff, a woman who I personally know to be highly qualified, and for whom I have huge respect. He said that this action “Was Not Biblical”. I just find all of this to be exceedingly strange and disturbing, in view of the fact that women are now filling many of the very important professional and political roles in our society from which they were previously excluded. When I graduated from Law School in 1967, we had one woman in our class. Now, at least 50 percent of Law School graduates are women, and they are admirably performing very important roles in major law firms, and the Justice system. They are Supreme Court Justices. Large numbers of women are graduating from our major medical schools, and are going on to becoming wonderful doctors and medical researchers. Women are flying our planes, including the most sophisticated military aircraft. They are presidents of some of our major universities and colleges, and are CEOs of some of our largest corporations and financial institutions. A woman has served as Vice President of the United States, and two of them have been candidates for its presidency. Women have occupied important leadership roles in other countries, including Margaret Thatcher and Golda Mier. The current leader of Italy is a woman. Women are celebrated professors in our universities, colleges, law schools and medical schools, where they are most certainly teaching men, without benefit of some male assistance. All of these facts of our current society notwithstanding, important Christian Denominations, Churches and Leaders continue to assert that the Bible prohibits women from holding Senior Positions in our Churches. I find this fact to be both strange and disturbing. Frankly, I would think that the dramatic cultural, societal and situational differences which exist between those of the ancient audiences of those Epistles of the Apostle Paul, the passages of which are most often cited by those who oppose women in Senior Positions and Roles in Christian Ministry, and those confronting most of ours current day churches would cause some doubts to be raised as to whether or not

those passages can be properly applied by such current day churches so as to exclude women from such Positions solely by reason of their gender. Well, unfortunately, at least in my view, such is not the case. Ok, so I have now disclosed my personal bias. I will now reveal some things about myself so that you will understand my given biases. I am a white, old (83), straight, conservative (and yes Republican leaning) male. If a Conservative, Republican Leaning Traditionalist like me, can come to the conclusion that our churches are wrongly restricting the roles of women in Leadership positions, then that fact alone should cause some of us to reevaluate our position that women's roles in Christian Ministry must be limited. As an aside, let me describe my TV watching experiences, and what those experiences have brought about in my thinking. I watch very little TV, but one program I regularly watch while I am exercising in the morning is *Mornings with Maria*, which is hosted by Maria Bartiromo. Yes, this is a conservative, republican leaning program. However, Maria makes it a point to constantly interview leading figures in politics, the corporate/business world, the professional fields, the financial fields and those occupying important administrative positions. If you watch this program you cannot fail to be impressed, as I have been, with the fact that many, sometimes I think the majority of the hugely impressive, obviously competent and certainly articulate people who are interviewed are women. Smart, articulate women leaders are providing huge benefits to our society. Yet, it seems to me that some of our churches, some of our congregations are denying themselves and their congregations, and even the advancement of the Gospel of the huge advantages which can be brought about by utilizing the leadership abilities of some of the women in their congregation or church. Culture, and I think the Bible is telling them that they are wrong, but they will not listen because of, in my view, wrong interpretation and application of a small number of Biblical passages which will be discussed below.

III) HOWEVER, IT IS GOD'S CHURCH:

Notwithstanding all of what I have said above, I readily concede that the Church is not Mankind's institution. It is God's Church. God has spoken to us, down through the ages, through the Bible. So, my bias notwithstanding, if God has said, through the words of His chosen human authors of the Bible that men must occupy all positions of Senior Leadership in God's churches, then, so be it. God governs, not humans, and certainly not me. But does the Bible really so assert? Has God really said, through the words of His chosen authors of the Bible that women are barred, are excluded, by reason of their gender, from occupying certain Senior Positions or performing certain Roles in Christian Ministry? Is that what the Bible really says?

IV) WHAT I AM GOING TO ARGUE AND WHAT I AM NOT ARGUING/BRIEF STATEMENT OF THE REAL ISSUES:

Now, at this point, I am going to again deviate from going forward with my arguments that, in fact, the Bible does not say that women are, solely by reason of their gender, excluded from certain Positions or Roles in

Christian Ministry. You, Dear Reader, will probably conclude that I continue to shy away from setting forth my arguments because I am a coward or am not fully convinced of the truth of my arguments, or that I am just plain lazy. I plead guilty to all of these accusations. I am not arguing that a woman should, under any and every circumstance, be placed in a Senior Role in every Christian Congregation. In fact, to make such a blanket assertion would be to indicate that the particular situation and circumstances, culture and sub-culture of the particular Christian Congregation which must deal with the issue of a Woman's Leadership should be disregarded. I think that the issues of Christian Leadership and Teaching and Shepherding are far more nuanced than we acknowledge. I timidly suggest that if the Apostle Paul (passages of whose letters are most often cited in the "Woman's Issue", if you will) were here today, he would say that "the real issues confronting every Christian Community are not those of gender, but are those of avoiding: 1) Disruptions of the Unity of the Community, 2) The Teaching of False Doctrines or Distortions of the Gospel, 3) Teaching by unqualified teachers, 4) Actions whereby some members of the Community are shown favoritism over other members or whereby their true spiritual gifts are not used or properly celebrated, and 5) Actions which will cause the Community to lose respect in the eyes of the greater society which it is, hopefully, and to the extent it can do so without abandoning or ignoring its true Christian Beliefs, trying to positively influence". So, I don't think that anyone can flatly assert that he or she "Knows With Certainty" how God's Teachings through the Bible about the "Woman Issue", if you will, are to be applied under every circumstance, for all times, in every Christian Community. "Certainty" is not appropriate, under every circumstance, and it is "OK to Have Doubts" when one humbly approaches any question of Biblical Hermeneutics, interpretation and application. I am now going to do a strange thing, which is to quote from a novel. All Wisdom is God's Wisdom, and I have found a lot of nuggets of what I believe to be God's Wisdom in some of the novels which I have read (and I read constantly and copiously). I quote from the recent Novel, made into a major Movie, "The Conclave" by Robert Harris, in which the Dean of the College of Cardinals who is responsible for leading the actions of the Conclave of Cardinals who will elect the next Pope, in his prayer at the opening of the Conclave states as follows:

"...Let me tell you that the one sin I have come to fear more than any other is certainty. Certainty is the great enemy of unity. Certainty is the deadly enemy of tolerance....Our faith is a living thing because it walks hand in hand with doubt. If there was only certainty, and if there was no doubt, there would be no mystery, and therefore no need of faith."

That is a great quote. I only wish that it came from some theological tome and not some novel, but I think that it expresses a lot of truth when it comes to questions of how to apply God's Biblically taught lessons to current day, real world circumstances. Look, I readily acknowledge that "I Do Not KNOW the Bible". I have studied it, and read about it, copiously and constantly over the last 29 years, but in no way do I "KNOW IT". What I do know is that no matter what you might think that you know about the Bible, you still have a whole lot more, a whole lot more to learn about it. I don't have enough lifetime left to study everything about the Bible which I would like to study. While I acknowledge that there are many people who know more about the

Bible than I do, I frankly fear those who claim that “I Know The Bible”, or “I Know Absolutely, What The Bible Says About This Subject”, or “This Is What God Says”.

V) RELEVANT BIBLICAL PASSAGES:

Well, let's begin to perform a hermeneutical analysis with respect to those Biblical passages or pericopes which are most often cited by those who contend that women are, solely by reason of their gender, barred from occupying Senior Positions (such as Senior Pastor) in Christian Ministry, or Senior Leadership Positions (such as being a member of a Board of Elders) in Christian Ministry or performing certain Roles in such Ministry (such as publicly speaking from the pulpit or teaching men, or teaching without having the participation of a man). Quoting from the NIV Bible and Peterson's Message version of the Bible, and sometimes N.T. Wright's Biblical Translation, those passages are as follows:

- A) 1 TIMOTHY 2: 8-15/NIV: (These are certainly the passages which are most often cited): *“I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing. I also want women to dress modestly with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God. A WOMAN SHOULD LEARN IN QUIETNESS AND FULL SUBMISSION. I DO NOT PERMIT A WOMAN TO TEACH OR HAVE AUTHORITY OVER A MAN; SHE MUST BE SILENT. FOR ADAM WAS FORMED FIRST, THEN EVE. AND ADAM WAS NOT THE ONE DECEIVED; IT WAS THE WOMAN WHO WAS DECEIVED AND BECAME A SINNER. BUT WOMEN WILL BE SAVED THROUGH CHILDBEARING-IF THEY CONTINUE IN FAITH, LOVE AND HOLINESS WITH PROPRIETY.”* (Emphasis Added)
- B) 1 TIMOTHY 2: 8-15/THE MESSAGE: *“Since prayer is at the bottom of all this, what I want mostly is for men to pray-not shaking angry fists at enemies but raising holy hands to God. And I want women to get in there with the men in humility before God, not primping before a mirror or chasing the latest fashions but doing something beautiful for God and becoming beautiful doing it. I DON'T LET WOMEN TAKE OVER AND TELL MEN WHAT TO DO. THEY SHOULD STUDY AND BE QUIET AND OBEDIENT ALONG WITH EVERYONE ELSE. ADAM WAS MADE FIRST, THEN EVE; WOMAN WAS DECEIVED FIRST-OUR PIONEER IN SIN-WITH ADAM RIGHT ON HER HEELS. ON THE OTHER HAND, HER CHILDBEARING BROUGHT ABOUT SALVATION IN EVE. BUT THIS SALVATION ONLY COMES TO THOSE WHO CONTINUE IN FAITH, LOVE, AND HOLINESS, GATHERING ALL INTO MATURITY. YOU CAN DEPEND ON THIS.”* (Emphasis Added)
- C) 1Timothy 2:8-15/N.T. Wright's Translation as taken from his “Paul For Everyone, The Pastoral Letters, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus” (page 21-21): *“So this is what I want: the men should pray in every place lifting up holy hands, with no anger or disputing. In the same way the women too, should clothe themselves in an appropriate manner, modestly and sensibly. They should not go in for elaborate hairstyles, or gold, or pearls, or expensive clothes. Instead, as is appropriate for*

- women who profess to be godly, they should adorn themselves with good works. *THEY MUST BE ALLOWED TO STUDY UNDISTURBED, IN FULL SUBMISSION TO GOD. I am not saying that women should teach men, or try to dictate to them; rather they should be left undisturbed. Adam was created first, you see, and then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived, and fell into trespass. SHE WILL, HOWEVER, BE KEPT SAFE THROUGH THE PROCESS OF CHILDBIRTH, IF SHE CONTINUES IN FAITH, LOVE AND HOLINESS, WITH PRUDENCE.*" (Emphasis Added)
- D) 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 (NIV): *"As in all the congregations of the saints, WOMEN SHOULD REMAIN SILENT IN CHURCHES. THEY ARE NOT ALLOWED TO SPEAK, BUT MUST BE IN SUBMISSION AS THE LAW SAYS. IF THEY WANT TO INQUIRE ABOUT SOMETHING, THEY SHOULD ASK THEIR OWN HUSBANDS AT HOME, FOR IT IS DISGRACEFUL FOR A WOMAN TO SPEAK IN CHURCH."* (Emphasis Added)
- E) 1 CORINTHIANS 14:33-35 (THE MESSAGE): *"Wives must not disrupt worship, talking when they should be listening, asking questions that could more appropriately be asked of their husbands at home. God's Book of the law guides our manners and customs here. Wives have no license to use their time of worship for unwarranted speaking. Do you-both women and men-imagine that you're a sacred oracle determining what's right and wrong? Do you think everything revolves around you?"*
- F) 1 CORINTHIANS 11: 3-16/NIV (WHICH SEEMS TO PRIMARILY DEAL WITH THE ISSUES OF HEAD COVERINGS FOR MEN AND WOMEN AND HAIR STYLES, BUT WHICH, IN RELEVANT PART STATES): *"Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, AND THE HEAD OF THE WOMAN IS MAN, AND THE HEAD OF CHRIST IS GOD. Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonor her head it is just as though her head were shaved...."* (Emphasis Added.)
- G) 1 CORINTHIANS 11: 3-16/THE MESSAGE (PARTIALLY QUOTED HERE): *"Don't, by the way, read too much into the difference between men and women. Neither man nor woman can go it alone or claim priority. Man was created first, as a beautiful shining reflection of God-that is true. But the head on a woman's body clearly outshines in beauty the head of her husband. The first woman came from man true-but since then every man comes from a woman! And since virtually everything comes from God anyway, let's quit going through these "whose first" routines....."*

(Note: These passages in 1 Timothy and 1 Corinthians seem to be the ones which are most often cited by those who oppose having a woman occupy a Senior Position (such as Senior Pastor or member of a board of Elders) or performing certain Roles (such as publicly preaching from the pulpit or teaching men) in Christian Ministry. There are other passages which are cited as supporting the conclusions derived from these passages, those conclusions being, primarily and in blunt language that "A Woman Cannot Preach or Teach, and Certainly Cannot Publicly Preach from the Pulpit or Occupy any Position Wherein She Will Have Authority Over a Man." Perhaps more bluntly stated: "Woman must shut up and learn from their man." Some "supporting passages" are the household codes of 1Corinthians 7, Colossians 3:18-4:1, Ephesians 5:21-33 and 1 Peter 3:1-6 (which provide that wives should submit to their husbands, but also provide that there shall be mutual submission between husbands and wives, a radical idea in the 2nd Temple Jewish, and 1st Century

Greco-Roman worlds), and the descriptions of the qualifications for, and instructions for deacons and overseers of 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 1 Timothy 3:8-13, and Titus, all of which are stated in purely male terms, and provide, for example, that a deacon must be a man with one wife. If we look solely at the male centric language of these instructions, then the argument is that deacons, and overseers and church leaders must be men. Obviously, for example, in their culture only men could have wives.)

Now what are some of the, or at least the primary Biblical passages or pericopes which arguably stand for the proposition, or at least are supportive of the proposition that there can be an equality of qualified and properly called men and women in all Positions and Roles in Christian Ministry: These are as follows (again using the NIV and The Message):

- A) FIRST AND FOREMOST GALATIANS 3:26-29/NIV: *"You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. THERE IS NEITHER JEW NOR GREEK, SLAVE NOR FREE, MALE NOR FEMALE, FOR YOU ARE ALL ONE IN CHRIST JESUS. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."* (Emphasis Added.)
- B) GALATIANS 3:26-29/THE MESSAGE: *"In Christ's family there can be no division into Jew and non-Jew, slave and free, male and female. Among us you are all equal. That is, we are all in a common relationship with Jesus Christ. Also, since you are Christ's family, then you are Abraham's famous 'descendant', heirs according to the covenant promises."*
- C) ROMANS 16, WHEREIN THE APOSTLE PAUL COMMENDED TO HIS READERS SEVEN WOMEN CHURCH LEADERS (Of the Romans 16 list of the commended church leaders, about one-third were women, and no distinction between male and female appears), ONE OF WHOM WAS PHOEBE, WHO WAS ENTRUSTED BY PAUL TO CARRY HIS LETTER TO THE ROMAN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES, AND, DOUBTLESSLY, EXPLAIN SOME PARTS OF IT TO, OR DISCUSS SOME PARTS OF IT WITH THOSE COMMUNITIES/NIV: *"I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church in Cenchrea. I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and to give to her any help she may need from you, for she has been a great help to many people, including me. Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. Greet also the church that meets in their house.....Greet Mary, who has worked very hard for you. Greet Andronicus and Junias (note: a woman), my relatives who have been in prison with me. They are OUTSTANDING AMONG THE APOSTLES, AND THEY WERE IN CHRIST BEFORE I WAS.....Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, these women who work very hard in the Lord. Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord..."* (Emphasis added, since Paul's view of an apostle was one who, like him and the original apostles and others has actually seen the risen Jesus. (1 Cor. 9:1))

- D) 1 CORINTHIANS 11:3-16, WHICH IS QUOTED ABOVE AND WHICH SEEMS TO CLEARLY PROVE THAT A WOMAN CAN AND WILL **PROPHECY** PROVIDED ONLY THAT SHE DOES SO WITH A PROPER HEAD COVERING, WHETHER THAT BE HAIR OR WHATEVER.
- E) 1 CORINTHIANS 12, WHICH DESCRIBES SPIRITUAL GIFTS GIVEN BY THE SPIRIT TO, AND ALLOCATED BY THE SPIRIT AMONG BELIEVERS, AND WHEREIN THERE IS NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN MALES AND FEMALES WHO CAN POSSESS THESE GIFTS (INCLUDING THE GIFT OF PROPHECY, WHICH WOULD SEEM TO REQUIRE PUBLIC SPEAKING IN THE ASSEMBLY).
- F) EPHESIANS 5:21-33 WHEREIN MUTUAL SUBMISSION BETWEEN HUSBANDS AND WIVES IS REQUIRED.
- G) ACTS 18; While, perhaps, the most relevant part of Acts 18 are the passages which describe the relationships of Apollos and Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18: 23-27 wherein Priscilla (obviously a woman) and her husband, Aquila, provided instruction to (obviously taught) Apollos (a man) “the way of God more adequately”, the entirety of Acts 18, and the descriptions of Paul’s Second Missionary Journey indicate that Paul was accompanied in Ephesus by Priscilla and Aquila, and this fact, coupled with the reference to Priscilla and Aquila in Romans 16 would seem to indicate that they were working with Paul, side by side, in Ephesus.

I don’t know about you, Dear Reader, but when I read these passages, and the entirety of the Epistles which contain them, and read the various commentaries about these passages, I become deeply “confused” if that is the appropriate word, about just how some good, intelligent, well trained theologians and church leaders can come to their adamantly, expressed with apparently deep confidence, that the Bible, and Paul in particular (or more appropriately, Jesus speaking through the words of His selected Apostle, Paul), had expressed a “UNIVERSAL RULE” (for want of better words) for all Christian Churches, Congregations, Fellowships and Communities, everywhere for all time, that they may not have a woman: 1) Publicly Preach From the Pulpit, or 2) Be a Senior Pastor, or 3) Teach, or at least Teach without being joined by a man, or 3) Occupy a Position of Leadership (i.e. Senior Pastor, Elder, Deacon, etc.). Why would Paul commend woman leaders and workers in Romans 16, and then say in 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 that a woman should not speak in church? Why would Paul, in his various lists of Spiritual Gifts in 1 Corinthians and elsewhere appear to make no distinctions between men and women, including in those gifts the gift of Prophecy, which would require speaking in public, and then say in 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 that a woman should not speak in church after just saying in 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 that women will prophecy, provided that proper head coverings (apparently hair) are in place? If Priscilla, a trusted co-worker who was able to participate in teaching Apollos and who was left in Ephesus and who would appear to have been in Ephesus and likely working for the church in Ephesus, would she have been included in the apparent admonitions to Timothy in 1 Timothy 2 that “I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man..” as “she must remain silent”? To put it in crude, everyday language, “What Was Going On Here?” “What Was the Deal?” If nothing else, just trying to reconcile the apparent conflicts among Paul’s letters, would seem to create a status of some possible “confusion and questioning”, particularly when one reads some of the various commentaries wherein attempts are made to reconcile these conflicts. Most certainly, I am still a victim of some “confusion and questioning”, which I will try to deal with as I go forward with this paper, this Case Study.

VI) SOME RELEVANT COMMENTARIES AND LITERARY SOURCES:

At this point I am making a confession. We always instruct our students that, when they engage in an exercise of Biblical Hermeneutics (The Science and Art of Scriptural Interpretation and Application) they should engage Commentaries as a last resort. Well, whether as a “last resort” or first resort, I have read a number of Commentaries, Books or other items of Literature, which refer to what we have here called “the Women’s Question”. I cannot say that these literary items have not influenced my thinking, because they obviously have done so. However, they are well worth reading and study, and I commend them to you Dear Reader. These literary items include:

- 1) William J. Webb’s book, *Women & Homosexuals/Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis* (William J. Webb, IVP Academic, 2001): Webb has authored a number of books, but it is in this book that he first described what he refers to as “The Redemptive Movement Hermeneutic” (“RMH”). He has also authored or co-authored several other books in which he applies RMH to a number of vexing Biblical issues, including *Corporal Punishment in the Bible/A Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic for Troubling Texts*, IVP Academic 2011, and *Bloody, Brutal and Barbaric?/Wrestling with Troubling War Texts* (Co-Authored with Gordon K. Oest, IVP Academic, 2019). I cannot claim that I fully understand the RMH Methodology, but my very short, inadequate summary of such methodology, is that, in trying to reach some conclusion about Biblical subjects which are troubling (e.g. Corporal Punishment texts of the Old Testament, the War Texts, Total Wipeout Texts of the Old Testament) you look at the manner in which such a subject was dealt with by the nations and cultures surrounding ancient Israel, and then compare that manner with the manner in which the subject is to be dealt with pursuant to God’s Law, the Mosaic Law or the Torah, and you then try to determine whether there would be a more humane treatment of people under God’s Law, as compared to the rules in effect in the surrounding cultures. If there is such a more humane or ethical treatment, then that is an “Initial movement”. You then go forward in the Biblical Text in order to determine whether that Movement, a Redemptive Movement, goes forward towards an even more humane or ethical direction, a Trajectory, and that Trajectory can then point beyond what might be found in the pages of Scripture towards an even more ethical situation, God’s Ultimate Ethic. This is a very inadequate explanation of RMH, which is much more deeply described in *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals* (Perhaps hereinafter cited as “Webb, Slaves”). In *Slaves*, Webb applies RMH to the vexing problems raised by the Bible’s treatment of Slavery, the Bible’s treatment of Women, and the Bible’s treatment of the questions surrounding homosexuality. Using an extensive RMH analysis with respect to the questions about how God’s Ultimate Ethic with respect to the many “women’s issues”, including women in ministry, women in the marriage and home, and women in the marketplace, Webb concludes that the Biblical Trajectory points forward to an Ultimate

Ethic in which there shall be equality (meaning an egalitarian ethic) between males and females, or a “soft complementarian” stance (where women can teach or preach, but cannot be a Senior Pastor or member of a Board of Elders) . Note that Webb took into consideration all of the texts that we are wrestling with here. I believe that he favors an egalitarian treatment or mutuality between males and females, considering all of the relevant Biblical texts.

- 2) *Hearing Her Voice/A Biblical Invitation for Women to Preach (Fresh Perspectives on Women in Ministry, A Case for Women Giving Sermons)/Revised Edition* (John Dickson, Zondervan 2014) (Which might be hereinafter cited as “Dickson, Hearing Her Voice”): Dickson provides an intensive, scholarly, well researched and thought- out argument in which he looks, at length, at 1 Timothy 2:11-12, *Let a woman learn quietly with submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to reach or exercise authority over a man: rather she is to remain quiet*, (emphasis added), and in which he advocates, very persuasively, for a conclusion that this passage, taken in context, cannot be applied in today’s world so as to bar a woman from delivering a “modern day sermon”, such as is customarily given in our Christian churches of today. He notes that there are many public-speaking ministries mentioned in the New Testament—teaching, exhorting, evangelizing, prophesying, reading and so forth, and that Paul restricts just one of them, to qualified men. Dickson makes no argument that the position of Senior Pastor can be filled by a woman, but rather restricts his analysis to the question of whether or not a woman would be barred by Paul’s 1 Timothy 2:11-12 admonition to Timothy from delivering a sermon of the type customarily delivered in today’s Christian churches. In reaching his conclusions, Dickson notes that: 1) Paul’s letters were written before the Gospels were written, 2) Many of the hearers of the audience in Ephesus were illiterate, in that they were unable to read, 3) The teachings of Jesus, which were entrusted to the Apostles (and to Paul, who personally saw the risen Jesus, and who received the Gospel by revelation from Jesus (see Galatians 11-24)) were not written down when Paul wrote his letters, and were passed on to new Christians and converts by word of mouth, oral tradition, from the Apostles (including Paul and others) who were “entrusted with the words and teachings of Jesus and the rulings of the Apostles which constituted what is referred to as ‘the Apostolic Deposit’”, 4) Only those entrusted with this Apostolic Deposit (originally the Apostles and those taught by the Apostles, including Timothy), were permitted by Paul to “teach the Apostolic Deposit” in churches, 5) Women, who were sorely restricted from abilities and resources of learning in the 2nd Temple and Greco-Roman worlds of the 1st century, were, at least arguably, unable or ill equipped to “learn or be entrusted with the Apostolic Deposit”, and, therefore, although they could engage in public speaking, in the churches, by exhorting and prophesying , and so forth, they could not *teach the Apostolic Deposit*, 6) Since the Apostolic Deposit was not available, in written form in Paul’s day (other than by way of his letters which supplemented extensive oral teachings, which far exceeded the contents of his letters), those who were vested with knowledge of that Deposit were “teachers”, and were the only ones to whom to turn for questions about the Apostolic Deposit. Today, now that the New Testament has been written and published, the Apostolic Deposit no longer needs to be passed on by oral transmission. It is available for all to read and study, and for use in checking or verifying what is said. Most modern- day sermons would not be considered to be a “setting forth of the Apostolic Deposit”

but would, rather, be considered to be exhortation, or something akin thereto, and, therefore, the role of delivering such sermons would not be restricted to men. That said, Dickson does not argue that a woman can fill the role of Senior Pastor, or can deliver a sermon which would be considered to be a laying out or setting forth of the Apostolic Deposit.

- 3) *Paul Through Mediterranean Eyes/Cultural Studies in 1 Corinthians* (Kenneth E. Bailey, InterVarsity Press, 2011) (which might be hereinafter cited as “Bailey”): This is a huge, monumental work by an acclaimed author and lecturer in Middle Eastern New Testament studies, who spent a considerable number of years in the Middle East, working among its people. I cannot, at this stage, claim that I have studied the entirety of this important, huge work. I have, however, studied with interest, Bailey’s analysis of 1 Corinthians 14:33-40, which Bailey concludes is the ending bookend of that part of 1 Corinthians which constitutes an essay focusing on problems of conflict and confusion in worship within the Corinthian Christian community and the need for love. He states that: *“The Corinthians were quarrelling over the place of men and women in worship, disorders in both sacrament and word and over spiritual gifts and their use. Presenting the various parts of the discussion in this carefully balanced way was clearly important for Paul.....The women worshippers were chatting in church and failing to listen to the women (and men) prophets who were addressing the congregation. In short: Some women were preaching—and other women were not listening to them....”* So, with this introduction at page 15 and 16 of Bailey’s work, I skipped (and will skip) far ahead, to his discussion of 1 Corinthians 14:33-40, at pages 410-417 of his massive book. He has noted the confusion which arises in that Paul clearly allowed for women to prophecy in the worship service, and to clearly have some public speaking role, and the provision of 1 Corinthians 14:33-40 that *“women should remain silent in the churches (as) they are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in church.”* How could a woman openly prophecy, openly speak, and remain silent and not speak? Bailey concludes that “the passage before us can perhaps be found in the composition of the church in Corinth”, then the largest city in Greece, which was made up of a huge diversity of peoples, many with very short attention spans. He draws upon his experience as a part of a team of Egyptian Christians engaged in teaching simple villagers in the south of Egypt. He found that the women, through no fault of their own, had a special problem due to their lack of social contacts and limited educational/learning opportunities. He found that these women had an attention span for listening to oral speech of roughly 15 seconds, even though they were intelligent and interested and wanted to learn. He noted that the problems with the women, which he encountered, were not that different from the problems which Paul and other teachers would have encountered in Corinth and other Ancient Culture cities, wherein some (perhaps Paul and Apollos for example) would have spoken in classical formal Greek language, but many of the Corinthian worshippers would have been accustomed to use of a less formal, colloquial language, which contributed to the attention span issue. Bailey experienced situations in Egypt where the men were seated on one side of the church and the women on the other side, and the women had a difficult time in understanding the preaching which was in a dialect different than the common, every day dialect, which they

were accustomed to using. So, with the attention span issue, and the understanding of the dialect of the speaking issue, the women would, oftentimes, fall into chatting (in church) with each other, a factor which was disruptive of the worship service. Bailey notes from the writings of John Chrysostom that he encountered similar problems when he would preach, in the fourth century, in the great Cathedral of Antioch, and the women's chatting would create a huge disruption. Bailey concludes that if Chrysostom experienced this problem in the fourth century, it is more than reasonable to think that Paul and other teachers were experiencing the same problems in Corinth in the 1st Century. Bailey further notes that there was a further reality at play, since Middle Eastern Society is now, and most certainly was in the 1st century, a predominantly oral culture, a fact which he encountered in his 17 years in Egypt, 17 years in Syria and Lebanon, and 10 years in Palestine. People receive and process information by talking more than by sitting quietly and listening. So, in Bailey's view: "Multiple factors must be considered. Attention-span problems, limited knowledge of Greek, accent issues, language levels of Greek in use, lack of amplification for the speakers, along with chatting as a methodology for learning are all involved. The women (therefore) slip into the list (of people who are admonished about disruption of the worship) along with tongues speakers and prophets. All three categories, when worship is disrupted, are asked by Paul to 'keep silent in church.'" Paul is saying, 'Women please stop chatting so that you can listen to the women (and men) who are trying to bring you a prophetic word but cannot do so when no one can hear them,'. These "multiple factors" which existed in 1st Century Corinth do not exist today in most of our current day churches. Furthermore, across the Middle East today, and then, an "honor-shame" culture existed and exists oftentimes today, and it was most certainly in Paul's day, shameful for a husband to have his wife engage in a shameful activity, in church, which would disrupt the worship. So, suffice it to say (and this is only an extremely, abbreviated version of Bailey's conclusions, a full outline of which would require a thorough reading, study and outlining of his massive book) Bailey concludes that, even in Corinth, women could and did speak in church by engaging in prophesying, and, in any event, 1 Corinthians 14:33-40 does not contain a Universal Rule, applicable to all churches for all time, everywhere, that women may not speak in church.

- 4) *Why Can't Women Do That?/Breaking Down the Reasons Churches Put Men in Charge* (Phillip B. Payne and Vince Huffaker, Vinati Press, 2021) (which might be hereinafter cited as "Payne and Huffaker"): I will discuss this very important book, in greater detail, in a later portion of this paper. However, it is interesting to note that Bailey (as set forth in 4) above, seeks to explain the "Women are not allowed to speak in church" provision of 1 Corinthians 14:33-40 by identifying the cultural factors which were in effect in 1st Century Corinth that led to these provisions. To the contrary, Payne and Huffaker strongly advocate for the position that the "women should be silent" admonitions did not appear in Paul's 1 Corinthians Epistle. They argue, at pages 111-120 of their book, that the words of 1 Corinthians 14:33-35, as they appear in our current day Bibles, were not Paul's words and were not in his letter, but rather were inserted later by some scribe or compiler, who thought that that insertion was required in order to reflect the correct cultural elements. I have to leave it to you, Dear Reader, to read Payne and Huffaker's book in order to

understand their arguments about such later insertion. The arguments are persuasive, but cannot be adequately outlined here.

- 5) *1 Corinthians 14:33b-38 as a Pauline Quotation-Refutation Device* (Kirk R. MacGregor, Priscilla Papers/Vol. 32, No. 1, Winter 2018, cbeinternational.org, pages 23 et seq.): MacGregor, a well respect theologian and author, does not accept Payne and Huffaker's conclusion that the "Women must be silent" provisions of 1 Corinthians 14 were not the words of Paul but were inserted later by some compiler. Rather he contends that Paul often used a device of rhetoric, which is referred to as a "Quotation-Refutation Device". (Note that this same argument could well apply to the very confusing 1 Timothy 2:12 provision about Women Being Saved by Childbearing). MacGregor notes that we do not have all of the letters of Paul's correspondence with the Corinthians and them with him. Clearly, from 1 Corinthians we note that Paul, who was not then present in Corinth, had learned of some problems with the Corinthian Christian communities, presumably by way of a letter or letters from those in Corinth (see 1 Cor. 5) He had also addressed an earlier letter to the Corinthians (see 1 Cor. 5:9) The Corinthians had written to him (See 1 Cor. 7:1: "Now for the matters you wrote about...") . MacGregor advocates for a conclusion that the "Women must be silent" provisions, and the following verses, constitute a decisive refutation of a quotation contained in the Corinthians letter to Paul wherein they asked him to clarify a number of matters relating to the worship in their churches. MacGregor contends that Paul introduces both rhetorical questions (in v. 36) "...which he does six times elsewhere in 1 Corinthians to argue against the Corinthians' position (1:13; 6:16; 9:6, 10; 11:22) and five times to express disapproval of a Corinthian practice (6:2; 9:19; 10:22; 11:13)." MacGregor goes on to contend that Paul: "Far from attempting to silence women.....is rebuking the Corinthian men for prohibiting women from speaking in assemblies, for he regards such a restriction as tantamount to alleging that the word of God belongs properly to the men and merely derivatively to any women married to one of them. Paul summarily exposes the absurdity of this allegation....Obviously, the word of God neither originated with men nor has come only to men; hence it is ridiculous, and contrary to the character of the gospel, to act as though the word belongs properly to men by disallowing women from discoursing about it or asking questions about it in church. For these reasons, the preceding thought-unit is shown not to belong to Paul, but is rather Paul's quotation of the Corinthians' position from the letter they had previously sent him, his response to which letter constitutes in large part the purpose of 1 Corinthians."
- 6) *Why Can't Women Do That/Breaking Down the Reasons Churches Put Men In Charge* (The Details are set forth in 4) above, and it is cited herein as "Payne and Huffaker"): I have discussed in 4) above the conclusions of Payne and Huffaker to the effect that the language in 1 Corinthians 14 that Women Should Remain Silent In Church was not Paul's language, but rather was inserted, later, by some scribe who subscribed to the then prevalent Greco-Roman cultural bias against women speaking in public, even more so if they disagreed with their husbands, something that would "shame" both the woman and the man. However, Payne and Huffaker did a great deal

more with their book, in which they concluded that no purportedly inferior intellectual capacity of women as compared to men, and that no inferior leadership capacity of women as compared to men, and that no Biblical text or pericope, when properly read in light of the culture and situation in which it was written or first spoken prohibits a Godly called, properly knowledgeable competent woman from: 1) Preaching from the pulpit (of course, Dickson agrees with this proposition in “Hearing Her Voice” described in 2) above), or 2) Occupying positions of Senior Leadership in a Christian church or community, including the position of Senior Pastor and the position of Elder. So, Payne and Huffaker come down, squarely, on the side of egalitarianism (mutuality between competent, properly called men and women). I consider this to be an important book, and I have previously prepared for the Theological Education Initiative (“TEI”) an extensive, 13-page Book Review about this book. (Yes, I know that such is way to long for a Book Review, as this paper is too long). That Book Review is available for your review on the TEI website, and I am not going to repeat it here. Suffice it to say that, in dealing with the Biblical passages or pericopes which are cited by those who oppose a woman’s acting in Senior Positions or Roles in a Christian Ministry (the same passages/pericopes which are quoted in the above parts of this paper) Payne and Huffaker reach well thought out, very well expressed conclusions that such passages/pericopes do not restrict a woman’s role solely by reason of her gender. Of particular interest are their arguments about what appear to be the strongest, most restrictive provisions against women’s roles, those being Paul’s admonitions to Timothy in 1 Timothy 2:8-15, particularly the admonition that: *“I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety”.* (NIV) The authors make what appears to be a very detailed, well thought out and documented argument for the position that this admonition to Timothy was both culturally and situationally based. It was generated by the pagan, Roman culture of Ephesus, which was, of course, one based in the pagan worship of gods and the Roman culture of the Imperial Cult and Emperor worship. It was also generated by the situation confronting Paul and Timothy wherein individuals, men and women but particularly women, who were not educated in the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles were spreading false doctrines. Paul had left Timothy in Ephesus to guide its church, but left with the fear that those trying to advocate false doctrines would steer the fragile Ephesian church away from the true Gospel and the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles. Paul’s great fear was that false teachers would descend upon the Ephesian church (Acts 20:29-31). In Paul’s view, some of these false teachers were “willfully blasphemous”, and that some spoke blasphemy out of ignorance, a condition which Paul found to be excusable and correctable. In much of 1 Timothy 1:18-20 wherein Paul spoke harshly of two who, in Paul’s view, were engaged in “willful blasphemy”, Hymenaeus and Alexander, Paul spoke to Timothy about misinformed teachers who were being deceived by false teachings. So, the fear of false teachings, whether delivered willfully or out of ignorance formed a part of the motivation for the admonitions of 1 Timothy 2:8-15. Additionally, the authors note that, in Ephesus, the goddess Artemis held a huge influence, particularly over women for whom she was sort of a patron goddess who would see

them through issues of sexual matters and child bearing. The leaders of the cult of Artemis were primarily strong women, and it is natural to believe that they had a role in the Ephesian Christian community and that they were, because of their positions in the cult of Artemis, able to exercise strong influence over the community, particularly its women and then, in further particularity, its women of child bearing age. So, in the view of the authors of this very important book, Paul, beginning at 1 Timothy 2:11 addresses the fundamental problem of women teaching or speaking in church who are not properly trained in the gospel and the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles, stating (actually commanding) that they learn “in quietness and full submission”. Timothy is actually “commanded by Paul” that these women should learn. I have, in the book review cited above (at pages 9-11 of that Review) provided a detailed, 11 point by point, outline of the authors’ arguments to the effect that Paul’s admonitions of 1 Timothy 2 do not provide for a permanent, for all Christian churches, for all times, everywhere, a command that women not be permitted to preach, teach or hold any senior positions, including Senior Pastor, in a Christian church, solely by reason of their gender. I leave it to you, Dear Reader, to read that book review, or, more appropriately, this important book. I think that the length of my book review, 13 pages, is reflective of the importance I attach to this book, and of my belief that the arguments of the authors of that book are highly persuasive.

- 7) *Paul for Everyone/1 Corinthians* (N.T. Wright, Westminster John Knox Press, 2004): As will become apparent from following parts of this paper, N.T. Wright, a very important and influential New Testament Scholar, has become one of my favorite theologians, if not, in fact, my favorite theologian. Yes, I know that some of his views are controversial, but, having read a number of his books (all of which are excellently written and fully researched) I have become persuaded that his views are correct. For purposes of this paper in which one of the passages cited by advocates for the position that the roles of women in Christian ministry are restricted by the Bible, I will refer to Wright’s analysis of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40, and, particularly, verses 33-36 which provide that in Christian assemblies women should not be permitted to speak but should inquire of their husbands, at home, if they are troubled by certain issues. Wright allows for a number of views as to these verses, noting however that they cannot mean that Paul would prohibit women from engaging in prophecy, as, in Chapter 11 of 1 Corinthians Paul assumed that women would take leading roles in praying and prophesying. Wright would agree with Payne and Huffaker’s position that these verses might have been inserted by a scribe, at a later date, in an attempt to “fill in the gaps” of Paul’s teaching. However, he would also allow for the possible, if not in fact probable view of Bailey that some Corinthian women, who were not learned (through no fault of their own) and who could not understand the language or dialect being spoken by the main speakers were talking (as Bailey puts it “chatting”) among themselves and were thereby disrupting the proceedings. Wright also is of the belief that some Corinthian women, who thought that they knew more than their husbands, might actually be disrupting the proceedings by questioning the words of their husband in open church, something which would have been both scandalous of and harmful to the honor of both the woman and her husband. We cannot know the actual reasons for the insertion of these troublesome verses in 1

Corinthians, but we can know that Paul did not restrict women from publicly preaching and prophesying, activities which would have required “speaking in church”. As Wright points out: “What is clear is that this was a particular problem posed from within the cultural setting of the time, and that Paul’s overriding concern (if the passage is indeed written by him) is for order, peace and mutual upbuilding when the congregation comes together for worship, rather than chaos, interruption and dissension....The important thing is that everything be done in a fitting and proper manner, and with proper order.” (Wright, 1 Corinthians pages 196-201)

8) *Women and the Nature of Ministry* (Walter L. Leifeld, *Jets* (Journal of Evangelical Theological Society), March 1987, PPs. 49-61) (possibly cited herein as “Leifeld”): Again, this is a paper for which I have prepared a November, 2023 Review for TEI (Theological Education Initiative) and that Review can be seen at the TEI website. I will not repeat it herein. While Leifeld hesitates to express a definite opinion, his apparent view is in line with the one expressed by John Dickson in *Dickson, Hearing Her Voice* described in 2) above. However, Leifeld does seek to confront what he calls “The Theology of Ministry” and to answer the question: “How Can We Make Our Patterns of Ministry More Biblical?”, and to thereby determine the proper roles for women (and men for that matter) in Christian Ministry. The Author, Leifeld, does not dispute the need to apply the principles taught by Paul in 1 Timothy 2:8-15, but he cautions that, taking today’s culture into account and the huge differences between that culture’s perception of the roles of women today as compared to the perception of those roles as it existed in first century Greco-Roman culture (and 2nd Temple Jewish culture for that matter) when Paul wrote his epistles, we “MIGHT DO GREAT HARM TO THE CHURCH’S ABILITY TO CONVEY THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL TO CONGREGATIONS OF TODAY IF WE RESTRICT THE ROLES OF WOMEN IN MINISTRY, AND, IN PARTICULAR, IF WE BAR WOMEN WHO ARE QUALIFIED TO SO TEACH AND PREACH BY A CALL FROM GOD AND BY APPROPRIATE SPIRITUAL GIFTING AND TRAINING, FROM THE ‘PUBLIC ROLE’ OF TEACHING AND PREACHING FROM THE PULPIT, A ROLE WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED SHAMEFUL IN THE 1ST CENTURY”. Leifeld argues that we have to look at the form of Christian Worship in a current day, New Testament church, as compared to the form of Christian Worship, as it existed in the first century, including in Ephesus. In the first century, Church was along the lines of an extended household, with intermingled elements from other social configurations. They did not have the form of contemporary “top down”, polar structure of preacher and audience of today’s churches. The implication of these differences in the forms of the early, first century Church and today’s Church, with respect to public perception of preaching/teaching are obvious. Preaching is a far more public function today. We all acknowledge that ministry is inevitably to some degree public and therefore a cultural matter. Therefore, “WHAT IS NEEDED IS TO DETERMINE FROM THE TEXT ARE THE PRINCIPLES BEING TAUGHT THAT ARE APPLIED APPROPRIATELY IN DIFFERENT CULTURES. SCRIPTURE IS NOT CULTURALLY RELATIVE, BUT IT IS CULTURALLY RELEVANT”. Leifeld, therefore, argues that, applying the principles of 1 Timothy 2:11-14 “cross culturally”, meaning finding and applying those principles which are timeless and not culturally bound might well lead to a conclusion (a conclusion he has but is, as an academic, apparently afraid to bluntly state) that would not be

one which would restrict the roles of women in ministry solely by reason of their gender, and that to restrict such roles might well do damage to the Church's ability to further the Gospel. Since, in any hermeneutical analysis of any Biblical text it is important to know just what the author of that text, or the authority who generated that text, actually said, in his language, and how that text, in his language, can be properly translated into our English language, the author of this paper, Leifeld, makes a couple of other, very important points about the wording of "A woman should learn in quietness and submission. **I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent...** ." The Greek words used by Paul for "to teach" (*didaskein*) and "authority" (*authentein*) have been classically interpreted in our English version Bibles, including the NIV, as "to teach" and "authority". In our author's, Leifeld's view, our English translations fail to make it clear that the Greek word used by Paul for "authority" (*authentein*), has a somewhat uncertain meaning, and that its meaning, in the English language, when coupled with *didaskein*, is far from clear. It is far from clear as to just what kind of "teaching" and "authority" are barred (or were then barred) to women. The author notes that this Greek word, *authentein*, does not appear anywhere else in Scripture. In the author's view, that word, *authentein*, does not simply refer to one having authority, or being given authority, or occupying a position in which authority is vested, but, rather, means that one has arrogated or usurped to oneself some authority which he or she did not possess or was not properly given to him or her. In other words, he or she improperly seizes or acts with authority, but without actually having that authority. The person grabs authority or purports to have authority, or speaks with authority which he or she does not actually have. So, in the view of the author, the restrictions which Paul sought to place on women, who were not learned and properly knowledgeable of the Gospel and of the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles, was not so much on what they did, but on how they did it, and how they purported to have the authority to do so. It should be noted that our other authors, Payne and Huffaker, in their book, have also expressed their view that the Greek word, *authentein*, which appears nowhere else in the Bible, properly interpreted, means "to assume authority", or taking or assuming authority on one's own initiative, or "aggregating to oneself authority which was not properly given" and that, in 1 Timothy 2:12 the Greek words, *didaskein* (for to teach) and *authentein* (for assuming authority not properly given) are joined together by the Greek conjunction, *oude*, meaning that Paul is not talking about two separate issues, teaching and having authority, but one single issue, teaching and assuming to oneself, authority over a man. In the views of both Leifeld and Payne and Huffaker, the words interpreted into English as "I Do Not Permit", are better translated as "I AM NOT PERMITTING", which implies a temporary, not permanent state of affairs, and they also note that the word "permit" is never used in the Bible as a universal command, but rather indicates a temporary permission. So, in conclusion, Leifeld on the one hand, and Payne and Huffaker on the other hand, conclude that what Paul is saying in 1 Timothy 2:12, properly interpreted from Greek to English, is that he is prohibiting, on a temporary basis, unlearned women from usurping authority not properly given to them, from teaching. They are to learn, in fact Timothy is commanded to have them learn, in quiet submission. They are not to teach that which they do not know, thereby furthering false or improper doctrines because of lack of knowledge. We can here add one further note. In

Ephesus, where the goddess Artemis had huge influence, and where her cults were led by powerful women, those women, if they were included in a Christian community, would likely have thought that they had authority to speak, when, in fact, they had no such authority in that setting and no knowledge or education about the subjects which should have been discussed in that setting. Leifeld also makes a somewhat innovative, perhaps unusual contribution to the debates about the propriety of women's roles in ministry. He concedes, absolutely, that Scripture governs. If Scripture, in fact, says that the roles of women must be restricted, then so be it. God's Wisdom, not human wisdom governs. That said, in looking at today's churches and their services, as compared to the churches and services of the 1st century, we should (in Leifeld's view) engage in an exercise of 'REVERSE CONTEXTUALIZATION'. Such an exercise, as I understand Leifeld's contention, would look at the nature of our current day churches and services, and then look back, in reverse, at the nature of the 1st century churches and their services, rather than to first look at the first century churches and then look forward to our current day churches. The contexts between the nature of our current day churches and the nature of the first century churches are substantial. Their natures are markedly different. A "Reverse Contextualization" approach requires that we look at our current day patterns of ministry, and then look back to the patterns of ministry that existed in 1 Timothy times, the 1st century in the Greco-Roman world. You look from current day back, not from back to current day. You then might ask whether "...the contemporary ministry at issue has been proven to be that prohibited by the text?" In Leifeld's view our contemporary practices of ministry are dramatically different from those of the 1st century, and, therefore, one cannot say that for a woman to participate in our current patterns of ministry would be comparable to participation by a woman in the patterns of 1st century ministry. The FORMS of current day, top down, pastor and congregation ministry differ, substantially from the extended household, mutually participating ministries of the 1st century, where many of the congregants would talk and publicly pray and prophesy in the worship service.

9) *Nobody's Mother/Artemis of the Ephesians in Antiquity and the New Testament* (Sandra L. Glahan, IVP Academic 2023): This is another very important book. It brings an entirely new light upon Paul's admonitions to Timothy in 1 Timothy 2:5-18. The author casts this new light by way of her exhaustive research into the goddess Artemis, and just who she was believed to be in Ephesus, and how her influence upon the people (particularly the women) of Ephesus was extremely strong. Some of the important women of Ephesus were priests or leaders in the cult and temple of Artemis. Most of the women in Ephesus were strongly affected by their beliefs in Artemis, particularly their beliefs that she, Artemis, would look after them during pregnancy and childbirth. If I can refer you, Dear Reader, to just one book which deals with the proper exegesis of, and proper application of the principles of 1 Timothy 2:5-18 it would be this book. It is a book for which I prepared a Book Review for TEI (Theological Education Initiative) in June, 2024. That Review can be found on the TEI website. It is an extensive Review, which I will not repeat here. Sandra Glahan, the author of this important book, is a highly respected scholar and theologian, and she has made a major contribution to the debates surrounding 1 Timothy 2:5-18 by her historical descriptions of the goddess Artemis, as she

existed in ancient times, and, particularly, in 1st century Ephesus. Dr. Glahan, like many of us, has puzzled over these parts of 1 Timothy 2, and over trying to understand why the Apostle Paul, who worked with, evangelized with, entrusted very important ministry roles to, and celebrated women co-workers, and who clearly allowed women to openly and publicly pray and engage in prophesying, in the Christian assemblies (See 1 Corinthians 11), would, in these few short verses of 1 Timothy 2 seem to disparage women and their roles in the Church and in the house churches of Ephesus. The Author notes many of the Biblical passages where Paul is described as working with women, and celebrating them, including Romans 16. She discusses the role of Phoebe, who was entrusted by Paul to carry his hugely important Romans letter to the assemblies of the Roman house churches, and with, doubtlessly, then reading and discussing the contents of that complex letter with its intended audiences, who doubtlessly had questions about the letter's contents. Phoebe was a person in whom Paul obviously reposed substantial trust. In some respects, she was entrusted by Paul to convey the Gospel and Paul's teachings to the people of the house church assemblies in Rome, a hugely important city which Paul had not yet visited, and the Christian people of which he sought to enlist to help him in his future missionary efforts. To contend that Paul did not trust women to convey the Gospel and proper Doctrines is a contention that falls apart in the face of Phoebe. The author also considers Prisca (i.e. Priscilla) who is mentioned before her husband, Aquila (something highly unusual in the Greco-Roman world), and who engaged in the instruction/teaching of Apollos, a learned philosopher (Acts 18:24-28), and who accompanied Paul to Ephesus, and who was likely in Ephesus when Paul wrote to Timothy. The author further notes the then ground-breaking statements of Paul in Galatians 3:26-28 by which he expresses a then revolutionary equality of Jews and Greeks, Slaves and Free, Male and Female in Christ Jesus, statements which, at the time when written (when there was essentially no separation between religion and politics and social customs) would have had broad social as well as redemptive effects. As the author concludes "Something here (meaning in 1 Timothy 2:8-15) just does not make sense". Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly for purposes of this paper, what do we make about this business that "women will be saved by childbearing"? The author, Dr. Glahan, who is a married woman, and who, despite desiring children and seeking to have children but was unable to have children (and was prevented from adopting them for reasons beyond her control) asks whether this phrase about childbearing in 1 Timothy stands for the proposition that, in order to be saved, all women must bear children? Does this mean that an unmarried woman cannot be saved? Does this make any sense? So, in the author's, Dr. Galahn's view, something is sorely amiss in the ways in which the 1 Timothy 2:8-15 have been construed as God's Word. Our author, Dr. Galahn, seeks to answer a number of the questions which arise from trying to reconcile the apparent conflicts which arise from what we might call a "Plain Reading" of the 1 Timothy 2:8-15 pericope (a reading which many have contended sets forth a universal, for all Christian churches, for all time, everywhere, under all situations and circumstances, Jesus delivered (through Paul) command to restrict the roles of women in Christian Ministry) and the reading of other pericopes from some of Paul's other epistles and the New Testament texts (e.g. Galatians 3:26-29, Romans 16, 1 Corinthians 11 all of which seem, through "Plain Reading", to stand for Paul's admiration of women in his ministries, Paul's allowing women to publicly speak in church (1 Cor. 11), Paul's allowing a woman, Priscilla to teach a man, Apollos (Acts 18:24-28), and to work with

him in Ephesus, and Paul's entrusting a woman, Phoebe, to carry to the churches in Rome his important letter to the Romans and to, doubtlessly discuss such letter with the congregations of those churches). However, in my view, her (our author's) greatest contribution to the debates about the meanings of 1 Timothy 2:8-15, and its application to our churches, is to remind us that parts, passages or pericopes which are taken from Scripture can neither be properly understood nor have the current day applications of their principles, if any there are, be determined unless: 1) the original audiences for such parts, passages or pericopes are properly identified, together with the cultural backgrounds of such audiences, 2) the situations, if any there are, of such audiences, or of the author's relationship with such audiences, which the author might be trying to address by such part, passage or pericope are identified and understood, and 3) the author's purpose in addressing such part, passage or pericope to such audiences and situations is identified and understood (i.e. what is the author trying to do with what the author is saying). Paraphrasing Dr. Galahn's words: *"Scripture does not change based on culture, nor does it contradict itself, but scholars might be able to reconcile competing passages that appear to contradict each other by considering the differing audiences and contexts in which the words were written and read-**because every biblical text has a literary, historical-cultural and social context**".* (emphasis added). So, what does Dr. Galahn note about the historical-cultural and social context of the situation confronting both Paul and Timothy with the audiences of the churches in Ephesus which Paul was trying to assist Timothy in dealing with by way of 1 Timothy 2: 8-15? (Note that there were really two audiences of 1 Timothy, Timothy and the people of the churches of Ephesus. Some of those people were creating the situations which Timothy and Paul were confronting. So, what was their historical, cultural and social context?) What was the historical-cultural and social context of the people of the churches of Ephesus, or of Ephesus itself? In order to identify these contexts Dr. Galahn uses all of the tools of education, history, literary analysis, archeology, anthropology, and iconography, which are available today to modern day scholars in order to take a "fresh new look" at 1st Century Ephesus, and particularly at the goddess Artemis, who might well be called the patron goddess of 1st Century Ephesus. Her conclusion is that most scholars and theologians who have tried to deal with 1 Timothy 2:8-15 have not properly understood who Artemis was believed by the Ephesians to be, or the huge influence which she and her followers of her cult (many of whom and the leaders of whom were women) had over the Ephesians generally, and the women of Ephesians in particular. Contrary to the assertions of many scholars about Artemis, she was not a goddess of sex, fertility and child bearing. She was not a goddess of the prostitutes. To the contrary she was a virgin goddess. She espoused virginity for her followers. She encouraged non-marriage, and non-childbearing. She was a complex figure, who was both a nurturer of and protector of pregnant women and a midwife who would assist them at childbirth. But she was also a warrior and huntress goddess akin to the Amazons who had purportedly (through legend) founded Ephesus. She could be counted on to try to help and watch over pregnant women through their (very dangerous and often painfully fatal in those times) pregnancies, and who could be counted on to painlessly and humanely euthanize a woman who was encountering a painful, dangerous, unsuccessful child birth, by shooting them with her arrows. At that time, child bearing was a dangerous situation for a woman (many of who died young, in "bad birth", agonizing situations). Part of the role of Artemis (who had watched her mother go through an

agonizing death in connection with the birth of Artemis's twin brother, the god Appollo) was to protect her women followers from having to undergo such a terrible situation. Artemis was a twin. She was the first born of two children of a goddess who was impregnated by Zeus. Artemis's mother went through terrible agony and death in her delivery of Appollo. Artemis resolved that she would never undergo such a situation, and resolved to forever remain a virgin and to encourage her followers to do the same. So, she was not an advocate of childbearing. In fact, she opposed it. Ephesus was the site of a huge temple for Artemis (sometimes referred to as Diana). The supporters and patrons of that temple, and the leaders of its cult, were prominent women of Ephesus, who had huge influence with its people, particularly its women. The author, Dr. Galahn, notes the difficulty which these women, and any women of Ephesus, would have had in "leaving behind all of their beliefs and dependencies upon their goddess" and, in effect, rejecting her and becoming devoted followers of Jesus, and being dependent upon Jesus. As a personal aside, I think that we underestimate the difficulties of Paul (and Timothy for that matter) in each of the Greco-Roman, Pagan cities in which he (they) sought to further the gospel, and lead the formerly pagan god and goddess dependent and worshipping, and emperor worshipping people away from what had been essential parts of their lives and world views. Our author, Dr. Galahn, takes the 1 Timothy 2:8-15 pericope, line by line, phrase by phrase, and concludes that Paul was seeking to aid Timothy in dealing with a highly charged situation in Ephesus, in which both men (some specifically identified) and influential women (likely strong Artemis followers and leaders in her temple and cult) were "preaching false doctrine" (a fake gospel (perhaps a blending of the gospel and of the cult of Artemis) and were disrupting and destroying unity in the affairs of the local house churches in Ephesus. The Christians of Ephesus were being subjected to major falsehoods, some related to Artemis and her worship, and the belief that she "would save women through the painful, dangerous ordeals of childbearing and childbirth" (my words). In particular, the author concludes that when Paul used the peculiar phrase "but women will be saved through childbearing..." he was quoting, and refuting an Ephesian locally used phrase about Artemis's helping women through childbearing. (Note: This quotation and refutation technique was, according to Kirk MacGregor, often used by Paul, particularly in 1 Corinthians. See 5) above.)

10) *Tell Her Story/How Women Led, Taught and Ministered in the Early Church* (Nijay K. Gupta, IVP Academic/Intervarsity Press, 2023) (Perhaps hereinafter cited as "Gupta, Tell Her Story"): I have also done an extensive Book Review of this book in July, 2024. That Review can be found at the TEI Website. I refer you, the Reader, to this marvelous book, and to that extensive Review, which I will not repeat herein. In this book the author, Dr. Gupta (a hugely talented and respected theologian, seminary professor and Christian Author, whose credentials are above reproach) succeeds in dispelling the concept that only men had important roles in Scripture, including in both the Old and New Testaments. The author refutes the concept that in Scripture "women were never there", even though the times and cultures and societies reflected in Scripture (both very ancient times and the 1st century times of the New Testament) and in which Scripture's authors/authorities (including the Apostle Paul) and the individuals whose stories or teachings were dealt with by them (including Jesus) lived were highly patriarchal. To quote our author, Dr. Gupta: "For centuries, the church has

focused its interest on the male leaders of the early church—as if women weren’t even there. In fact, some seem to think that women weren’t there in the rooms where important things happened. But there is ample evidence, inside and outside of the New Testament that women were actively engaged in ministry, at the frontier of the gospel mission, as respected leaders in the church, and even as primary leaders of household congregations.” In order to argue for, and to support this position, the author, Dr. Gupta, engages in extensive, scholarly, well documented research in order to identify the women of important roles in both testaments. In identifying the causes for his interest in pursuing this project, the author first notes the verses of Romans 16:1-15 wherein the Apostle Paul extends greetings and COMMENDATIONS to twenty-six people (one of the longest lists in the New Testament, other than the genealogies in Matthew and Luke), one third of whom were women. The author ponders that fact, noting that Paul commended the people (men and women) on this list as leaders and co-workers in the Roman churches and in Paul’s ministry, including: Phoebe (v. 12), Priscilla (v. 3), Mary (v. 6), Junia (v.7, who is referred to as “an apostle”), Tryphena and Tryposa (v. 12), and Persia (v. 12). So, the author asked himself *“If Paul, publicly by way of his massive and massively important letter to the Romans, held in such esteem women who were leaders and workers in the early church, how can we rationally conclude that women held only minor, insignificant roles in the early church, if any roles at all?”* The author’s hope is that *“when we really understand the world in which Jesus and his followers lived, and what the New Testament actually attests about women leaders in the churches, it will become clear that women were there; they were welcomed and supported by the apostles like Paul, they were equipped and trained for ministry leadership, they ministered to leaders, they were on the frontlines of the gospel mission and faced hardships because of it—and some became heroes and legends.”* (emphasis added). So, the author proceeds to identify and review the important women of both Testaments. He starts with the creation order/man created before women, of Genesis, concluding (as I think the Scripture obviously implies) that nothing in Genesis 2 establishes male headship role or female submission to male leadership. In fact, in the author’s view, properly read, the passages of Genesis 2 establish quite the opposite, that man and women are each created in the Image of God, and they are to be joined together as one. The author then reviews the stories of the Fall in Genesis 3, which state that a woman’s desire shall be for her husband, “and he shall rule over thee”, concluding that these were problems created by the Fall, and not a part of God’s intended creation, and that we should not be following Fall created problems, but rather should be seeking to eliminate them. The author skips forward to Deborah, an important Old Testament figure and leader, who was, as a Judge of Israel, chosen by God to lead, even when men, including her husband were available. Other women of importance in the Old Testament, including Hulda, are also identified. Going forward to the New Testament, and the times and cultures in which its books were written (those being the times of Jesus, the Apostles, the Evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) and the Apostle Paul), the author notes that these times and cultures were hugely patriarchal, but that fact notwithstanding some women occupied very important, leadership roles, both in their homes and their societies, and the Christian household churches of those times. Women who played important roles in the life of Jesus (obviously Mary, often referred to as “the Mother of God”), Elizabeth, Mother of John the Baptist, the women who ministered to Jesus, Mary Magdelene, and others are identified and their stories described. For example, see the Song of

Mary, which goes back and reflects on the long history of God's faithfulness to His people and the fulfillment of His Covenant promises. That song resonates with the faith filled songs of inspired women, Miriam ((Ex. 15:1-21), Hannah (1 Sam. 2:1-10), and Deborah (Judg. 5:1-31). These are all militant songs which exult the saving power of God. The author extensively reviews the stories of a number of women who played important roles in the life of Jesus, who obviously respected women, a number of whom were His disciples, although not members of the original 12. Then the author reviews the stories of the many women who had important roles in the life of the early churches, the 1st century churches, noting that these churches were nothing like our churches and that we cannot read our modern experiences and expectations of our current day churches into our readings of the New Testament, particularly the Epistles. The top-down, minister-congregation, "audience-stage dynamic" (of today) was not reflective of the Christian assembly of the early churches" (P. 73). These were more gatherings than they were structured services. Therefore, participants would oftentimes speak up (in fact, if we look at 1 Cor. 11 they very likely did speak up). The author provides a very thorough description of the early churches (and all of this is outlined in my Book Review). (Note: As I go forward with this paper, pages 80-100 of this book, as outlined on pages 5-8 of my Review, are going to play a very important role in my conclusions. We just cannot transpose the structures and experiences of the early churches to our current day churches. They did not have "lead pastors/ministers". They seem to have avoided hierarchal leadership. They were "attendee participation", if you will. Husbands and wives attended, with the likelihood, in this honor-shame, highly patriarchal culture, that both husband and wife would be "shamed" if the wife spoke up and publicly disagreed with her husband.) The author then goes on to tell the stories of important women in the early churches and in the early Gospel mission. The entireties of Chapters 7-9 are devoted to this project. He identifies Phoebe, a respected church leader in the Macedonian churches (see Acts 16), and the person entrusted by Paul to be his "letter carrier" to transmit his important letter to the Romans. Scholars "recognize that she would possess a kind of apostolic agency, operating on Paul's behalf in Rome, especially since she was going to stay in town and could ensure a clear understanding of Paul's messages and potentially bring back a response or report on how the churches were assimilating his teachings." (p. 122). The story of Prisca (i.e. Priscilla), a "skilled teacher" is told. She and her husband, Aquila, travelled, oftentimes with Paul, from city to city. While Paul was in Ephesus with Prisca and Aquila, he wrote 1 Corinthians. It was during their time in Ephesus that Prisca and Aquila encountered and taught Apollos. They seem to have been important leaders of the church in Ephesus. As noted on page 9 of my Review, Prisca and Aquila were in Ephesus when Paul wrote 2 Timothy, and were apparently important house church leaders. Paul refers to Junia in Romans 16:7 as "a venerated apostle and imprisoned hero." The author also deals with the so-called "Prohibition Texts", including the "Household Codes", 1 Cor. 11, and, eventually, 1 Tim. 2:12. His conclusion is that these texts have been wrongly used to restrict the roles of women in Christian ministry in that none of these texts uses the same language, and they "...appear to be situation-specific teachings **having more to do with harmony and unity in the church, and less to do with 'gender roles'**" (p. 156, emphasis added). "He Phoebe away from home to do apostolic work on his behalf. He instructed Nymphia to take responsibility for having the Colossian letter read (and presumably obeyed) in her church. He partnered with Prisca and Aquila in city-to-city missionary

work, treating them as equals in leadership....” (see page `10 of my Review). The author takes 1 Timothy 2, verse by verse, and identifies just why the teachings of this pericope were situational, directed to a specific situation in Ephesus, and concludes that such teachings do not constitute universal commands to all churches, for all time, everywhere and under all circumstances, to exclude women from roles in Christian Ministry. His reading of these texts indicates to him, that “....Paul instructed Timothy to shut down destructive patterns that were forming in the Ephesian community, fueled by outside false teaching that was making inroads in the church...(with some women)...being convinced that they held some superior wisdom and were directly challenging the church’s leaders (most of whom were men)” (P. 165). “Paul wanted to put a stop to the ‘battle of the sexes’ in this community. Women who had fallen prey to false teaching should not disrupt the church gathering...” (p. 165). The author goes on at great, great length to deal with all of the so-called “submission texts” and “prohibition texts”, and concludes that none of them constitutes some universal, for all times, for all Christian communities everywhere, prohibition against a woman’s occupying any role in Christian ministry for which she is Godly called, and properly learned and equipped and competent. Rather, the goal is to maintain harmony and unity in the communities/churches, and to eliminate disruptions in those communities, particularly in worship, and to guard against false teaching in those communities, and where practicable, to have those communities serve as models of behavior and belief for the outside world. His arguments are extensive (and are extensively outlined in my Review cited above), and are highly, highly persuasive.

11) *Women and the Gender of God* (Amy Peeler, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2022): I have wrestled with making a decision as to whether or not to include this book in this compendium of literary sources which deal with the “Women in Ministry” issue. I must first make a candid confession that I have never thought any issue about God’s Gender has really presented a problem. I picked up this book and, through the first few pages thought that it was just “arguing for a solution to a problem which did not exist”. Until confronted with Dr. Peeler’s book, I have always assumed that Christian Doctrine has consistently stood for the proposition that God has no Gender, whether that be male or female, but that He (there I go) has the characteristics of both Genders, and that He (yes, there I go again) created both Male and Female in God’s Image (or as God’s Imagers). I have never thought, or I don’t think that I have ever thought that God is somehow Male or More Male Than Female, or that God has, in some fashion, favored males over females, or that there is anything about the Gender of God which has caused the Church or some of its Churches to reject women for certain Roles or Positions. So, you could put me, at least initially, in the class of those who would ask about the Gender of God issue raised by Dr. Peeler: “Is This Really A Problem?”, or are “We Just Wasting a Lot of Energy Talking About Some Perceived Problem Which Is Not a Significant Problem?” Well, after reading (and understanding to the extent I am capable of understanding) Dr. Peeler’s book, you can Color Me Wrong. Dr. Peeler has convinced me that wrongful perceptions and erroneous Christian Traditions which stand for the proposition that the roles of women in Christian Ministry, particularly those of Senior Pastor, Priest, or Senior Leadership must be restricted or barred are influenced, at least in part if not in fact substantial part, by the beliefs that God, the Father, is

male in gender or possesses more characteristics of the male gender than the female gender, and that Jesus, who was most certainly male, as the perfect revelation of God, not only confirms the maleness of God, but confirms the accuracy of the beliefs that only males can truly intercede with God on behalf of human beings or serve as the mediators between God and humans. In this book, Dr. Peeler refutes the beliefs or perceptions that God is male in gender or that the human maleness of Jesus confirms the propriety of positions that restrict the roles of women in Christian Ministry. Dr. Peeler's book presents very dense, complex, well researched, scholarly and well documented arguments against the maleness of God, and against those restrictions on women's ministry which arise from the perceptions of such maleness. I cannot, truthfully, state that I have really absorbed Dr. Peeler's arguments or her conclusions. Dr. Peeler is an academician, and this book is an academic book written, I think, for academicians or theologians of the Academy. I don't mean this statement as being one which is critical of the book, but as being one which confesses my "non-academic" standing, and my lack of real academic abilities. So, when I read a dense, academic book of this type, I have to try to summarize its contents, for my purposes, and, in this case, for purposes of this paper on the roles of women in ministry. I, therefore, try to summarize what I think are the most important parts of Dr. Peeler's book, as follows:

- a) "Theology has consequences. It is easier to devalue and mistreat those humans who are believed to be less like God. If Christians really want to live out their own claims and value women fully and consistently, they must disabuse themselves of the false idea that men, over and above women, favor this male God."
- b) "When it is added, in some Christian circles, that *only* males can represent God—not because of God's free choice but because of a certain male-like quality in God—the underlying but unstated belief arises to the surface of reality."
- c) Conservative, and many theologians, are of the opinion that Scripture asserts God's maleness. "Conservative theologians retain a tight grip on the male-like masculinity of God. In their view, this grip is released at the very cost of the faith."
- d) The only way in which to support or end masculine privilege in Christian Ministry is to "...attend to the doctrinal center of the faith, the incarnation. As the chief revelation of God, what is disclosed by God in the coming of Jesus Christ defines all knowledge of God."
- e) The incarnation, as narrated in Matthew and Luke, and the most dominant and influential names used in Scripture, which are at the heart of the Christian confession, Father and Son, reveal that there is "...no preference for males because God the Father is not male and God the Son is male like no other."
- f) "That God chose to reveal Godself to humanity, to redeem humanity, by taking on human flesh, *by being born of a woman* sets the appropriate ways to conceive of God."
- g) "This God who honors women and does not favor men is revealed with dazzling clarity in the pregnancy (i.e. that of Mary) that is the epicenter of the Christian faith."

- h) The incarnation itself—the fact that God chose to have a mother—proves the audacious claim that God does, indeed, value women.
- i) In support of these general propositions, all of which, or certainly most of which center on the incarnation, the coming of Jesus/God into this world in human flesh, meaning that God was born of a woman, took human flesh through the virginal pregnancy of a woman, Dr. Peeler:
 - 1) Provides an excellent, well documented, both with Scriptural references and ex-Scriptural literature, argument for the proposition that God, the Father, is not male, is not male gendered, and is not more male in His characteristics, than female.
 - 2) Provides a thorough analysis of the events leading up to Mary's pregnancy, without benefit of male participation, and relying upon the birth narratives of both Matthew and Luke, particularly Luke, which demonstrates how God held Mary in the highest respect, and that her acceptance of the commission to be the mother of the Messiah was purely voluntary, on her part, and was not coerced in any way, and that she thought through her decision in a deliberative manner. God's respect for Mary is demonstrated by the discussions the archangel Gabriel had with her.
 - 3) Jesus, who was conceived by the non-sexual actions of the Holy Spirit, had no earthly father. He, as God himself, elected to take on human flesh, with a human mother, Mary, through the hugely humbling experience of human birth, with Mary contributing her human flesh. He was mothered, in every respect, and taught and mentored by Mary, and submitted to the parenthood of Mary and Joseph. While He was male, he was, as the author puts it "a male like no other", as evidenced by his virgin conception, and, as God, taking on human flesh contributed by Mary. He was, therefore, a male, who could and did represent both men and women.
 - 4) "Mary is known to the world because she was the mother of Jesus, but she did more for God than mother Jesus. She provides a template for all Christians whose primary identity resides in their relationship with Christ, whose Christian identity comes to expression in a variety of ways." She served God, not only with her body, but also with her character. God also enabled and honored her ministry to people other than Jesus. "Her ministry is not that of parenting but that of proclamation." The authors of the New Testament portray Mary as speaking truth about God to others. She sings to Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist, while she is carrying Jesus. She instructs the servant at the wedding conversion of water to wine. She testifies to diverse crowds at the Pentecost event. Reasonable inferences to be gained from Scripture would show that she was with the remaining 11 apostles, in the Upper Room, when the resurrected Jesus appeared. The New Testament shows that she ministered both inside and outside of the home. All of this supports conclusions that: 1) God honors and

respects women, 2) God does not favor men over women in proclaiming his word, in ministry.

- j) In short, the perceptions that God is male in gender, and that God possesses more male characteristics than female characteristics, and that men are more like God and more able to represent God and to intercede with God than are women, and that the roles of women in proclaiming the word are limited by God and Scripture, are false perceptions. So, any position that a perceived maleness of the gender of God requires that the roles of women in Christian Ministry must be restricted is not a proper position, and it is not supported by Scripture.

Sorry to belabor this outline of this dense book, but I had to do so for my own purposes in trying to properly write this paper.

12) *Study Notes for 1 Timothy 2:8-15 Which Appear in the NIV Life Application Study Bible:* Sometimes we overlook good sources of information which are readily available to us through our Bibles. These Study Notes, point out a number of significant facts and factors, including:

a) "To understand these verses, we must understand THE SITUATION in which Paul and Timothy worked. In first-century Jewish culture (and I would add Greco-Roman culture) women were not allowed to study. When Paul said that women should *learn* in quietness and full submission, he was offering them an amazing new opportunity to learn God's Word. That they were to listen and learn quietly and submissively referred to an attitude and composure (not total silence). In addition, Paul himself acknowledges that women publicly prayed and prophesied (1 Corinthians 11:5). Apparently, however, the women in the Ephesian church were abusing their newly acquired Christian freedom. Because these women were new converts, they did not yet have the necessary experience, knowledge or Christian maturity to teach those who already had extensive scriptural education."

b) While some contend that this passage means that women should never teach in the assembled church....."....Paul did not forbid women from ever teaching. Paul's commended coworker, Priscilla, taught Apollos, the great preacher (Acts 18:24-26). Paul frequently mentioned other women who held positions of responsibility in the church. Phoebe worked in the church (Romans 16:1).... ." Romans 16 mentions and commends a number of other women who worked in the church. "Paul was very likely prohibiting the Ephesian women, not all women, from teaching."

c) Other very valuable points are made in these study notes.

13) *Study Note As To 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 (Women should not speak in church) in the NIV Life Application Study Bible:* “In the Corinthian culture, women were not allowed to confront men in public. Apparently, some of the women who had become Christians thought that their Christian freedom gave them the right to question the men in public worship. This was causing a division in the church. In addition, women of that day did not receive formal religious education, as did men. Women may have been raising questions in the worship services that could have been answered at home without disrupting the services. Paul was asking the women not to flaunt their Christian freedom during worship. The purpose of Paul’s words WAS TO PROMOTE **UNITY**, not to teach about women’s role in the church.” (emphasis added)

14) *N.T. Wright, Paul For Everyone/Galatians and Thessalonians:* Yes, I admit it, I have a strong bias for the books and teachings of N.T. Wright. I understand that there are competent theologians who oppose some of Wright’s views, but I find those views to be very well and thoughtfully presented, and to be very persuasive. Sometimes, when it comes to the various theological fields, one can find a number of competing views. I oftentimes think that some writers simply want to offer contrary opinions so that they can get published. So, at least for me, I have to find a theologian, whose views are, for me, very persuasive, and stick with that individual. Wright is one of those individuals in whose views I put substantial trust. All of this said, after I have studied this book of Wright’s, together with Paul’s letter to the *Galatians*, I think that we can from *Galatians* (one of the earliest Christian writings) gain a whole lot understanding of what Paul was about and about his primary concerns in his missions to advance the Gospel, and about some of the overall themes of his ministry. I am not going to try to summarize *Galatians* or this particular *Paul For Everyone* book of Wright’s. However, I think that some of Paul’s main, overriding points which he emphasized in *Galatians* as highlighted by Wright’s commentary in this book are critical to our understanding of Paul’s instructions to Timothy in 1 Timothy 2:8-15 and in several, if not in fact most of Paul’s epistles. What are these overriding points? They are, in my view (relying heavily on Wright’s commentary in this book): 1) Paul was extremely concerned about, and zealous about, establishing and maintaining and defending the **UNITY** of the Church, and of the individual assemblages of the Christian communities which he established, 2) Such **UNITY** requires that all barriers to the constitution of **ONE FAMILY** of all who have attained **FAITH** in Christ, and been baptized into the **FAMILY** of Christ (i.e. the Church) be eliminated, including all barriers of class, culture, and class standing, as specifically stated in *Galatians 3:26-29*, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus”, 3) “Those who are baptized have thus ‘put on the Messiah’, (and) they are the Messiah’s family, (and, therefore) as a result, old distinctions cease to be relevant in terms of their status in the family, their standing before God or one another (which is to say that) every aspect of human identity becomes irrelevant (See Wright’s book at page 42), 4) The Jewish Law, the Mosaic Law, was a gift from God, the purpose of which was to serve as a “placeholder”, or, as Wright puts it, a “Babysitter” of the Jewish people in order to establish boundaries which would identify the Jews as God’s people among the Nations, but the birth, life, death and resurrection of the Messiah have eliminated the need for this placeholder as the Gift of God’s Holy Spirit, who will live within and guide those who have **FAITH** in Christ into the **FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT** have made the **WORKS OF THE**

LAW unnecessary, 5) In the churches of Galatia (and as shown by other Pauline Epistles, in other churches) the community of the churches was being destroyed by DIVISIVE INFLUENCE, the Divisive Influence of Agitators who were preaching FALSE DOCTRINES (those urging that in order to be Saved one had to both have faith in Christ but also must follow the Law, the primary requirement of which was circumcision), and such Divisive Influence, whether caused by False Teachings or otherwise, must be avoided, 6) Divisive Influence of Agitators within a church can cause those of its congregation to turn against each other, sometimes angrily, 7) MUTUAL ENVY AND RIVALRY within the congregation of a church must be avoided. So, what can our main takeaways from Galatians (and Wright's commentary about Galatians) be? How about these: a) False Teachings can lead to Disunity within a congregation, and b) UNITY within the Church and its individual congregations must be maintained, and c) Disruptive speech and actions which create Disunity, Divisions and Lack of Unity must be avoided, and d) There are no Divisions by Class, Social Standing, Gender, or other cultural distinctions within the Body of Christ, and e) FALSE TEACHINGS HAVE TO BE AVOIDED AND FOUGHT AGAINST. If we just take these Takeaways from Galatians, and those we can take away from 1 Corinthians in which Paul's primary purpose was to address certain problems in the Corinthian church and its worship services, we can go a long way in understanding the concerns which led to Paul's instructions to Timothy (and, hence, the church in Ephesus), as set forth in our passages under study, those of 1 Timothy 2:8-15.

15) *A Sermon Delivered at New Life City Church (Kansas City, Mo.) on February 2, 2025 by Reverend Troy Campbell:* It might seem strange to include a Sunday Sermon in my listing and description of sources to which I have referred in preparing this paper. However, this Sermon by Reverend Campbell was/is, in my opinion, brilliantly done. I would urge you, Dear Reader, to find this Sermon on this church's website and to listen to it. Reverend Campbell speaks at length about, and analyzes, verse by verse, 1 Timothy 2:8-15. He does so by utilizing a three- part analysis, that being: 1) Biblical Context, 2) Historical/Cultural Context, and 3) Content (meaning contents/words of the text). In Reverend Campbell's judgment (which he extensively describes) the Biblical Context of Paul's remarks are those of concerns about FALSE TEACHINGS, and BEHAVIOR OR CONDUCT BY SOME IN CHURCH. For historical context, he relies heavily upon Sandra Glahan's book, *Nobody's Mother*, which is cited and described above in this paper. He discusses the manner in which Ephesian women had been encouraged to look to Artemis, their patron goddess, to protect them in childbirth, and to be encouraged to assert themselves against men. Reverend Campbell's conclusions are that there should be, in today's culture and churches, an equal division, 50/50, between men and women, in leadership positions. However, he, apparently, finds that, in his church the, appropriate "roles" (and I cannot find any reference to "roles" in Scripture) of male leadership should be respected in their/his church; my understanding being that they welcome women leadership in groups and would welcome a woman as a Teaching Pastor, but that a woman should not serve on the Board of Elders. Frankly, after listening to Reverend Campbell dissect 1 Timothy 2:8-15, verse by verse, and having him, quite persuasively assert that this pericope does not stand for the barring of women from leadership or teaching positions, I cannot understand how he reaches this position, which might be called a "soft complementarian" position, one where women may lead and teach/preach, but cannot be an Elder

or Senior Pastor. This position seems to be one which is philosophically unsound, in that it contradicts itself. However, I think that one of our local, large, quite successful congregations holds the same position. It allows a woman to be a Pastor and includes her on the Pastoral Staff, and has her preach/teach, but will not allow her to be an Elder. All of my reservations about Reverend Campbell's conclusions notwithstanding, he, quite brilliantly, dissects 1 Timothy 2:8-15, verse by verse. I strongly recommend that you listen to his Sermon. However, I fear that I am not giving this Sermon the respect it truly deserves. I am surprised by the ultimate conclusion that, somehow, even though "there should be an equality (equal numbers) of men and women in the leadership of the church", the speaker and his church nevertheless ask for a respect of their tradition of male leadership, and, apparently, while seeking a female teaching pastor who will teach from the pulpit, they deny any female participation on the Board of Elders. While I clearly do not understand this decision and think that it fails of itself because of its inherent internal contradictions, Reverend Campbell, strongly and eloquently with scholarly support, made some excellent points about 1 Timothy 2:8-15 which must be considered. Those points are as follows:

- a) The opening passages of 1 Timothy make it apparent that the Ephesian church, and Timothy who was left by Paul to lead that church, were confronting situations of false, or misleading teaching, including meaningless meandering teachings about endless genealogies and the Jewish Law, which they did not even understand and which were calculated to mislead or confuse the congregation.
- b) Some in the congregation, including Hymenaeus and Alexander, had rejected their faith and even good conscience, posing a danger to the congregation.
- c) Some of the men of the congregation were lifting unholy hands, meaning unclean hands or even hypocritical hands in prayer (it being the custom to lift hands in prayer, but these men were praying for one thing or acting like they were praying for one thing, while acting otherwise in their lives). Some of the men were also engaging in angry and disputatious conduct or prayer, thereby detracting from the true center of worship, Jesus, upon whom all worship is to be centered.
- d) "Likewise" (meaning just as was the case of the men in prayer), some women were bringing attention to themselves, rather than seeking to focus or helping to focus the proper attention of worship on Jesus. These women were, in a hugely class/social status society, seeking to cause attention to be given to themselves by wearing elaborate hairstyles and jewelry and clothing. Some of the women were even succumbing to the local cult of Artemis which discouraged traditional marriage and family lifestyles, and were dressing in a fashion which would advertise their availability for romantic relationships, even though they were not so available. All of these actions caused attention to be diverted from true worship of Christ to these women.
- e) No person in a church congregation is to engage in any actions or activities or speech which detracts from the attention which should be given to worship and Jesus.

- f) Whereas women in the prevailing Jewish and Greco-Roman cultures were not permitted to have formal learning, or formal education, and particularly religious education was not available to them, the women of the congregation were to be provided (and Timothy was commanded by Paul to provide them with) an opportunity to study and learn, with a proper attitude of quiet attention and submission, not silence.
- g) It is likely that women, who were or had been leaders (even priestesses) in the cult of Artemis (which encouraged something like modern-day women's liberation and, perhaps, non-marriage and non-childbearing), and were of the belief that Artemis would look after and protect women through childbearing and childbirth, and who were not educated about or learned in the Gospel and the teachings of the Apostles, were seeking to assert themselves and their newfound freedom in Christ and were speaking up in church, and were, perhaps (and likely) engaging in disputes with the men of the congregation, and were assuming (aggregating to themselves) in the congregation the authority which they held in the cult and temple of Artemis.
- h) The word "permit" is used 19 times in Scripture, and, in all cases was used in connection with a situation, and was never used in order to establish a timeless command. (Note, one of our other authors states that the proper translation is "I am not permitting... ", which would clearly be language intended to deal with a temporary situation, not language that is intended to establish a timeless command.)
- i) Teaching or preaching by unlearned individuals (in the case of Ephesus, women) or improper assumption of authority by such individuals is to be avoided.

In summary, the upshot of Reverend Campbell's Sermon was that the passages of 1 Timothy 2:8-15 do not stand for the proposition that properly learned, gifted, called and effective women may not preach or teach in church, or occupy positions of leadership in Christian Ministry (and women should be encouraged to seek and to equip themselves for these positions). Nevertheless, in his church, while a woman teaching pastor is being sought and women are encouraged to follow their giftedness, a woman may not be an elder (and likely may not be a Senior or Lead Pastor). That I find these conclusions to be puzzling need not be repeated. However, having thought more about this matter I will, later in this paper, offer for your consideration a possible explanation for the positions taken by Reverend Campbell and his church.

16) *N.T. Wright, Paul for Everyone, The Pastoral Letters, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*: Yes, again, I confess my strong admiration for the scholarship and books of N.T. Wright. I think that his books, "Paul for Everyone", in which he provides not just teachings and commentaries about every book of the New Testament, but also his personal Translations of the Biblical texts about which he teaches and comments, are excellent starting points for, and mandatory reading and study sources for any student or Christian who wants to better understand the New Testament. I have set forth above in

this paper Dr. Wright's translation of 1 Timothy 2:8-15, as that translation appears in this book. N.T. Wright's commentaries about these passages appear at pages 21-27 of this book. You, Dear Reader, can (and I submit should) read these commentaries for yourself. However, allow me to briefly outline such commentaries as follows:

- a) These passages, like some others which deal with the roles of men and women, seem to say that men should always be in charge, and that women, who are weak and easily misled, should just do what the male leaders tell them to do.
- b) These passages, in particular, are held as being prime examples of these positions, and are held to say that: "Women mustn't be teachers....or have any authority over men; they must keep silent....(and that)....the New Testament forbids the ordination of women." "The whole passage seems to be saying that women are second-class citizens...(and) aren't even allowed to dress prettily...(as)...they are the daughters of Eve, and she was the original troublemaker....(So)...the best thing for them to do is to get on and have children, to behave themselves and keep quiet."
- c) "Not only (do these interpretations stick in our throats) as a way of treating half of the human race; (they) do not fit with what we see in the rest of the New Testament, where women were the first witnesses of the resurrection (in other words the first apostles); where Paul speaks of women as apostles and deacons (Romans 16); where he expects them to be praying and prophesying in the assembly (1 Corinthians 11; or where he states that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, no male and female since you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). In particular, it doesn't fit with the practices of Jesus himself. In one telling little story (Luke 10:38-42) Mary of Bethany is sitting at Jesus' feet; in other words, she is joining the men in becoming a disciple, a learner, with a view to becoming a teacher in her turn. That's the main reason Martha was cross with her; no doubt she'd have liked some more help in the kitchen as well, but Mary's real offense was to cross a hidden barrier that, up to then, had women in the background and left education and leadership up to the men." (We could add here the facts that Jesus included Mary Magdalene in the circle of leaders, that he took time to converse with and teach the woman at the well, that many of his supporting patrons were women, that his mother, Mary (as shown in Amy Peeler's book, *Women and the Gender of God*) was likely included with the remaining 11 apostles in the upper room and became a proclaimer of the Gospel, and seems to have held a key position with the original church leaders.) (We could also add the facts showing the significant roles of women in the Old Testament, and in the early church, as shown by Nijay K. Gupta in his book, *Tell Her Story/How Women Led, and Taught and Ministered in the Early Church*, which is cited and discussed above, and the facts showing that women played significant roles (up to the point of death) in the missionary activities of the Moravians, and the founding and operations of the Salvation Army, and in early American Evangelic activities (i.e. Amy Semple MacPherson)). (My Note: None of these facts seem to remotely

support the proposition that women should be restricted from Senior or Leadership Positions or Roles in Christian Ministry.)

- d) "The key to the present passage, then, is to recognize that it IS COMMANDING THAT WOMEN, TOO, SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO LEARN, AND SHOULD NOT BE RESTRAINED FROM DOING SO (VS. 11). They are to be 'in full submission'; this is often taken to mean 'to the men', or 'to their husbands', but it is equally likely that it refers to their attitude, as learners, of submission to God—which of course would be true of men as well."
- e) "Then the crucial verse 12 need not be read as 'I do not allow a woman to teach or hold authority over a man (the translation which has caused so much difficulty in recent years). It can equally mean: 'I don't mean to imply that I'm setting up women as the new authority over men in the same way that previously men held authority over women'."
- f) "Why might Paul need to say this?" This letter was sent to Timothy while he, Timothy was still in Ephesus. "And one of the main things we know about the religion in Ephesus is that the main religion in Ephesus—the biggest temple, the most famous shrine—was a female-only cult. The temple of Artemis (that is her Greek name; the Romans called her Diana) was a massive structure which dominated the area. As befitted worshippers of a female deity, the priests were all women. They ruled the show and kept the men in their place. Now if you were writing a letter to someone in a small, new religious movement with a base in Ephesus, and wanted to say that because of the gospel of Jesus the old ways of organizing male and female roles had to be rethought from top to bottom, with one feature being that the women were encouraged to study and learn and take a leadership role, you might well want to avoid giving the wrong impression. Was the apostle saying that women should be trained up so that Christianity would gradually become a cult, like that of Artemis, where women did the leading and kept them men in line? That, it seems to me, is what verse 12 is denying.Paul is saying, like Jesus in Luke 10, that women must have the space to study and learn in their own way, not in order that they may muscle in and take over leadership as in the Artemis-cult, but so that men and women alike can develop whatever gifts of learning, teaching and leadership God is giving them."
- g) The story of Adam and Eve makes the point about the necessity for women being allowed to learn. "Women need to learn just as men do. Adam, after all, sinned quite deliberately; he knew what he was doing, he knew that it was wrong and deliberately went ahead."
- h) "Let's not leave any more unexploded bombs and mines around for people to blow their minds with. LET'S READ THIS TEXT AS I BELIEVE IT WAS INTENDED, AS A WAY OF BUILDING UP GOD'S CHURCH, MEN AND WOMEN, WOMEN AND MEN ALIKE. Just as Paul was concerned to APPLY THIS IN ONE PARTICULAR SITUATION, so we must think and pray carefully about where our own cultures, prejudices and angers are taking us. We must do our best to conform, not to any of the different stereotypes the world offers, but to the healing, liberating, humanizing message of the gospel of Jesus."

Why have I set forth such extensive information about the various items of literature which I have read and consulted in trying to prepare this paper? Candidly, I have done so because of my above stated lack of formal theological or seminary training, and my lack of theological academic training. I have a very definite opinion that Scripture, properly read and understood in its proper literary, historical, cultural and situational setting, does not stand for the proposition that women, are by reason of their female gender alone, restricted from occupying certain positions in Christian Ministry or performing certain roles in that Ministry. I will, shortly, come to a description of the manner in which I have reached my personal opinion in this respect. I did not want to go out on a fragile limb in reaching or asserting that opinion. So, I wanted to determine whether there are respected, well trained theologians, including those of the Academy, who have reached a similar opinion. Hence, my thorough description of the literary sources which I have reviewed in preparation for writing this paper.

Additionally, I want you, the Reader, to have the benefit of knowing about, and being able to review the literary sources which I have consulted in my efforts to prepare this paper. You will then be better able to critically evaluate my conclusions about the “Women In Ministry” issue, as I state them in this paper. Critical comment will be appreciated.

VII) FURTHER STATEMENT OF MY PERSONAL CONCLUSIONS:

So, now that I have danced all around the mulberry bush with my reluctance to reach this part of the paper wherein I need to state and justify my personal opinion that women are not, by Scripture, barred by reason of their gender from assuming any Position or performing any Role in Christian Ministry for which they are Godly called to assume or perform, and for which they are fully qualified to assume or perform, and in which they can effectively perform. However, in my view, the issue is one whether a woman *can*, not whether she *should*, in every instance and situation occupy a position or perform a role. As I view the “Women’s Issue”, it is one of whether or not God, in the person of Jesus, has, through the human authors of the Bible (primarily the Apostle Paul) stated that in God’s Church Women should not, by reason of their gender, be allowed to have certain Positions (primarily as a Senior Pastor or Senior Leader, such as an Elder), or to perform certain Roles (primarily to publicly teach or preach from the pulpit, or to have authority over male members of the congregation). As I view the relevant passages of Scripture which deal with this Issue, as those passages are cited and quoted above in this paper, those passages, when properly read and understood in view of their literary, historical, cultural and situational context DO NOT STAND FOR THE POSITION THAT WOMEN ARE, SOLELY BY REASON OF THEIR GENDER, BARRED FROM OCCUPYING CERTAIN POSITIONS OR PERFORMING CERTAIN ROLES IN CHRISTIAN MINISTRY, BUT THOSE PASSAGES, AND OTHERS, WHEN SO READ AND UNDERSTOOD, ALSO DO NOT STAND FOR THE PROPOSITION THAT, IN EVERY CHURCH, AND IN EVERY SITUATION, WOMEN SHOULD OR MUST OCCUPY A POSITION OR PERFORM A ROLE.

VIII) MY PERSONAL ANALYSIS OF 1 TIMOTHY 2:8-15:

Now leaving aside the work of the other authors who have written the literary sources cited above, but, obviously, strongly drawing in part upon that work and those sources, how have I reached my conclusions which are set forth in the paragraph which appears immediately above? Leaving aside the Household Code, Husband and Wife, Wifely Submission passages which are cited and quoted above in this paper, which I believe were guided solely by prevailing cultural and situational issues at the time which those passages were written by Paul and Peter (and I will try to deal with those submission passages at a later place in this paper) the most troubling Prohibition Passages which I have to deal with are those of 1 Corinthians 14:33-36 (i.e. that women should keep silent in the assemblies and should not be permitted to speak, but should remain in submission, as it is shameful for a woman to speak in the assembly), and 1 Timothy 2:8-15 (i.e. "I do not permit a woman to have teach or to have authority over a man, she must be silent...But women will be saved through childbearing....). I mean you might well ask: "What's the Big Deal? Don't these passages clearly and plainly state that women must be silent and cannot teach or have authority over a man? Don't they clearly state that women cannot speak in church? How can you (meaning me) argue against the clear and plain meaning of these passages?" In support of these questions which you might reasonably ask, I would quote some unnamed theologian who is cited by Max Lucado at page 55 of his recent book, *What Happens Next* (Max Lucado, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2024) where Dr. Lucado quotes as follows: "*When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, we will seek no other sense*". So, how can I argue that the plain sense of these Prohibition Passages (i.e. that women should stay silent in church, and not reach or to have authority over a man), which seem to make "common sense" should not be read to mean precisely what they say, and be applied today in the manner which they plainly, precisely state? Well, my somewhat convoluted answer to this question is that (assuming that Paul wrote the passages of 1 Corinthians 14:33-36, a fact about which there is some reasonable doubt (see Payne and Huffaker, *Why Can't Women do That? Cited above, at pages 113-120 where the authors of that book set forth an extensive, well- reasoned and documented argument that Paul did not write these passages but, rather they were inserted, later, by some scribe to reflect what that scribe thought the predominant culture to be, an argument to which N.T. Wright gives some credibility in his book, "Paul for Everyone/1 Corinthians")*) these passages clearly made "common sense" in light of the historical, cultural, and situational conditions which existed at the time the passages were written and directed to their original audiences, but such passages were not intended by the Apostle Paul to set forth universal, for all times, for all churches everywhere and under all situations and conditions command. Better stated, Jesus did not, through his human apostle, Paul, state God handed down commands that women cannot speak or teach or have authority in His churches, everywhere, for all times.

A) CONFLICTS IN PAUL'S EPISTLES AND OTHER FACTS AND FACTORS WHICH SHOULD, PERHAPS, CAUSE US TO CHANGE OUR CONCLUSIONS BASED UPON A "PLAIN READING" OF 1 CORINTHIANS 14:33-36 AND 1 TIMOTHY 2:8-15:

If you look, carefully, at these Prohibition Passages of 1 Corinthians 14:33-36 and 1 Timothy 2:8-15, and do so with a consideration for Paul's other writings and some additional facts and factors which we will describe in this Section A), you have to ask: "What Is Going On Here?" How can you state that women can pray and prophesy in the assembly, and then say that they have to be silent? Leaving aside all of the confusing statements about head coverings and hair (about which scholars constantly argue), Paul's statements in 1 Corinthians 11:2-6 clearly contemplated the fact that women would pray and prophesy in church. One cannot prophesy without speaking. In the views of N.T. Wright in his commentary on 1 Corinthians Wright describes the term "prophecy" as it is used in 1 Corinthians and in Paul's epistles as having a wide sense whereby a member of the assembly (in the 1st century, groups gathered in homes or other meeting places) has acquired and speaks about some insight gained by him or her, whether thorough study or special thoughts or God given insight which edifies those present in the worship service. Such insight might include many different kinds of speaking, such as to rebuke, encourage or give insight into God given truth. All of these things require speaking. To quote from Wright's commentary on 1 Corinthians: *"When Paul says 'prophecy', he doesn't just mean 'foretelling' the future.... Nor is he simply referring to sudden flashes of inspiration in which someone comes to know something, or understand something, they couldn't otherwise have imagined, and is moved to speak it out so that others—perhaps particularly the person about whom something is thus known and profit from it....His central emphasis is on God-given wisdom, understanding, insight and teaching that the church badly needs if it is to go forward instead of round and round in circles...."* (See Wright, 1 Corinthians, which is cited above, at page 183). In 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 Paul describes spiritual gifts, and he makes no distinction between men and women who might possess these gifts, which are to be exercised for the benefit of the church. In 1 Corinthians 12: 27-31 Paul emphasizes (again without distinction between men and women) the fact that all are a part of the body of Christ, and, as a part of that body, God has placed in that body apostles, prophets, teachers, and other spiritually gifted individuals, all of whom are to work for the benefit of the body. So, how do we reconcile all of these passages, which seem to contemplate that women will prophecy and teach and pray in the assembly, with 1 Corinthians 14:33-36 which says that women should remain silent in church? The same question must also be directed to 1 Timothy 2:8-15 where Paul says that he "does not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man but she must remain silent and learn in submission?"

Then, we might also look at Romans 16 wherein Paul commends and celebrates people on the longest list of individuals in the New Testament, other than Matthews' genealogy, one-third of whom are women. One of these women, Junias, who, together with Andronicus, has been in prison with Paul, and is referred to as "outstanding among the **apostles, and who was in Christ before I(Paul) was**" (emphasis added). She is referred to as an "apostle". It appears that Paul classified an "apostle as one who has either personally seen the risen Lord or been directly instructed by one who had been among the original apostles. Looking back at 1 Corinthians 12:27-31, Paul advises that apostles, like those possessing other spiritual gifts, are to exercise their gift for the benefit of the Body of Christ, the church. Also included on the Romans 16 list are Phoebe, a woman, who was entrusted to deliver the letter to the Romans to the house churches in Rome and who appears to have acted as Paul's apostolic representative, and to have engaged in discussions about the contents of that letter. Also on this list are Priscilla and Aquila (note

that Priscilla is the one first mentioned), Paul's fellow workers in Christ, as well as "the church that meets in their house", meaning the house of Priscilla and Aquila. The logical inference is that they (a woman and a man) were leaders of that church. Priscilla and Aquila, while in Ephesus, had engaged in the "teaching" of Apollos, a learned man who was well versed in the Scriptures, but who needed instructions in order to know "the way of God more adequately" (Acts 18:23-26). Priscilla and Aquila travelled with Paul from city to city (Acts 18), and were with him in Ephesus when he wrote 1 Corinthians, and were then leading a church in their home in Ephesus. (See 1 Corinthians 16:19-20). While in Ephesus, with Paul, they instructed Apollos (Acts 18:23-26). So, we have a woman apostle, Junias, a woman who was entrusted to carry, deliver and likely read and discuss Paul's important letter to the Romans (Phoebe) and a woman who was, with her husband, Aquila, hosting a church in Ephesus and then in Rome (see Acts 16), and who was with Paul in Ephesus, and who was instructing Apollos in Ephesus. We have Paul, in 1 Corinthians 11 and 12, clearly contemplating that women will pray and prophecy in the assembly. How do we reconcile all of these facts and these passages which seem to celebrate or confer responsibilities upon women with the language of 1 Corinthians 14:33-36 or of 1 Timothy 2: 8-15? Place on top of these considerations that which appears to be Paul's clear and "plain sense" statement about the equality of all in the Body of Christ of Galatians 3:28 (i.e. there is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female"). By way of Galatians and by way of most of his epistles, and his teachings outside of his epistles that far exceeded the epistles themselves, Paul was seeking to bring together, in a unified body, those from extremely diverse groups. He was seeking to eliminate all existing cultural, and sociological distinctions within the Body of Christ, including the distinction between slave and free, Jew and Greek (i.e. Pagan), male and female. All were equal in the Body of Christ. For all of this see the analysis of N.T. Wright in his magnificent Biography of Paul, *Paul, a Biography* (N.T. Wright, Harper One Publishers, 1989) (a book to which I will often refer in the following parts of this paper as "Wright/Paul Biography") at pages 142-160.

Furthermore, in looking at, and trying to understand any passage of Scripture, we need to look at the entirety of Scripture, the entirety of the Biblical Narrative. If we look at Gupta's *Tell Her Story*, we are reminded of the significant roles played by Old Testament women, Deborah, Huldah and others. If we look at the Book of Proverbs we see that true "Wisdom" that comes from God (and some theologians equate God and Wisdom, but, in any event, God is the source of Wisdom) is referred to as a woman, and in feminine terms. We are to look to God's Word, Scripture, to help us find Wisdom, who is referred to in feminine terms, but we are not to let a woman speak in church. What? We are, by Amy Peeler's book, *Women and the Gender of God*, reminded of the very significant role played by Mary, the mother of Jesus, not just as the child-bearer of the infant God, Jesus, and the mother and mentor of the young Jesus, but as one who proclaimed the truth of God publicly, and who was with the apostles, in the upper room, when Jesus appeared after his resurrection. Dr. Peeler also reminds us of the significant roles played by women in the life of Jesus.

All of the facts and factors and passages cited in the above paragraphs of this Section A) have to cause any reasonable reader of Scripture to raise questions about the intended applications to our churches of today of Paul's writings in 1 Corinthians 14:33-36 and 1 Timothy 2:8-15. While we must

agree, absolutely must agree, that Scripture governs, God's Word and Wisdom and Commands govern, there seems to be good reason to question whether or not, taking Scripture as a whole and Paul's writings as a whole, these passages stand for God Given commands for all Christian Churches, for All Times, Everywhere that a woman's role in Christian Ministry must, by reason of her gender alone, be restricted. In that respect, we might well want to look at the pragmatics, the practical effects upon the ability of our churches to seek to reach as many persons as possible with the Gospel, and to save for Christ as many persons as can be saved, if our churches are required to restrict women from having significant, Senior Roles in Christian Ministry, solely by reason of their gender. As stated by Leifeld in his Paper, *Women and the Nature of Ministry*, which is cited above: *"Today a ministry that excludes public participation of women is likely to be rejected by the people we are trying to win."* I think that it is obvious that many women (not all, most certainly, but many) would or are offended by the idea that they are, just because they are women, cannot preach or teach publicly in church or have authority, such as by being a member of a Board of Elders, no matter how qualified to hold these positions they might be. Aren't they, reasonably, going to feel that they are somehow second class citizens in God's Church? So, and while recognizing that Scripture, the Word of God, and not human wisdom, governs our churches, I respectfully submit that we have to (and can legitimately) raise questions about whether these passages in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy can be heard today to stand for the proposition that women cannot occupy Senior Positions, or any positions for that matter, or perform any roles in Christian Ministry solely by reason of their gender. Let's put it another way: Would the Apostle Paul, if he were here and speaking to us today about today's churches, say that "A Woman Must Be Silent In Church", or "A Woman Cannot Publicly Preach or Teach in Church", or a "Woman Cannot Occupy a Position of Authority in a Church Wherein She Has Authority Over Men"? Do we, legitimately, believe that Paul would so state, or, at the very least, don't we have to question whether or not he would so state?

B) QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED TO THE PASSAGES:

So, let's try to move forward with some reasonable hermeneutical examination of our Prohibitory Passages, 1 Corinthians 14:33-36 and 1 Timothy 2:8-15. Of these passages, the ones in 1 Timothy 2 give people who have opinions such as I do (i.e. that the roles of women in ministry are not restricted solely by reason of their gender) the greatest problems. These passages of 1 Timothy appear to be the strongest passages which, on their face, stand for the placing of restrictions on women. So, I will try to deal with those passages first, and then come back to the ones in 1 Corinthians. Let's try to perform a hermeneutical/exegetical analysis of the 1 Timothy Passages. In doing so, we must address some questions to these passages, as follows:

- A) **WHO WROTE OR SPOKE THESE PASSAGES TO THEIR ORIGINAL AUDIENCES?**
- B) **WHO WAS THIS PERSON, AND WHAT WAS THE NATURE OF HIS MINISTRY?**
- C) **WHO WERE THE INTENDED ORIGINAL AUDIENCES TO WHICH THESE PASSAGES WERE INTENDED TO BE ADDRESSED?**
- D) **WHAT WAS THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE WRITER OF THESE PASSAGES WITH THE ORIGINAL AUDIENCES TO WHICH THE PASSAGES WERE ADDRESSED?**

- E) **WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE PEOPLE OF THESE AUDIENCES, AND THEIR HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS?**
- F) **WHAT DID THE PASSAGES REALLY SAY, MEANING, TO THE EXTENT WE CAN DO SO, INTERPRETING FROM THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGES IN WHICH THE PASSAGES WERE WRITTEN INTO CURRENT DAY ENGLISH, WHAT DID THESE PASSAGES REALLY SAY?**
- G) **WHEN WAS THIS PASSAGE OR THE BOOK CONTAINING THIS PASSAGE WRITTEN?**
- H) **WAS THERE A SITUATION INVOLVING THE AUDIENCES, OR THE WRITER OF THE PASSAGES, OR THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE WRITER OF THESE PASSAGES AND THE ORIGINAL AUDIENCES, WHICH THE WRITER WAS SEEKING TO ADDRESS BY WAY OF THE PASSAGES OR THE BOOK OR LETTER IN WHICH THE PASSAGES ARE CONTAINED?**
- I) **ARE THERE ANY CULTURAL OR HISTORICAL FACTORS WHICH AFFECTED WHAT WAS WRITTEN?**
- J) **ELIMINATING ANY SUCH CULTURAL FACTORS, IF ANY THERE WERE, WHAT TIMELESS, NOT BOUND BY TIME OR CULTURE, PRINCIPLES CAN BE FOUND IN THESE PASSAGES, AND HOW CAN THEY BE APPLIED TODAY?**

C) **RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PASSAGES:**

Now I recognize that the analysis which I am going to describe, and which is sometimes referred to as some sort of a principalizing approach is, to some extent, frowned upon by many current day theologians, including N.T. Wright, my favorite New Testament Scholar, but it at least gives us some starting point or some good guidelines in our analysis of the 1 Timothy 2 passages. So, let's start that analysis:

- 1) **WHO WROTE 1 TIMOTHY AND OUR PASSAGES IN QUESTION?** While there is some doubt about this matter, including some doubts raised by N.T. Wright in his *Paul, A Biography*, I think that the greater weight of scholarly opinion stands for the proposition that Paul wrote 1 Timothy during times between two imprisonments of Paul in Rome. While the matters are not clear, the prevailing belief is that Paul was imprisoned in Rome, and was then released, but, when Nero sought to eliminate Christianity which he saw as a threat to the Empire, he had Paul re-arrested and again imprisoned, and, eventually, executed. So, if the prevailing belief is accurate, Paul, after his release from his first imprisonment, travelled again. Sometime between his release from his first imprisonment, and his second imprisonment, Paul wrote this letter to Timothy. It appears that Paul, either fearing or hearing about or learning about or, from prior work in Ephesus being aware of problems with the Christian assemblies in Ephesus, directed this advisory letter to his protégé, Timothy, who was young and needed help, advice and encouragement. For support of these propositions I cite the opening comments for 1 Timothy, as they appear in the NIV Life Application Study Bible: *"Most Scholars believe that Paul was released about A.D. 62 (possibly because the statute of limitations had expired), and that during the*

next few years he was able to travel. During this time, he wrote 1 Timothy and Titus. Soon, however, Emperor Nero began his campaign to eliminate Christianity. It is believed that during this time Paul was imprisoned again and eventually executed. During this second Roman imprisonment, Paul wrote 2 Timothy..."

- 2) WHO WAS PAUL AND WHAT WAS THE NATURE OF HIS MINISTRY? I did not know much about Paul before I began to try to prepare to write this paper. I quickly came to the conclusion that in order to make an at least reasonable attempt to analyze Paul's writings, you have to try to have some understanding about who Paul was, and about what he viewed his ministry or mission to be. If you can achieve at least some basic understandings in these respects, it can help you to understand just why he might have said what he said in his various writings. While I am certainly not now an expert on Paul, my reading has given me, at least, a somewhat basic understanding (or reasonable guesses) about who he was and what he was about. Certainly, I cannot perform for Paul what might be called a "psychological autopsy" or "post mortem psychological evaluation", but I can, at least, read some of the available literature about him, and then make some effort to understand "what he was about" and "what his motivations to write what he wrote" might have been. In or to try to explain this effort to you, the Reader, I rely heavily on two books by my favorite New Testament scholar, N.T. Wright, *Paul/A Biography*, which is cited above and *Paul in Fresh Perspectives* (N.T. Wright, Fortress Press, 2005). These two books, together with some of Wright's commentaries on "Paul for Everyone" help to provide some insights into what Paul's motivations to write what he wrote might have been. Relying on these two books, and without providing specific page citations to the various parts of these books, I will try to state in this section 2) what I understand (actually what Wright understands and wrote) about Paul and how he, Paul, viewed his mission as given to him directly by Jesus, who, in Wright's view caused Paul to believe (by the events on the way to Damascus or in Arabia) that he, Jesus was the long- promised Hebrew Messiah. Paul (named "Saul") spent his early years in Tarsus. Tarsus was an important and prominent city in the Greek, and later Roman empire. It was located on a major trade route. It was a city of culture, politics, philosophy (i.e. Greek philosophy) and industry, with a very diverse population, including a small population of devout Jews, which included Paul's parents and family. It rivaled Athens as a center of Greek Philosophy. Like most cities in the Greco-Roman world, numerous shrines to various pagan deities were located in Tarsus, and all of its population (other than the Jews who were excluded from this requirement) were expected to worship these perceived deities and the emperor, the emperor being declared to be either the "son of god" (meaning of

a previous deified emperor) or a “god” himself. The Imperial cult required citizen worship of the emperor (again, the Jews were excluded, so long as they prayed for the emperor and the empire). I will note, in passing, that this sort of situation existed in virtually every city in which Paul and his followers sought to establish small groups of those who were followers of “the Way”, meaning of Jesus, and who later became known as Christians. Paul’s family belonged to the strictest of Jewish schools, the Pharisees. Paul grew up as a Pharisee. They lived, with a fierce strictness, in obedience to the various Jewish/Pharisee traditions. What is known about Paul leads to reasonable beliefs that he was a very gifted child, that he read Biblical Hebrew fluently, that he spoke Aramaic, and that he spoke and wrote, fluently and with great speed, in the ubiquitous Greek. His writings indicate that he had swallowed the then Bible, the Hebrew Bible, whole. He was able to shift, with polished ease, between Genesis, the Psalms, Deuteronomy and Isaiah. He knew how the story of the Hebrew Bible worked, with all of its twists and turns. He was, to put it bluntly, a Hebrew/Israel Bible and Traditions nerd. He appears to have also been well versed in the philosophical traditions going back to Plato and Aristotle. He knew and could readily discuss philosophy. He thus appears to have been at home with both the Jewish story and Greek Philosophy. In Wright’s words: *“Saul (Paul) grew up within a world of story and symbol: a single story, awaiting its divinely ordered fulfillment, and a set of symbols that brought that story into focus and enabled Jews to inhabit it. If we are going to understand him, to see who he really was, we have to grasp this and realize that for him it wasn’t just a set of ideas. It was basic to his whole existence....”* The essence of the story of Israel, as set forth in the Hebrew Bible, was that Israel was called to worship the One God, but had failed dramatically to do so, and, therefore, had been exiled. A covenantal separation of God from Israel had taken place. While some Jews had been returned to the Promised Land, they were still in “exile” because they were dominated by foreign powers (in the case of the times of Jesus and Paul, the Romans). A rescue, a Second Exodus, was anticipated and hoped for, when God would, at last, restore his people and return to reside among them. To understand how Saul/Paul thought, never mind how he prayed, we have to grasp the fact that, although the Temple in Jerusalem (the Second Temple) held powerful memories of the divine presence among the people of Israel, the Jews did not think that the One God actually resided there and they believed that the promised ultimate return of the One God to Israel had not yet occurred. It had not happened yet. The God of Israel had said that he would return, but He had not done so yet. *“Saul of Tarsus was brought up to believe that it would happen, perhaps very soon.” “Temple and Torah, the two great symbols of Jewish life, pointed to the story in which devout Jews like Saul and his family believed themselves to be living....The One God would come back at last to set*

up his kingdom, to make the whole world one vast glory filled Temple.” But, for this to occur, complete loyalty to the Torah and Jewish Traditions was required. Such loyalty meant that Saul (and other devout Jews of Tarsus) had to keep oneself pure from idolatry and immorality, and to avoid the pagan shrines which were located on every corner. The Jewish people had to avoid compromise with their pagan neighbors and their practices and their temples, including the practice of emperor worship. One of the first solid things we know about young Saul is that he followed the ancient Jewish tradition of “Zeal”, a tradition which held to a principle that violence would be necessary to root out wickedness from Israel. A defining moment in this tradition of Zeal occurred when Phinehas, one of Aaron’s sons, took a spear and killed a man and his Moabite woman. This man had brought this Moabite worm into his tent during the Exodus travels. People were then running wild, with all kinds of idolatry and immorality, and a plague broke out. The plague stopped when Phinehas killed the man and Moabite woman. One of the Psalms says that Phinehas intervened *“and that it was recognized to him as righteousness.”* The prophet Elijah was another paragon of Zeal, who killed the whole lot of Baal prophets. In 1 Maccabees 2 (with which young Saul would have been intimately familiar), Elijah is coupled with Phinehas as examples of Zeal. *“The books of the Maccabees tell of zeal for Israel’s God, zeal for God’s Torah, zeal for the purity of Israel... (and)....if this was Israel’s story, this is how a loyal Israelite should now behave when faced with the same problem.”* Saul went to Jerusalem as a very young man, probably in his early teen. Paul’s teacher in Jerusalem was Gamaliel, one of the greatest Rabbis of the period. However, Saul appears to have taken a different track than that of Gamaliel. Gamaliel believed in, and advocated for peace and “live and let live”. Saul followed an opposing course, one advocated by Gamaliel’s rival, Shammai, who advocated *“that if God was going to establish his reign on earth as in heaven, then those who were zealous for God and Torah would have to say their prayers, sharpen their swords and get ready for action”*. Paul did not believe in “live and let live”, but rather in “zeal” and the Jewish tradition of “zeal”. Enter the scene, Jesus, a purported prophet who was not much older than Paul, who defiled the temple and who led his followers to what was perceived to be non-Torah observance, and who was killed by the Roman authorities. Who ever heard of a crucified Messiah? But now the followers of Jesus were claiming that he had been raised from the dead. They were talking as if heaven and earth were now being joined together in the person of this crucified man, and that God was now bringing about a new kingdom. Stephen, on trial for his life, made matters worse by claiming that “I can see heaven opened, and the son of man standing at God’s right hand!” Blasphemy! The court had heard enough. Stephen was rushed out of the city, and was stoned and crushed to death under a hail of rocks. Saul, with his zeal,

approved of this action as being one required to purge Israel of heresy, which would prevent God's return. This was the kind of action that Torah loyalty required in order for God to return as promised. Saul, therefore, set off as a new Phinehas, a new Elijah, to defend the Torah and the Temple. Many followers of Jesus fled from Jerusalem after Stephen's death. Many went to Damascus. Saul elected to zealously pursue them. An incident which happened to Paul on the way to Damascus, narrated three times in the Book of Acts and briefly referred to by Saul/now Paul in those autobiographical remarks that appear in his letters, clearly had a cataclysmic effect on Paul. There is a lot of uncertainty about just what occurred on the way to Damascus. However, what is abundantly clear is the fact that whatever did happen it had a seismic effect on Paul. While some refer to this event, and to the immediately following events as they are described in the Book of Acts, as causing a "Conversion of Paul", Wright argues that there was no "conversion" as such, but rather that Paul was convinced by this incident that Jesus was, in fact, the culmination of, the fulfillment of the story of Israel, a story in which Paul had been steeped during his entire life. In short, Paul was convinced that Jesus was the Messiah for which the Jews had been waiting for centuries, ever since the exile to Babylon. So, this incident on the way to Damascus shook Paul to his very core, and he emerged in ways which were dramatically different than his ways before the incident. That said, he was somehow convinced by this incident that Jesus, whose followers, he, Paul, had been persecuting, was what God had long promised, His, God's return to Israel and the world; that Jesus was the Messiah promised by the story of Israel in which Paul had been steeped for his entire life. When speaking of the event on the way to Damascus Wright says: *"We must look carefully to see what emerges, not only about the event itself, whatever it was, but about the way in which the 'zeal' of the eager young Torah student emerged in a different form as 'zeal' for what he called the 'good news', the euangelion, the gospel, the message about Jesus—the fulfillment, shocking though it seemed, of the ancestral hope"*. Saul/the Apostle Paul, did not see this so much as a conversion from one faith/religion to another (i.e. the Jewish faith to Christianity) but rather he saw it as a fulfillment of the basic Jewish narrative, now demanding to be understood in a radical, but justifiable new way. "The narrative in question was the hope of Israel." It is easy to get this wrong. People speak of Paul and the groups of Jesus-followers who sprang up as though Paul's work offered a new kind of religion. In fact, there was nothing called "Christianity" in the first century, only groups of people who believed that Jesus of Nazareth was Israel's Messiah and the world's rightful Lord. *"What drove Paul, from the moment on the Damascus Road and throughout his subsequent life, was that Israel's God had done what he always said he would; that Israel's scripture had been fulfilled in ways never before imagined; and that the Temple*

and Torah themselves were not after all the ultimate realities, but instead glorious signposts pointing forward to the new heaven-and-earth reality that had come to birth in Jesus. Paul remained to his dying day fiercely loyal to Israel's God, seen in fresh and blinding focus in Jesus." Following the Damascus Road experience, Paul spent a few days in Damascus asserting that Israel's hope had been fulfilled; that the crucified Jesus was Israel's long-awaited Messiah. Then, as Paul states in Galatians 1:17, he went away to Arabia. What does this brief reference contribute to our efforts to try to understand Paul, and how he viewed his mission and his writings? Paul states in Galatians 1:1-2 that he is an "apostle", "sent not by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father." In Galatians 1:11-12 Paul states that the Gospel he preaches "is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ." He goes on to say at 1 Galatians 1:15-20: "But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, **but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus.** Then, after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days. I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord's brother." Paul is insisting that the message he is delivering, the Gospel he is preaching, was given to him by Jesus himself, likely in Arabia (Perhaps Mount Sinai, the scene of God's Revelations to Moses and Elijah). The message was the message about Jesus himself, who he was, that he was raised from the dead and was Israel's Messiah and the Messiah of and Lord of the World. Where and why did Paul go to Arabia? When did he receive this revelation directly from Jesus? Wright is of the belief that Paul, by his reference to the events where God delivered the Law to Moses which occurred on Mount Sinai in the Arabian desert, is, in effect, stating that he received the Gospel by direct revelation from Jesus on Mount Sinai, the place of Revelation, the place of beginning, and also the place where Elijah, a model Zealot, went to encounter God. This may all be speculation but it seems clear from Paul's own biographical claims made in Galatians that he received the Gospel he is preaching directly from Jesus, and there seeming to be no other time when this revelation might have occurred (other than, I suppose, possibly on the Damascus Road), in order to make sense out of Paul's statement that he went to Arabia virtually before he began preaching anywhere, that such revelation might well have occurred when Paul went to Arabia, at Mount Sinai. Paul, then on fire with having seen the risen Lord, eventually went back to Jerusalem, and then (likely after causing some issues through zealous public speaking about Jesus as the Messiah) returned to his home in Tarsus. There he stayed for roughly 10 years. Little is known about this period of Paul's life. It is

assumed that he earned his living by working in the family's tent making business, and that he continued to pray and study and ponder. He likely focused on the Jewish Scriptures and honed what became his standard argument, based on such Scriptures (Israel's own story from Abraham, the prophets, through exile and beyond) that Jesus was the promised Messiah. He likely developed a thought process which he could use in relating to others in his future ministry, a thought process and line of argumentation or preaching which was based on Israel's Own Story, and on God's story-the story of what the One God had done, was doing, and had promised to do, with both stories narrowing down to one point: Israel's God would return visibly and powerfully to rescue His people from their ultimate enemies and set up a kingdom that would not be shaken. To Paul, Israel's story and God's story had merged together. Paul could later preach and argue, directly from Israel's Scriptures, from Abraham to the Prophets, that all of the Jewish Scriptures and story pointed to Jesus as the long-promised Messiah. All the while when he was in Tarsus, Paul had to have been aware that his still Jewish vision of the One God reshaped around the crucified and risen Messiah was most certainly not one shared by his fellow Jews and was bitterly opposed by them, opposition that continued throughout much of Paul's ministry. This vision may well have cost Paul a wife. People speculate about whether or not Paul was married as, for a Pharisee to not be married would present an unusual if not scandalous situation. Wright speculates that Paul may have been married, but lost his wife at an early age, or that he was betrothed to a Jewish young woman, with that betrothal being broken off, either by her or her parents because of what was perceived to be Paul's radical, if not in fact blasphemous views. Paul also developed his "Gentile Argument." That argument was basically that Jesus had, on the cross and by his resurrection, defeated the ultimate force of evil, and that, through Jesus and his death and resurrection, the One God had overcome the powers that held the world in their grip, and that meant all humans, not just Jews, could be set free to worship the One God. This thinking evolved into one of the great themes of Paul's mature thought and particularly his pastoral efforts: a zealous belief that there was a UNITY OF ALL OF THE MESSIAH'S PEOPLE across all ethnic boundary lines. This push for Unity within the Church as a whole, and within its individual assemblies that were founded and pastored by Paul, continued to be a touchstone of Paul's missions and ministry (and his Epistles) throughout his missionary life which began when he, with Barnabas, went to Antioch and beyond. Paul believed and taught that the Body of Christ (or, as he oftentimes referred to it, the Body of the Messiah) included all people of every race and ethnicity who had been baptized into the Body, without there being any distinctions based on race, ethnicity, class or other cultural divisions (and we would submit here, Gender). As Wright points out achieving this Unity in the

Christian assemblies founded and pastored by Paul within the Greco-Roman cities reached by Paul's mission represented, not just a difficult task but a gargantuan task. Each of these cities contained pagan temples to pagan deities on every street corner, together with temples dedicated to the emperor. The Imperial Cult was prominent and growing, and while Jews were (because they had promised to "pray for the emperor and the empire") generally exempt from the requirement for emperor worship (in other words considering the emperor to be a god) and from worship of the various pagan deities, they were always viewed with suspicion. Furthermore, until one emperor or government official declared that what became known as "Christianity" was a form of, or an offshoot from the Jewish tradition, which was exempt from the requirement for emperor worship, many Jews viewed Christians as presenting a threat to the continued existence of their exemption from the requirement of emperor worship. We should also keep in mind that, while we live in a country where state and church are separate and religious freedom is provided for, in the cities where Paul preached, religion (particularly including Imperial Worship) and civil government were closely intertwined and were essentially inseparable (a fact that continued for centuries) and law was believed to have been handed down by (or at least inspired by) the various deities. In most of the cities reached by Paul on his mission trips he would start his missionary work in one of the synagogues, where he would, arguing from the Jewish Scriptures and the Story of Israel, preach that Jesus was and is the long-awaited Messiah, but that he is not just the Messiah for Israel, but is the Messiah for and rightful Lord of the entire world. This message was hugely controversial among the Jewish occupants of any given city. Sometimes, Paul was subjected to the prescribed punishment for preaching what was perceived to be heresy or blasphemy, the laying on of strokes, a punishment which Paul endured in order to try to further his efforts to reach Jews and Gentiles with his message of the true Gospel, the Gospel revealed to him by Christ himself. As stated by Wright in one of his "Paul for Everyone" commentaries on the books of the New Testament (in this case *Paul For Everyone/Galatians and Thessalonians* (N.T. Wright, Westminster John Knox Press, 2004)): *"...Imagine you're in central south Turkey during the reign of the Roman Emperor Claudius. Most of the town worships one or the other of the local gods or goddesses, several of whom claim the loyalty of particular racial groups. Some have started to worship the emperor himself, and with him the power of Rome. There is also a significant minority of Jews, with their own synagogue. They are threatened by the growing power of the imperial cult, on top of the usual pagan idolatry and wickedness. And into this town has come a funny little Jew called Paul,..."* who preaches a message that seems to be contrary to everything the Jews have held to be true, and which threatens the gods and goddesses who have been worshiped, and appears to be even

subversive to the emperor and the power of the empire. If you think about these matters you have to conclude that what Paul and the other apostles were able to accomplish with the spread of what came to be known as “Christianity” is remarkable. Furthermore, being mindful of the tendency of all of us humans to want to associate with “people of our kind”, meaning folks who are more like us than those who are different from us, you have to conclude that for Paul to strive for “Unity” in the church and its individual assemblies (all of which included ethnically diverse groups as well as groups which were internally separated by social and economic class distinctions) presented him with a hugely difficult task. Furthermore, the populations of the cities that were the subject of Paul’s missions, were populations where the “honor-shame” culture was in full force, and people wanted to do everything which they could do to achieve or maintain honor and avoid shame. You certainly did not want your spouse to do something that would bring shame on you, or even shame upon your spouse which would then reflect back on you. Furthermore, the populations of these cities were very “Class-conscious”, and social class standing was fought for and jealously protected. One’s class might well be “flaunted” by, for example wearing rich clothing, hair styles or jewelry. Now, how in the world was Paul to take a bunch of these folks and meld them together in a “Unified” assembly, that would be free from disruptive behavior or statements during worship, or from a sort of separation of the classes (recognizing equality of all before Christ)? If we look at Paul’s letters as a whole, particularly Galatians, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians and Romans, we see that Paul was trying to address a congregational issue which threatened the UNITY of the congregation, or subjected it to disruptive or non-helpful behavior or speech during worship services. Furthermore, we oftentimes overlook the fact that the “Gentile” members of these assemblies had been pagans, who had, throughout their entire lives been steeped with requirements for worship of one or more of the local pagan gods or goddesses. I cannot truly put myself in their shoes, but, that said, I can imagine that an individual, who had grown up believing that some pagan god or goddess, if properly worshiped, would make his or her life better, and if offended, would make his or her life awful, would have been presented with a rather wrenching experience when he or she was asked to totally reject these ideas and abandon his or her patron god or goddess and worship only the One True God. My guess (and I admit that it is a guess) is that we grossly underestimate, the influence which pagan gods and goddesses had over the pagan populations of the cities approached by Paul’s mission. It appears that, perhaps, in one or more of these cities individuals who had held positions of influence in the temples of one of these pagan deities were members of one of the Christian assemblies and might well have been causing some disruptions in such assemblies, perhaps because of their class standing or position of honor

and their attempts to use this standing in order to make statements which were offensive to the true Gospel. Furthermore, we certainly well know that the pagan populations of the various cities were not accustomed to living in what we might consider to be “the most moral ways”. Sexual immorality, in particular, had free reign. So, Paul would have been constantly warring against Disunity, Disruption, and Immorality (he required Holiness, lives of morality). In addition, since many of the people in the assemblies founded and pastored by Paul were illiterate, in that they were, while intelligent, unable to read and write, and were not learned in the ways of Jesus and the Gospel, and had no exposure to those who were so learned (i.e. Paul and other apostles and people taught by them) they were very vulnerable to those who purported to have knowledge but who really did not know what they were talking about. So, Paul also had to war against false teachings, or teachings by people who were not properly learned in the true stories and ways of Jesus and the Gospel. We might summarize by saying that some of Paul’s guiding requirements, for which he zealously fought, were: 1) UNITY, 2) LACK OF DISRUPTION IN THE ASSEMBLIES, PARTICULARLY IN WORSHIP, 3) HOLINESS (LACK OF IMMORAL BEHAVIOR, PARTICULARLY SEXUAL IMMORALITY), 4) TRUTHFUL TEACHING OF THE TRUE STORIES AND WORDS OF JESUS AND OF THE GOSPEL, AND 5) AVOIDANCE OF FALSE TEACHINGS. We could go on and on about “WHO PAUL WAS AND WHAT HE WAS ABOUT”, relying heavily on N.T. Wright’s books referred to above wherein he covers each of Paul’s mission journeys, but I think that, at this point, I can bring this part of this discussion to a close by adding some very summary statements. A close examination of Wright’s books provides very helpful insights into Paul’s personality and into what he viewed his mission to be, as assigned to him or commissioned for him, directly by Jesus, who Paul believed to be the long-promised Messiah. Such examination, together with a brief scan of the Rose Publishing “Bible Map’s Insert” which shows the extent of Paul’s missionary journeys, demonstrate that Paul, who started as a Jewish Zealot, and who was Zealous in his efforts (including violent efforts) to protect the purity of the Jewish Torah and Traditions, never ceased to be one who we might call a “Zealot”. However, his zeal was set on its head. He continued to burn with Zeal for the “One God of Israel”, but the subject of his Zeal was dramatically altered by what happened (whatever it was) on his way to Damascus and the subsequent revelations given to him (in Paul’s words) directly by Jesus (presumably in Arabia). He had a burning Zeal for the Messiah, and to preach the Gospel of the Messiah, and to bring people from the many Greco-Roman cities which were the subjects of his mission into the Unified Body of The Messiah/the Unified Body of Christ. The battles which he had to fight (and which he zealously fought, sometimes in ways which caused him great pain and hardship), and what I have surmised to be his Guiding Principles in these

fighths are described above, with such principles being stated in bold type above. The information which is, in summary form (YES SUMMARY FORM) in this Section should help us to better understand what Paul was saying in some of his letters, particularly the Prohibition Texts which we are currently studying.

- 3) WHO WERE THE INTENDED AUDIENCES OF 1 TIMOTHY, AND, PARTICULARLY, 1 TIMOTHY 2? Well, obviously, the primary intended audience was Paul's young protégé, Timothy, who, when Paul travelled on from Ephesus, had been left behind to care for the assemblies of the Followers of Christ founded and pastored by Paul. However, I think that we can also conclude that the people of these assemblies were also included in such audiences. They knew Paul. They had respect and admiration for Paul. It seems highly probable that young Timothy would have shared the advice and admonitions of 1 Timothy with the assemblies which he was to pastor. Paul had a position of authority with these people, whereas they might well have been a little resistant to the authority of young Timothy. However, it is important to note that Timothy was not a "novice" in the correct teachings about Jesus and the True Gospel. He had been taught and mentored to by Paul, an apostle. He would have known what he was talking about, and could be properly characterized as a Second-Generation Apostle, one who learned at the feet of an apostle. So, there are parts of this letter which he would have clearly understood, but about which the other audience, the people, might have had some misunderstanding or lack of understanding or clarity. I might be overstating my understandings, but I would believe that Timothy would not have just read this letter to the people of the assemblies, but would, very likely have discussed it with them, and would, likely, have answered questions about the letter which came from them. He might well have also had some "one on one" counseling sessions about the advice of this letter with folks who were believed to be causing (probably totally unintentionally on their parts) some of the problems mentioned in this letter. I can just imagine some statements coming from Timothy like this (my words not his, obviously): "Look Dear Brother (Or Sister), you know that we have been having some problems or conflicts and I have taken the liberty of communicating with our founder and pastor, Paul, about these problems or conflicts, seeking his advice to me and us, and this is what he said. This is what I think we need to do to make things right, for the good of all of us and for the good of our assembly. Now, let's talk..."
- 4) WHAT WAS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PAUL AND THE INTENDED ORIGINAL AUDIENCES OF 1 TIMOTHY, TIMOTHY AND, VERY LIKELY, ALSO THE PEOPLE OF THE CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLIES OF EPHESUS? Well, obviously, Paul had a very close relationship with Timothy. He spoke of Timothy as being his "son". He mentored Timothy in the Gospel and the Truths about Jesus and the ways of the Apostles.

He had such confidence in Timothy that, when he, Paul, moved on from Ephesus, he left Timothy behind to lead the young Christian assemblies in Ephesus. It appears from the letter, 1 Timothy, that Paul did so knowing that Timothy might or would encounter certain problems and Paul had confidence that Timothy could deal with these problems. Perhaps Timothy was a “second generation apostle”, one who had been taught and mentored by an apostle, Paul, and he was, therefore, fully qualified to Teach/Preach that which had been Revealed by Jesus. He was party to, and had received what is referred to as “the Apostolic Deposit”, the teachings of the Apostles who had personally known Jesus, or seen and received revelation from the Risen Jesus, or been taught, directly, by someone who had so seen or received revelation from Jesus. Hands were placed on Timothy, giving him authority to go forward and teach this “apostolic deposit”. Paul’s relationship with the second audience of 1 Timothy, the people of the Christian assemblies in Ephesus, was one of founder and pastor. He had been the initially founder of these assemblies. He had lived with the people of these assemblies for a substantial period of time, about 2 1/2 years. He taught them, preached to them and mentored them, likely imparting to them a whole lot of information that went above and beyond anything in his letter. He wrote 1 Corinthians while in Ephesus. He had experienced a huge problem in Ephesus when those who supported the goddess Artemis (the pagan deity of Ephesus, also known as Diana) caused a massive disruption or riot and sought to do away with Paul. (Acts 19:23-40) N.T. Wright, in *Paul/A Biography*, is of the opinion that Paul was imprisoned in Ephesus because of this incident, and that this imprisonment (and his abandonment in this imprisonment) caused him to lose heart. He wrote parts of 2 Corinthians during this imprisonment. At first the tone of this letter is dark, but something happened to re-charge Paul’s batteries, so to speak, and the tone of 2 Corinthians goes from rather dark and depressing to joyful. In 1 Corinthians 15:30-32 Paul states that he “fought with wild animals in Ephesus”. N.T. Wright in his “Paul for Everyone” book, 1 Corinthians which is cited above, discusses this strange statement at page 216. It is his view that Paul speaks here metaphorically, and that he was speaking of the battles he had, and difficulties he had in Ephesus in trying to preach the Gospel. The “wild animals” are people, not actual beasts, but, perhaps, they acted like beasts. The riot mentioned above is discussed in Acts 19, and that riot (and Paul’s possible imprisonment) is an example of the tremendous opposition which Paul encountered in his efforts to further the Gospel. As stated by Wright (citation above): *“I am inclined to think that it’s (meaning the reference to wild animals) had to do with the enormous opposition that the gospel aroused, not least from those who saw it as a political threat (Ephesus was a great center of the new imperial cult), an economic threat (if Paul was right, man-made idols were nonsense, but lots of people made a living by*

making and selling them), and a religious threat (if Jesus was the world's true Lord, the other gods and goddesses at Ephesus, whose worship was woven into the fabric of local culture, were downgraded)." As we read Paul's Epistles we need to do our best to try to recall what battles he was having to fight, the opposition which he encountered, and hardships which he had to endure. I am, again impressed with what a remarkable man he was. His endurance and perseverance and zeal are traits that I cannot begin to emulate.

- 5) WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE PEOPLE OF THE ORIGINAL AUDIENCES OF THIS BOOK/THIS LETTER/THIS EPISTLE, AND ABOUT THEIR HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL SETTINGS? In dealing with this question, I think that we can disregard one of the intended audiences for 1 Timothy, Timothy himself, who we have properly dealt with in section 4) above, and move on to the people of the (what became known as) "Christian Assemblies" of the city of Ephesus. Here I have to heavily rely on the books of N.T. Wright mentioned above, *Paul/A Biography* and *Paul, A New Perspective*, and to some extent, some on his New Testament Commentaries, *Paul for Everyone*. In addition, I have relied heavily on Sandra L. Glahan's, *Nobody's Mother/Artemis in Antiquity and the New Testament*, which is cited and described, above, in this paper. Admittedly, my knowledge of the historical Ephesus is limited. However, I think that such limited knowledge will suffice for purposes of this paper and our analysis of 1 Timothy 2. Apparently, there was a huge disruption in the Roman Empire after the death of one of the emperors. Many Roman soldiers were caught up in the battles of this disruption, and the battles that the various competitors for the throne of emperor fought with each other. In addition, many Roman soldiers (both actual Romans and those from other localities who were brought into Roman service) retired from service. The emperor did not want all of these retired soldiers to return to Rome or move to Rome. Therefore, various Roman cities were founded (or existing cities were "enlisted" for this purpose) throughout what became the Roman Empire, including cities in Galatia and Asia Minor, and what is now known today as "Turkey", in order to provide homes for these retiring soldiers. Ephesus and Corinth were among these cities. These cities had, in most cases (including Ephesus and Corinth) a pre-existing Greek influence (some being occupied by Alexander the Great), and that influence continued. They became Roman Cities. Since they were cities of substantial importance in the economic and trade pursuits of the times, they drew populations from various parts of the empire. Keep in mind that some of the retiring soldiers were not Romans, but came from other areas and had been "enlisted" into Roman service. Furthermore, because of the Diaspora, each city had a significant minority population of Jews. If we think our city populations of today are ethnically diverse, those populations have nothing on the ethnically

diverse populations of these 1st Century cities, which were virtual seething cauldrons of ethnic and class diversity. Other than the Jews, the people were pagans, and they worshipped the various local gods and goddesses, who had a substantial impact on the people and their cultures. There were pagan temples on virtually every street corner. The Jews had a synagogue. In addition, the “Imperial Cult”, emperor worship was taking hold and there were temples for the emperor. As pointed out above, in addition to ethnic diversity there was substantial “class/social standing” diversity. People were very class conscious. The “honor-shame” culture prevailed. With some exceptions for Roman women, the societies were heavily patriarchal, and women’s rights to own property or to receive an education, or to pursue a business were heavily restricted. Wifely submission to the husband was a social and domestic requirement. Very few women occupied any position of authority, and it would have been very rare for a woman to have any position of authority over a man. For a woman to publicly speak out in opposition to something said by her husband would have been considered to be a scandalous event, which would bring shame to both spouses. Such patriarchal cultural condition’s prevalence notwithstanding, some women did hold positions of patronage or authority in the various pagan temples. They could be leaders of the cult of the deity of the temple. This situation was, apparently, the case with the Temple of Artemis (a goddess sometimes known as Diana) in Ephesus. Artemis was the “patron goddess” of Ephesus and of the Ephesians. Sure, she was a mythical being, but, mythical being or not, she and her worship occupied large positions among the minds of the people of Ephesus, particularly the women. The legend of Ephesus was that it was founded by Amazons, warrior women of a highly matriarchal, women led society which was, pursuant to legend, located in eastern Europe. In fact, there is some evidence that the Amazons might well have truly existed. Whether or not they did, the legend identified them, warrior women, as founders of Ephesus. Artemis was reputed to have some connections to the Amazons. She was the first-born twin child of a goddess who had been impregnated by another god, apparently Zeus. Artemis was the first-born twin. Her twin brother was the god Apollo. Artemis’s mother had a painful, excruciatingly painful and fatal experience in birthing Apollo. Such “bad childbirth” for the mother of Artemis had a huge impact on Artemis (how she became aware of it is not really described). In any event, she, Artemis, purportedly decided that, under no circumstances would she become pregnant. While some scholars describe Artemis as a patron for sex and fertility, Dr. Glahan, through extremely extensive research and investigation, as described in her book cited above, has found that Artemis was anything but a goddess who encouraged sex, marriage, pregnancy or childbirth. In fact, because of the terrible, terminal experience of her mother, she vowed to forever remain a

virgin. She encouraged virginity and non-pregnancy among her women followers, and, perhaps, even a total abstinence from sex or normal family life. Submission to a man would have been something that was contrary to the personality of Artemis and her cult. Artemis was also a warrior and a huntress. She constantly carried weapons, including a bow and arrows. The women of Ephesus believed that if they did become pregnant and suffered a “bad childbirth”, Artemis would watch over them and help them, and if things were really bad, would painlessly euthanize them with her arrows. Child bearing and child birth were very dangerous events for women of the times of Jesus and Paul. Many women died in childbirth, sometimes very painfully. While husbands probably wanted their wives to get pregnant and provide them with heirs, particularly male heirs, many wives probably feared pregnancy. Ephesian wives would, very probably, have looked to Artemis and even prayed to Artemis to help them through childbearing, and, if necessary, to painlessly euthanize them with her arrows. Some very prominent women were patrons of the temple of Artemis, and were, likely, leaders of the cult of Artemis. It is reasonable to infer from 1 Timothy that some of these women were participants in the Christian Assemblies of Ephesus. Most certainly, every woman, every wife who was included in these assemblies had been heavily influenced by the legend of Artemis. Some of them had probably looked to (or perhaps even prayed to) Artemis to help them through childbearing and childbirth, and to even painlessly euthanize them with her arrows if things went bad in childbirth. While we cannot absolutely know that such was the case, it seems to be reasonable to strongly suspect that some of the Ephesian women (particularly including any who were leaders in the cult of Artemis) who were members of the Christian assemblies in Ephesus found it difficult (perhaps even very scary) to completely reject their dependence on Artemis and their beliefs that she would protect them in childbearing, and that they might well have spoken up about Artemis in the Christian assemblies. What we do know about Paul’s experiences in Ephesus is that: 1) he worked in ministry there with Priscilla and Aquila who had taught a man, Apollos (Acts 18:24-27), and 2) that Priscilla and Aquila were both considered by Paul to be valued co-workers and teachers in ministry, who had risked their lives for him and for whom the churches in Galatia were grateful, and who were hosting a church in their home in Rome (Romans 16:3-5) (note that, somewhat unusual in the patriarchal times of Paul, Priscilla, the wife, was always mentioned by him before Aquila, the husband), and 3) that while Priscilla and Aquila travelled with Paul from city to city (Acts 18), when Paul left Ephesus he left Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus, presumably to continue the work with the assemblies there (Acts 18:18-19), and 4) that when Paul first preached about Jesus and the Gospel in the Jewish synagogue of Ephesus, some became obstinate and publicly maligned the

matters/The Way of which Paul was speaking (Acts 19:8-10), and 5) that this went on for some time so Paul left those obstinate people of the synagogue and continued to teach Jews and Gentiles of Ephesus in some assembly hall, and 6) that while Paul was in Ephesus, “God did extraordinary miracles through Paul...and the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them” (Acts 19:11-12) causing additional resentment among the Jews and the Ephesian practitioners of the Dark Arts who were prevalent in Ephesus, and 7) that Paul continued to receive substantial Jewish resistance (Acts 19:13-20); and 8) that Paul had preached with respect to the pagan deities of Ephesus (who would have included Artemis) that man-made gods are no gods at all, threatening (in the eyes of some) the goddess, Artemis and her great temple in Ephesus and the business of craftsmen who made money making and selling statues of her, which stirred up a huge riot among the Ephesians who were shouting “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians”, an incident to which Paul might have referred in 1 Corinthians 15:32 as a “fight with wild animals” and an incident which, if N.T. Wright in his biography of Paul referred to above led to an imprisonment of Paul that occurred between Paul’s first visit to Corinth and his return to Corinth (2 Corinthians). So, we know that Paul had encountered substantial resistance to his message, and substantial difficulties during his first extended visit to Ephesus (a visit of about 2 1/2 years-see the introduction to the book of the Ephesians in the NIV Life Applications Study Bible). When Paul was on his way to Jerusalem, he was met by Elders from the Ephesian assemblies. What he said to them evidences a fear on Paul’s part that “savage wolves”, as Paul put it, would come among the flock of the Ephesian assemblies, and that they, and even members of the assemblies themselves (possibly including even members of the Elders themselves) would distort the truth and draw away disciples. (Acts 20:27-31) It is apparent that, whatever happened while Paul was in Ephesus, it caused Paul to have a continued fear that an invasion of false teaching, both from outside of the assemblies and from inside of the assemblies, would lead the flocks astray. When Paul was imprisoned in Rome, and, if scholars are correct, before he was released from prison and travelled again, he wrote his letter to the Ephesians. He, in this letter, continued to preach to the Ephesians (and apparently other neighboring churches, it being believed that this letter was intended to be a circular letter to be read in a number of churches) his prevailing message of the need for UNITY in the church. (See Ephesians 3 and 4). There, speaking of Christ, Paul says: *“It was he who gave some to the apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up UNTIL WE ALL REACH UNITY IN THE FAITH AND IN KNOWLEDGE OF THE SON OF GOD AND BECOME MATURE, ATTAINING THE FULL MEASURE OF FULNESS OF CHRIST.”* (Ephesians 4:9-14) At no place in this letter

does Paul distinguish men from women in the granting of the grace of spiritual gifts, including those of prophecy, pastors, teachers and evangelists. In Ephesians 4:22, one of the so-called “Wifely Submission Passage” he appears to preach a message of mutual submission and oneness of husband and wife. As previously noted, assuming scholars are correct, Paul was released from imprisonment in Rome. When he had earlier left Ephesus, he left Timothy there to protect the members of the Ephesian assembly from the teaching of false doctrines. (1 Timothy 1:3-8). While summarizing the thoughts of this section is difficult, it appears that we can clearly conclude that Paul had great respect among some of the Christian assemblies in Ephesus, but that he experienced substantial resistance among some Jewish people (1 Timothy 1:3-11) and converted Gentile members of the assemblies, particularly women, who were not educated or learned in the teachings and story of Jesus or the thoughts of the apostles. So, DISRUPTIVE THREATS TO THE UNITY of the assemblies existed, threats which Timothy was left by Paul in Ephesus to deal with.

- 6) WHAT DID THESE PASSAGES (1 TIMOTHY 2:8-15) REALLY SAY IF WE CORRECTLY TRANSLATE THE ORIGINAL GREEK WORDS OF THESE PASSAGES INTO ENGLISH: I cannot, from personal knowledge, answer this question. I have no knowledge of the Greek language. I, therefore, have to rely on the work of scholars who have made what appear to be reasonable attempts to correctly interpret these passages as they would have been heard and understood, in Greek, by their original audiences, who were learned in Greek and spoke Greek. If these scholars are correct in their reading of these passages, then that fact brings a hugely illuminating light on what Paul was saying in these passages. Let’s turn first to the excellent paper, *Women and the Nature of Ministry*, of Walter L. Liefeld, which is cited and discussed at length above in this paper. Dr. Liefeld performs in his paper a wonderful scholarly, hermeneutical analysis of the relevant 1 Timothy 2 passages, including both his exegetical interpretation of what the relevant passages of 1 Timothy truly say (understanding their Greek language) and how, correctly understood, the principles of those passages (correctly interpreted) might be applied in our current day churches (using what he refers to as “Reverse Contextualization”). I strongly recommend this paper to you, the Reader. But let’s look at Liefeld’s interpretation/translation of the passages. His question 1 is one of “definition”, and, in this respect, he first looks at Paul’s phrase: “I do not permit”. Since this passage uses the Greek present indicative, “*ouk epitrepo*” Liefeld concludes that it is likely that Paul was stating a matter of personal preference, rather than issuing a Command (i.e. “DO Not Permit”). Another pertinent issue concerns the relationship between *didaskein*, “to teach”, and *authentein*, a disputed term not used anywhere else in Paul’s writings or Scripture, which has been generally interpreted as “authority”. What

is the relationship between these terms? Are they separate matters, teaching, and authority, or are they joined together so that they are, in some way, overlapping? Is all “teaching” banned for women, or is it only a specific type of teaching that is banned? Looking at historical cultural matters affecting the positions of women with respect to their abilities to be taught and to learn and to teach (in both the Jewish and Greco-Roman worlds), all as described in detail in Liefeld’s paper, his conclusion is: “All of the above suggests that the position of teacher was inappropriate for women but that this was not a permanent situation.....and that it is, therefore.....precarious to equate the status of teachers in the early Church with that of teachers today.” Additionally, when we look at the meaning of the highly peculiar term *authentein*, and the history of its usage, we are led to the conclusion that, as used here, it refers to “the initiation of an action....on one’s own prerogative”, meaning that one, without being granted authority, simply takes charge on his or her own initiative. The conclusion is that *authentein* as used by Paul here “does not describe the mere exercise of authority but rather the way authority is gained—that is, by arrogating it to oneself, not just by receiving it.” So, as Liefeld states: “If this is accurate, can 1 Tim. 2:12 still be used to restrict women from having any positions of authority in the Church?” Going further, Liefeld states that it is his view that, keeping in mind the fact that “Paul governs the public appearance and behavior of women not only to avoid any blurring of sexual differences but also to avoid the shame that disregard of conventional morality would bring on the woman’s head, on her husband, and consequently on the gospel....,the restrictions Paul placed on women may not have been so much on what they did as on how they did it.” Again, Liefeld’s entire paper should be read by the Reader. Now let’s look at Payne and Huffaker’s book, *Why Can’t Women Do That*, which is also cited and extensively discussed above in this paper. At pages 142-149 of their book, Payne and Huffaker perform an extensive, verse by verse analysis of 1 Timothy 2:8-15. This analysis, and the entire book, are strongly recommended for you, the Reader. Noting first that, as we have noted above, Paul’s fear that false teachers (referred to by Paul in 1 Corinthians as “Savage Wolves”) had infiltrated the church at Ephesus, and that such false teachers included both men and women, but that most of the women who preached falsely generally did so, inadvertently, out of ignorance, not willfulness. Therefore, the first step was to get the inadvertent false teachers, men and women, to develop the right mindset of humility and focus on God, and to give the women that which they had been culturally denied, an opportunity to be educated and learn. As 1 Timothy goes on from 1 Timothy 2, Paul points out that some men and some women (primarily young widows) have given themselves over to Satan and are falsely teaching. With those who are just falsely teaching because of lack of knowledge, a humble, God centered focus is

first required. Hence, we see the verses 1 Timothy 2:8, (men shall pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing), and “likewise” (meaning just as was the case of men in prayer) women in prayer and in the assembly are not to flaunt their wealth or class of social standing, but are to dress modestly, etc. (1 Timothy 2:9-10). Then Payne and Huffaker turn to 1 Timothy 2:11, “a woman should learn in quietness and submission”. The word used for “quietness” here means, not silence (i.e. not talking or speaking) but “a sense of calm”. Furthermore, the verb used for “learn” here is a command. Paul is commanding Timothy that these women must learn and should be taught. Why doesn’t “Paul tell men to do likewise”? “Because the context indicates that the main problem Paul is addressing concerns women. And there was already a culture of men learning from rabbis, but they didn’t have an established convention regarding how women should be taught.” Now Payne and Huffaker come to the meat of the problem, 1 Timothy 2:12, “I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet.” The Authors, Payne and Huffaker, conclude: FIRST, the verb in the phrase “I do not permit” “is a present, active, indicative verb in the Greek, (which) indicates something that is presently ongoing, so it is better translated: ‘I am not permitting’, (which) does not imply a permanent state, or a universal command, like ‘*I do not permit does*’”, and SECOND, “the word itself, ‘permit’, is never used in the original text of the Bible as a universal command.....(and) Paul issues many permanent commands in his letters, and never uses the verb ‘permit’ to give a permanent command”, and THIRD, “the word translated ‘*to assume authority*’ is *authentein*”, (which) is not used elsewhere in the Bible...(with) ..the most common usage of this word around Paul’s time meaning ‘to assume authority’ which one does not rightfully have”, and FOURTH, “the two verbs here, ‘*to teach*’ and ‘*to assume authority*’ are joined by the coordinating conjunction “*oude*”, meaning that the correct wording of the sentence would be “I am not permitting a woman to assume authority to teach”, as “Paul is not prohibiting two separate actions—he is prohibiting the *combination* of teaching and assuming authority.” With respect to Paul’s statements about “it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner”, Payne and Huffaker argue that this passage should not be held to mean that all women are easily deceived and, therefore, should not be permitted to teach, but, rather, taken in the context of the situation in Ephesus where untrained women were assuming authority to teach, and even to teach men (perhaps their own husbands, a scandalous situation at that time) this passage is a clear indication that the women of the Ephesian Christian assemblies should not be permitted to assume authority to teach until they have been given the commanded opportunities to learn. So, now we reach the highly strange phrases that “*women shall be saved through childbearing*”. There have been many attempts to explain the meaning

of this highly peculiar phrase. Surely Paul does not mean to say that a woman, who has not born a child, cannot be saved when the core of his whole message is one of “Justification through Faith.” If one is saved by Faith alone, then why must a woman bear a child to be saved? Why is the Work of Childbearing required of women, in addition to their “Justification by Faith”? Something just does not add up here. One is tempted to look at the childbearing phrases as being one of those highly confusing Biblical passages which cannot be explained or understood and should just be disregarded. Many theologians urge that you just have to pass over and ignore these passages which are not capable of being understood at this time. An example of such a passage is the reference of Paul to “baptism of the dead”. However, rather than ignoring this childbearing passage, I choose to adopt a combination of the “Pauline Quotation-Refutation Device” argued for by Kirk MacGregor in his paper, *I Corinthians 14:33b-38 as a Pauline Quotation—Refutation Device*, which is cited above in this paper, and the information about the Ephesian culture of the goddess Artemis which is provided by Sandra L. Glahan’s book, *“Nobody’s Mother/Artemis of the Ephesians in Antiquity and the New Testament”* which is cited and described above in this paper. I think that Dr. Glahan, without referring to “Quotation-Refutation Device” uses that device in arguing in her book that Paul, in the “women shall be saved through childbearing...” phrase is referring (perhaps quoting outright) a statement by Ephesian women, who worship Artemis to the effect that Artemis will look after them and save them through childbearing and is then refuting that statement by, in effect, saying that “Women will be saved in childbearing by “continuing in faith in Christ, love and holiness”, faith, love and holiness being hallmarks of Paul’s messages.

- 7) WHEN WAS 1 TIMOTHY WRITTEN: I think that we have covered this subject already in Section 1) above. As noted therein, scholars believe that Paul was imprisoned in Rome, but was subsequently released around A.D. 62, and that, during the next few years he was able to travel, and that, during this time, he wrote 1 Timothy and Titus. He was then again arrested and imprisoned, and, during this second imprisonment he wrote 2 Timothy. Some conclude that, during this time period between his release from his first imprisonment and his second imprisonment, Paul “revisited many churches in Asia and Macedonia (and that) when he and Timothy returned to Ephesus, they found widespread false teaching in the church.” (See NIV Life Application Bible, Study Note 1:1) “Paul sent Timothy to lead the Ephesian church while he moved on to Macedonia. From there Paul wrote this letter of encouragement and instruction to help Timothy deal with the difficult situation in the Ephesian church.” (Same Study Note) Regardless of whether or not Paul revisited Ephesus between imprisonments, it is apparent that he feared, or had somehow become aware of

some very difficult situations in the Ephesian church which Timothy (who had been left in Ephesus by Paul to lead that church) was encountering, including situations of false teaching and disruption. We do know that Paul visited Ephesus on his second missionary journey (Acts 18:19-21). Later, on his third missionary journey he stayed there almost three years (Acts 19:20). Again, regardless of the sequence of events, it is apparent that Paul met with the elders of the church in Ephesus on his way to Rome, and warned them that Savage Wolves of false teachings would appear. (Acts 20:17-35) He had left Timothy in Ephesus. It is apparent that Paul either strongly suspected, when he left Ephesus (regardless of when that was) that Timothy was going to encounter difficulties, some of the nature of which Paul had already experienced (hence the references to savage wolves in his warnings to the Elders in Acts 20), or that he somehow became aware of the fact that Timothy was experiencing issues, or, he did retravel to Ephesus, becoming aware of problems, and again left there with Timothy in charge.

- 8) WAS 1 TIMOTHY WRITTEN IN ORDER TO ATTEMPT TO DEAL WITH A SITUATION BEING ENCOUNTERED BY TIMOTHY OR BY THE MEMBERS OF THE EPHESIAN CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLIES, AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THAT SITUATION?: Of course, we have heard the statement “All of the Bible is situational”. That statement holds true for many, if not, in fact, all of the Epistles, which were the earliest writings of the infant Church. Looking at the views of the authors whose books and papers are described above, and at the passages of 1 Timothy, read in its entirety, it definitely appears that Paul had encountered, and that Timothy was encountering a very difficult situation in the Ephesian Christian assembly. Both men, and women, were disrupting and endangering the lessons of the Gospel by false teachings. In some cases, it appears, particularly in the case of the women, that the false teaching arose from inadvertence, and lack of learning of the true words of Jesus and the apostles, not from a malicious intent to mislead. However, there were other cases in which the false teachings were deliberately expressed, or, in the words of Paul, were induced by Satan. Let’s look at the events leading up to 1 Timothy. When Paul was in Ephesus (or when he returned there after his second missionary journey and after his first imprisonment, if did, in fact, return after his release from his first imprisonment in Rome) he encountered opposition from both the Jews and the pagan worshippers of Artemis (or those idol making tradespeople who profited from her). (See Acts 18 and 19). The opposition from the followers of Artemis or from the merchants of the statutes of Artemis resulted in a huge riot (“Great is Artemis of the Ephesians”). (Acts 19:23-41). The Ephesian temple of Artemis was one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world. (See N.T. Wright’s *Paul, a Biography* which is cited and discussed above, at page 235) N.T. Wright

speculates, on the basis of some pretty sound evidence, that Paul was imprisoned in Ephesus, likely as a result of the riot. (See *Paul, a Biography at pages 239-241*). For whatever reason, Paul, on a subsequent travel seems to have deliberately avoided Ephesus, a city in which he had spent almost 3 years and had many devoted followers (Ibid). However, on his way to Jerusalem, he summoned the elders of the Ephesian assemblies, and he warned the elders that “savage wolves will come among you and will not spare the flock (and that such wolves)....even would include (those) from your own number (and that)...men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples...”. That Paul feared for the congregations in Ephesus is obvious. That he feared that they would be misled by those seeking to preach a false gospel, including those within the assemblies and those from outside of the assemblies, appears to be obvious. That Paul’s fears were justified also appears to be obvious. Ephesus was the main city in the Roman province of Asia. It was home to the magnificent temple of Artemis, a goddess who was held in high esteem in Ephesus, particularly among its women. “It was in this period the proud host of the imperial cult”, and it was given the proud privilege of sporting new temples to Rome. “In addition, Ephesus was the home of all kinds of magic, the dark and powerful arts that were always popular...” . (For all of the above see Wright’s *Paul, a Biography, Chapter10, Ephesus I.*) Then we come to 1 Timothy. In vs 1:3-7 Paul tells Timothy that he had urged Timothy to stay in Ephesus “so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer nor to devote themselves to myths and meaningless genealogies.” The following vs. 1:3-11 seem to make it apparent that some of these teachers of false doctrines were Jews, who sought to preach the requirements of the law. In 1 Timothy 4 Paul cautions that “the Spirit clearly says that in later times, some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons....(who) forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods.... ” In 2 Timothy 2:14-20 Paul again expresses strong concerns about false teachings, and specifically names two men, Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have wandered away from the truth, and whose false teachings will spread like gangrene. It appears abundantly clear, to me at least, that 1 Timothy was addressed to Timothy in order to provide him advice, assistance and encouragement as to how to deal with the existence of false teachings which Paul feared would emerge in Ephesus, and of which Paul was aware when he left Ephesus or of which he had become aware. Included within those who were spreading false doctrines or thoughts were likely some women who had held positions of influence in the cult of Artemis, and who thought that, because of their positions and the respect which those positions commanded, they could assume the authority to speak. Quite possibly they were speaking of Artemis somewhat favorably (and logically they would) and of Artemis’s ability

to watch over women through pregnancy and childbirth. If we look at 2 Timothy 2:14-20 these women might even have been advising women “not to marry”, which was certainly the position of the cult of Artemis. My conclusion is, therefore, that 1 Timothy, particularly the passages of 1 Timothy 2 were written by Paul to address specific concerns with respect to the Ephesian Christian assemblies and particular situations which existed in those assemblies. The provisions of 1 Timothy 2 which addressed the roles of women were specific to the Ephesian situation, and were of temporary intent, and were not intended by Paul (or Jesus speaking through Paul) to prohibit women, in every church everywhere, for all time and in all situations, from teaching/preaching in Church or from holding positions, including Senior Positions, in a Christian church.

- 9) ARE THERE ANY CULTURAL FACTORS WHICH WOULD HAVE AFFECTED WHAT PAUL WROTE IN 1 TIMOTHY 2:8-15? I think that part of the answer to this question is adequately addressed in the above Sections 1)-8), and particularly in 8) above. However, it is important to also note some other cultural factors which should affect the ways in which we try to transpose Paul’s advice to Timothy, as contained in 1 Timothy 2:8-15, from the Ephesian Christian assemblies addressed by Paul to today’s churches. As noted by more than one of our authors whose books and articles are cited and described above in this paper, Jesus, the original apostles, and Paul were all living in, and trying to deal with situations created by heavily patriarchal cultures. Although, as noted by Nijay Gupta in his book “*Tell her Story*” which is described above, there were exceptions in both the Jewish world and the Greco-Roman world, women in those cultures could not be educated, and generally could not hold property, and were generally subject to the whims of their husbands. Unlike men, then could generally not seek a divorce. Unlike men, they were generally discouraged from speaking out in public, and were certainly not in a position where they could publicly disagree with their husbands. However, perhaps one very significant deviation from this normative treatment of women would have existed in Ephesus where women were the patrons of the magnificent temple of Artemis and were the leaders in the cult of Artemis, which had significant influence in Ephesus. (See Sandra Glahan’s *Nobody’s Mother*, which is discussed above). Therefore, these women of influence in the cult of Artemis, if they were participants in the Ephesian Christian assemblies (and there is every reason to believe that they were) then they could, very probably, have expected that they could use their influentially held positions to speak out in the Christian assemblies about matters of which they had inadequate knowledge. The very nature of the early Christian assemblies (that is to say the very nature of the early churches) differed, dramatically, from the nature of our current day

churches, as pointed out by several of the authors whose works are cited above. These early churches met in homes or other places of public meeting. Their congregations were small in number. They did not have the sort of “Top Down”, pastor to congregation type of worship services which we have today. Their worship services were generally centered around a meal. They were, for want of a better terminology, “participatory”, meaning that, unlike our church services where the congregation sits silent and listens to the preacher, in their church services those assembled could all pray and prophecy. (See 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, and N.T. Wright’s commentary on these passages at pages 138-141 in his Commentary *Paul for Everyone, 1 Corinthians*, which is cited above) I think that it is appropriate to apply Walter Liefeld’s “Reverse Contextualization” approach, as he describes it in his paper, *Women and the Nature of Ministry* which is cited and discussed above. Look at the *current contexts* of the *current day* nature of our current day churches, and of the cultures in which they operate. Then compare these *current day contexts* (i.e. the current day nature and cultures of our churches) to the *ancient* contexts of the nature of the church services of the ones that existed in Paul’s time and the cultures in which they operated. Now assume that we have a woman preaching in a current day church or occupying a senior position with such a church. Looking at our *current day contexts* and then comparing those contexts with the *ancient contexts* of Paul’s time, can it be said that allowing a woman to preach or hold a senior position in a current day church somehow violates Biblical principles that are somehow purportedly handed down by Jesus, through Paul, in 1 Timothy 2? I submit that the answer to this question is No, or, at best is Highly Doubtful. Are we going to apply some highly doubtful, arguable conclusion in such a manner as to deny people of our Christian congregations the benefits of the learning and teachings and leadership of skilled, well trained, competent, effective and properly called women? I strongly commend Dr. Liefeld’s very well thought out, documented and presented paper, *Women and the Nature of Ministry*.

- 10) ELIMINATING THE CULTURAL FACTORS, AND THE SITUATIONAL FACTORS WHICH APPLIED SOLELY TO THE ASSEMBLIES IN EPHESUS, CAN WE DERIVE TIMELESS PRINCIPLES AND TRUTHS FROM 1 TIMOTHY, PARTICULARLY 1 TIMOTHY 2, WHICH APPLY TO CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLIES/CHURCHES EVERYWHERE, FOR ALL TIMES? First, a derived timeless principle or truth is not one which says that “a woman cannot preach or hold a Senior Position in church or perform some roles in Christian ministry for which she is qualified, simply because she is a woman”. In other words, the passages of 1 Timothy 2 do not bar women from holding positions or performing certain roles in Christian ministry because of their gender. What we can say, knowing of the history of Paul, and of his teachings in

1 Timothy and elsewhere, particularly 1 Corinthians 12-14 and Galatians, is that Paul had received his knowledge of who Jesus was and of the teachings of Jesus and of the Gospel, not from any human person but from Jesus Himself, and that he was, by personality and deep convictions, zealous in his pursuit of the preaching of the true, Jesus given, Gospel. He couldn't allow for the teaching of some gospel, or some doctrines, other than the Truth as given to him by Jesus. A part of those teachings was the doctrine that those who had faith in Christ and who were baptized into the body of Christ (or, perhaps, as Paul would put it, the Body of the Messiah) were members of one, unified FAMILY. (See Galatians and particularly Galatians 3: 27-28, "there is no longer Jew or Greek..."). Reading through N.T. Wright's *Paul, a Biography*, and the relevant Scriptural passages he cites therein, as well as those specifically referenced in this Section 10) one becomes easily convinced that Paul: 1) Was zealous in the preaching and teaching of, and the protection of the True Gospel which was handed down to him directly by Jesus, and 2) He had huge concerns about any teachings other than the true Jesus delivered Gospel, and 3) He was hugely concerned that the UNITY of the church and the UNITY of and within each Christian assembly be maintained, and 4) While he preached the FREEDOM, particularly freedom from the law, that one was afforded by being a member of the Body of Christ, that Freedom should be exercised in such a manner as to not harm the Unity of the assembly, particularly in worship, and must not be exercised in such a manner as to provide DISRUPTION in an assembly or worship, and 5) One should not be permitted to preach, if one does not know what one is talking about, and particularly should not be heard to purport to teach or preach or prophecy about some truth, or doctrine or gospel when he or she has not been properly trained in the True Gospel, and 6) One must, before attempting to teach or preach the Gospel or Doctrine, take the time, and make the effort to educate one's self about that which he or she is attempting to talk about. To me, at least, these 6 points, 1) through 6) above are permanent, timeless truths and principles which provide guardrails for Christian Ministry. FALSE TEACHINGS AND DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR OR SPEECH OF ANY KIND WHICH HARMS THE UNITY OF THE ASSEMBLY MUST BE AVOIDED. For a preacher to mislead the flock is something that must be avoided at all cost. For someone to make statements or carry out some conduct which is DISRUPTIVE OF THE ASSEMBLY is to carry out conduct which cannot be tolerated. So, in essence, what do we learn from Paul's 1 Timothy 2? We learn the huge importance of correct teaching from the pulpit or in Christian gatherings. We learn that maintaining Unity, and avoidance of Disruptions of our churches, and particularly of our worship services are important. Further discussions of the impacts of the differences between our current day cultures and the ancient cultures of the Ephesus of Paul's day appear in Section 9 above, including a

discussion of the application of Walter Liefeld's *Reverse Contextualization* approach which is discussed in his paper *Women and the Nature of Ministry* that is cited and discussed above in this paper.

D) SOME FURTHER ANALYSIS OF THE PASSAGES, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE RESPONSES TO THE HERMENEUTICAL QUESTIONS RAISED AND RESPONDED TO IN SECTIONS B) AND C) ABOVE:

So, let's see if we can put ourselves in the shoes of Paul and Timothy and the members of the Ephesian Christian assemblies as they existed at the time when Paul addressed 1 Timothy to Timothy. In preparing this part of this paper, I rely heavily on all of the literary sources which are cited and discussed above. I am going to do so without specific attributions to the sources which are used or referenced. However, I acknowledge that the contents of this part of this paper are based, almost entirely, upon information provided by such sources. That said, let me try to proceed. We know that Paul had a personality that could properly be described as *Zealous*. Until he encountered the risen Jesus he was *Zealous* in his defense of the Jewish Tradition. He saw that those earlier followers of Jesus were a threat to this Tradition, and could prevent the promised return of God to Israel. He saw the followers of Jesus, "the Way", as being such a threat to the promised return of God that they had to be silenced or eliminated by whatever causes were available. He was zealous to the point of violence. He witnessed, with favorable impressions, the stoning of Stephen. From my perspective, this *zealous* aspect of Paul's personality and character did not change. I would submit that it was this Zeal, coupled with Paul's exhaustive knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures, that caused Jesus to select Paul to be his, Jesus's, apostle for the advancement of the Gospel. Paul had a tremendous knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures. He had studied these extensively. He advocated for them Zealously. He was also well schooled and learned in the literature of the Second Temple period. It appears that he had a virtually encyclopedic knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures and Second Temple Literature. Regardless of what specifically happened to Paul when he was on his way to Damascus, it is apparent that the risen Jesus then caused Paul to understand and know that he, Paul, was simply misunderstanding or misapplying the Jewish Scriptures in that those Scriptures and the Story of God presented by those Scriptures pointed to, and identified Jesus as the Messiah who had been long promised by such Scriptures and Story. So, Paul was required to radically adjust his thinking in order to understand that the Jewish Scriptures, properly read and interpreted in the light of this Jesus, who was executed and rose from the dead, pointed to, and identified Jesus as the Messiah which the Scriptures had long promised. Paul did not cease to be a Jew. While it is sometimes said that he was "converted" on his way to Damascus, it would appear more appropriate to conclude that he was not "converted" as a Jew, but that he had his view of Jewish Scriptures and the Story of God "converted" or radically altered so as to cause him to believe that the executed and risen from the dead Jesus was, in fact, the Messiah for whom the Jews were then waiting. He was simply, somehow, taught by Jesus that the Jewish Scriptures, and their promises, and God's Story identified Jesus as the Messiah. This would have been an earth-shattering revelation for Paul, and would have been a revelation which could not be readily accepted by devout Jews of the day. After all, the Jews expected a Messiah who would free the Promised Land from rule by outsiders, the Romans, and would set the Jewish people free from their oppressors, and would make the way for God to return to the Temple and again be living among His

people. An executed Messiah was a contradiction in terms. How on earth could the Jewish people accept a crucified Messiah, who had been executed in the most awful way used by Rome to deal with those who opposed it? Paul did not, immediately, go about preaching the nature of the revelation which he had received on his way to Damascus. He went to Arabia. While it is unclear what happened in Arabia, N.T. Wright (in his Biography of Paul) submits that it is reasonable to conclude that Paul went to Mount Sina (which is in Arabia), the Mountain of Revelation by God to Moses and to the Israelites and to Elijah. Paul states, in Galatians, that he did not learn the Gospel which he would preach from men, but rather received it directly from Jesus. He was directly endowed with knowledge of the Gospel by Jesus himself. After returning from Arabia, and a subsequent visit to Peter and possibly James in Jerusalem, Paul returned to Tarsus. A ten-year period of silence about and from Paul ensued. It is, however, reasonable to expect that he lived with his devoutly Jewish parents, and worked in their tent making shop. He would have come into contact with those of the Jewish community, and with Philosophers, who were steeped in the then Greek Philosophical schools of thought, including the Sophists and the Epicureans. It is reasonable to believe that he would have engaged in numerous religious and philosophical debates, and that he honed his arguments that Jesus was and is the Messiah, not just for the Israelites but for all the Nations. For the Jews, he argued and preached that the Jewish Scriptures, from Abraham forward through the Prophets, clearly identified Jesus, who was executed and then rose from the dead, as their long- promised Messiah and was God Himself, who had delivered them from the "curse of the Law" as handed down to Moses on Mount Sinai. For the pagan Gentiles he argued that Jesus was the Messiah who had come to deliver them from the threat of death and to provide them with the promise of eternal life, thereby freeing them from the oppression of earthly rulers and the dark powers of the pagan gods and the power of both earthly and heavenly princes and powers. Paul preached to all that Jesus, the risen and living Jesus, was now the Lord of and over Israel and all of the Gentile Nations, meaning that He, Jesus, was Lord over and above the emperor and civil ruling authorities. As we can readily see, these arguments, which Paul continually preached during all of his missions were hugely threatening to zealous Jews, and to those who worshipped and profited from pagan gods, and to the Imperial Cult of the Roman empire, which was then in the process of becoming prominent throughout the Roman empire. Temples to the many pagan deities could be found on every corner in the Greco-Roman cities in which Paul carried out his missions and founded small Christian communities, including Ephesus. Temples to the Roman emperor, a purported deity, were appearing, and several were erected in Ephesus. All citizens in the Roman empire were required to worship the emperor. However, the Jews were exempt from this requirement, their requirement being only that they pray for the emperor and the empire. Many Jews feared that Paul's message, if adopted, would threaten the Jewish exemption from emperor worship and would subject them to persecution by the Romans. The Jews were, in any event, viewed with strong suspicion throughout the empire because they were seen as being "different", and as non-worshippers of the emperor. While the destruction of the Temple, the Second Temple, did not occur until around 70AD, discontent and rebellion were always festering in Israel and, particularly Jerusalem. (Note: The Jewish-Roman war resulted in the destruction by Rome of the Temple and Jerusalem in about 70 AD.) We also know that both the Jewish culture of the Second Temple period (and its predecessors) and the Greco-Roman, pagan cultures throughout the Roman Empire were heavily patriarchal and misogynistic. While there were exceptions, as noted by Nijay Gupta in his book,

Tell Her Story which is cited and described above, women, by and large within these cultures, could not be educated and could not hold property, and could not seek divorce from their husbands and were seldom viewed as the victim in rape situations (rather it was their husband whose property was damaged by a rape who were the victims and were entitled to compensations as such). Women were, to put it bluntly disvalued. In many cases their testimony in court was not respected. They could not publicly dispute a male, particularly their husband. The cultures were very class conscious, and individuals sought to elevate their class among other citizens, and to be very protective of their class standing. The cultures were very honor-shame centric. Honor was important. Shame was to be avoided at all costs. For a woman to dispute a man, particularly her husband, in public, was perceived as bringing shame upon her and her husband. If a wife wanted to know something, then she was to wait until she and her husband got home, and then learn (it is often said “submissively”) from him. While child-bearing and child-birth were hugely risky situations, many times resulting in the death (sometimes very agonizing, painful deaths) of many women at very young ages, wives were expected to bear children for their husbands (hopefully a male child who would be an heir of and carry on the name and family line of the husband). For a man or woman to not marry, or have children, were perceived as being shameful situations. These were the cultures which existed during the times of Jesus, Paul and the other apostles and disciples. This was the world of Jesus, Paul, the other apostles and disciples. To inject into these cultures a Story that some guy who had been executed and rose from the dead and was now Lord over all, would have been to inject a virtual flashpoint into both the Jewish communities and pagan communities of the cities in which Paul and other apostles and disciples sought to further the Gospel and bring about converts to its message. That the Church prospered and grew throughout the known world of the Roman Empire, under these circumstances, has to be considered to be a truly miraculous occurrence, a result of the actions of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit acting through people like Paul (and, one can reasonably argue, particularly Paul). One cannot help but be hugely impressed by the missionary journeys and other travels undertaken by Paul as these journeys and travels are briefly described, outlined and mapped at pages 33-41 (with overlays) in the *Then and Now, Bible Maps Insert*, produced by Rose Publishing, 2008. Paul’s journeys were of lengths of 1400 to 2800 miles over rough roads and dangerous sea travels. Paul would generally start out in one of the cities he visited (as shown on such maps) in the local Jewish Synagogue, where he would often encounter huge resistance and by which he would sometimes be subjected to the prescribed punishment for false teachings, 40 whacks. He experienced hunger, cold, punishment and other hardships. He experienced imprisonments. His life was threatened. All of these problems notwithstanding, Paul carried on with ZEAL AND PERSEVERENCE, even though (as described by N.T. Wright in his *Paul, a Biography*) he could become exhausted and depressed and worried about whether he was accomplishing anything. Paul’s three missionary journeys and other travels, and many of the events of same, are described in the Book of Acts, and by N.T. Wright in such *Biography*. We learn a whole lot about Paul, Paul’s basic message, arguments, and ongoing concerns from this *Biography*, and the Book of Acts, and one of the earliest Christian writings, his letter to the *Galatians*. I think that, from these sources, and also from 1 and 2 *Corinthians*, we learn a lot about Paul’s basic, continual, underlying concerns which likely played a role in the statements he set forth in 1 Timothy 2:8-15. I have outlined these concerns in my discussions of N.T. Wright’s commentaries, *Paul for Everyone, Galatians and Thessalonians*, and *Paul for Everyone, 1 Corinthians*, as those commentaries are cited and discussed

above in this paper. I think that from 1) Paul's work with Priscilla and Aquila (Priscilla being almost always named first, a highly unusual thing in the Jewish and Greco-Roman worlds where the husband was almost always named first, with the wife being sort of a secondary person) as described in Acts 18 and 19, and 2) Priscilla's participation in the teaching of a learned man, Apollos (Acts 18:24-26), in Ephesus, after Paul had left Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus when he left Ephesus on his first missionary journey (Acts 18:18-26), and 3) Paul's being accompanied on his first missionary travels by Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:18 et seq), and 4) Paul's going to Ephesus, the first time on his first missionary journey, with Priscilla and Aquila and his leaving Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus when he left, with them, thereafter, instructing Apollos (Acts 18:16-26), and 5) Paul's commendations of Phoebe, Priscilla, and other women, including Junia, "an apostle" in Acts 16, and 6) The fact that Paul recognized that women would pray and prophesy in church (1 Corinthians 11:9-10), we learn the accuracy of N.T. Wright's conclusions as set forth as follows in his *Paul, a Biography* that is cited above, at page 82, which is as follows: *"But he saw women as fellow members on an equal footing within the people of God, and also, it seems, within the public ministry of that people. He could be friends with women and work alongside them without patronizing them, trying to seduce them or exploiting them"*. I think that it is more than reasonable to believe that a conclusion that Paul somehow saw women as being inferior to men in the work of and for the Gospel, or, perhaps more appropriately, that Jesus, who Paul says directly gave Paul the Gospel which Paul preached and for which he, Paul, zealously advocated, instructed Paul, and spoke through Paul in such a way as to denigrate the roles of women in the ministry would be to reach an unjustifiable conclusion. Can we sincerely conclude that Jesus intended to, through His apostle and spokesperson, say "A Woman Shall Not Ever Speak in Church, or Teach in Church or Teach or Have Authority Over A Man?" I mean come on, can we really believe that? Sometimes I think that we forget that the Bible, Scripture, is the Word of God conveyed to us by human authors, who, like all of us, are affected by their circumstances, but notwithstanding the fact that these human were affected by their cultures and their circumstances, it is the Word of the Divine Author, God, we are seeking to find when we do our best to read and interpret Scripture. Frankly, it is, for me, difficult to believe or even fathom the idea that God, who created Male and Female in "the image of God" (Genesis 1:27), and who provided Adam with a delivering ally to help Adam in his work by creating woman out of the flesh of Adam (Genesis 2:23) inspired His human author, Paul, to state a command to the effect that "In Every Christian Church, Everywhere, For All Time and Under All Circumstances, A Woman Shall Not Teach, Preach, Speak, or Have a Position of Authority".

Now considering all of this let's look at Ephesus and Paul's role with the Ephesian church, and that of Timothy who Paul left in Ephesus to lead that church when Paul moved on to Macedonia. What do we know of Ephesus itself and of its people. We know that Ephesus was one of the main cities of the Roman Empire in the area of Asia Minor (what is now Turkey). Like all such cities it was a pagan city and the gods of Greek and Roman paganism were everywhere. In Ephesus, in particular, which was believed to have been founded by Amazon women, Artemis, who was believed to be somehow closely aligned with the Amazons or to be, like the Amazons, a warrior woman goddess, was the patron deity. A huge temple of Artemis, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, dominated Ephesus. The priests of that temple and of the cult of Artemis were women, who held positions of substantial authority, and social class standing in Ephesus. Ephesus, like most Greco-Roman cities, held a small population of Jews, who had

their synagogues. Furthermore, there were recent arrivals among the Roman gods, those being the emperors. Shrines to Rome and the emperor were prevalent in Greco-Roman cities, and Ephesus was no exception. Roman citizens were expected to worship the emperor, with the Jews having a rather tenuous exemption from this requirement, as long as they prayed For The Emperor and For The Empire. Additionally, Ephesus was the site of those who practiced the dark arts, seeking to summon the intervention of the so-called “dark powers”. (Note, N.T. Wright submits that these dark powers were not going to give in to Paul’s message or the Gospel, without a fight, and that this fight led, at least in part, to Paul’s imprisonment in Ephesus, which is discussed below. (See Wright’s *Paul, a Biography*, which is cited and discussed above, at page 247)). So, Ephesus which Paul visited during his first missionary journey and where he stayed for over 2 years during his second missionary journey (but which he declined to re-visit on his way to Rome) (See Acts 18, 19 and 20:17-31) had a mixture of people who Paul, Timothy, and, at some point, Priscilla and Aquila, sought to bring to the gospel. That opposition to Paul’s message and the Gospel would arise in this Ephesian population, from a number of sources, seems obvious. That Paul and those working with him faced a very difficult task in bringing the gospel to the Ephesian people (and the people of other strongly pagan Greco-Roman cities) is obvious. These people would likely have included some Jews and, certainly, pagans some of whom were, very probably, women who were participants in, if not in fact were leaders of the cult of Artemis. It appears from 1 Timothy, and 18 Acts 18 and 19 that Paul encountered: 1) some strong opposition from the Ephesian Jews which caused him to transfer his missionary activities from the synagogue to a lecture hall (See Acts 19:8-9), opposition which appears to have continued and to have been a part of Paul’s message to Timothy (See 1 Timothy 1-8), and 2) opposition or at least some strong resistance from those who had been brought up to worship the pagan gods, including Artemis, and 3) very likely, suspicion or opposition from the citizenry who had been steeped with the requirements of the Imperial cult (emperor worship), and 4) maybe opposition or fears of some of the Jews who feared that Paul’s strange (to them) message that Jesus, the Messiah, was Lord over all (meaning that the emperor was not) would cause the Jews to lose their exemption from the requirement that they worship the emperor, provided only that they pray for the emperor and the empire (Note: Could this have been part of the motivating force behind Paul’s admonition to Timothy that everyone offer prayers and intercession for the kings and all of those in authority (see 1 Timothy 2:1-7) in addition to his concerns that peace prevail so that all could worship in peace?), and 5) opposition from the practitioners of the dark arts, the dark magic, since many of their magic books were burned (Acts 19:17-20). This opposition, from these various sources was large. At the heart of Paul’s message to the pagan Gentiles was the call to worship the true God rather than idols. “That was simply unheard of in Paul’s world. It would be like asking people in a modern city to give up using motor cars, computers and telephones. The gods of Greek and Roman paganism were everywhere.” (N.T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone, Galatians and Thessalonians*, page 91) To ask that the women of Ephesus, particularly the female priests of the temple of Artemis, completely abandon their lifelong beliefs that Artemis would look after and protect women, particularly in childbirth, would have been a very tough ask at the very least. One can surmise that such women would have been very fearful of possibly offending Artemis, thereby subjecting them to huge risks of childbearing and childbirth (which were very dangerous activities for first century women). Obviously, the civil authorities would have been very suspicious of any message to the effect that someone (particularly a dead man who had purportedly risen from the dead)

held a rulership position superior to that of the emperor and the empire and its authorities. Artisans, who made their living from crafting and selling statues of the beloved Artemis, incited a riot and sought to bring harm (if not in fact death) to Paul and his followers (Acts 19:23-41). N.T. Wright and other scholars are of the opinion that this event caused Paul to be imprisoned in Ephesus (see N.T. Wright's *Paul, a Biography*, which is cited and discussed above, at pages 239-242). Wright and others believe that this imprisonment and Paul's fear for his life and feelings of abandonment, led Paul to question whether or not he was accomplishing anything and to the rather dark, opening parts of 2 Corinthians. (Ibid.) What we do know, for certain, is that Paul, for some reason, declined to revisit Ephesus on his way to Rome, but rather summoned the elders of the Ephesian church to meet with him at Miletus, and that, during this meeting he warned such elders that "savage wolves will come among you...(and that they)...and even (some) from your own number...will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples." (Acts 19:27-31) We know from Paul's letter to the Corinthians, 1 Corinthians, which Paul wrote while he was in Ephesus, that Paul said that "he fought wild animals at Ephesus" (1 Corinthians 15:32), a statement which N.T. Wright believes to have been metaphorical and to have indicated that something had happened to Paul in Ephesus, which had been, for Paul, just like fighting wild animals. (See N.T. Wright's *Paul for Everyone, 1 Corinthians* at page 216). So, the reasonably expected strong opposition to the Gospel, and to preaching that man-made idols were worthless (including Artemis) and to the Lordship of Jesus over all, appears to have, in fact, occurred. The bad situations in Ephesus appear to have resulted in Paul's decision not to revisit Ephesus on his way to Rome, even though he was close by and did revisit the churches in other cities. (Acts 20:17-31). Candidly, it appears that Paul had every reason to abandon Ephesus and the people of its Christian assemblies. However, his zealous personality and his zeal for the Gospel which had been personally given to him by Jesus himself (Galatians 3:11-12) would not permit him to do so. In my crude words, he hung in there. He warned the elders against the encroachments of "savage wolves" and false teachings. (Acts 20:23-31). He left his beloved Timothy, who was like a son to him, to try to deal with the problematic situations in the Ephesian church (1 and 2 Timothy). He sought to give Timothy the advice and encouragement he, Timothy, would need to deal with these situations (same references). This advice seems to have been clearly directed at specific problematic situations, as follows:

- a) Some individuals, likely those of the Jewish opposition, were confusing the congregation by preaching or teaching some requirements of the Jewish law, including some endless and likely meaningless genealogies and parts of the Law which they did not understand. (1 Timothy 1:3-11).
- b) Some men in the congregation were raising hands that were impure (i.e. Not Holy) in prayer, and were engaging in angry and disputatious words and conduct, taking attention away from Jesus and the worship of Jesus and causing disruptions in the community. (1 Timothy 2:8-15).
- c) Some of the women in the very culturally class conscious and status conscious community of the congregation were seeking to flaunt their wealth, status and class standing, by wearing fancy, expensive clothes, jewelry and hairstyles, thereby bringing attention upon themselves and acting in a way which was contrary to Paul's (and other apostles') universal message that everyone,

regardless of class, status, wealth, ethnicity, etc., is equal in Christ and is a part of one Family, and also detracting from the worship of Christ.

- d) Very likely, some of the women in the congregation (very likely women who were followers of, and maybe even priests in the cult and temple of Artemis), who were not educated or learned in the Gospel or the teachings of the apostles (the so-called “apostolic deposit”), through no fault of their own because they had not been permitted to learn or be educated in religious matters, were seeking to assert their authority (authority which they had held in the cult of Artemis and the Ephesian community by virtue of their positions in that cult and in the temple of Artemis), including authority over the men in the congregation, and to teach such men, likely even including their spouses (a situation which would have brought shame upon them and their husbands in this honor-shame culture).

These situations would have, or could have resulted in the consequences which Paul constantly preached against, those being: 1) The subjecting of the congregation to preaching/teaching which would, at best be confusing and not edifying, and at worst be false teachings and false doctrines, 2) The Disruption of the Worship Service and the congregation, thereby detracting from the message of the Gospel and the worship of Christ, 3) Damage to the Unity of the Church as a whole, and to the particular Christian Community in particular, 4) Members of the congregation seeking to puff themselves up and to show or claim that they are somehow superior to other members of the congregation, a consequence which flies in the face of the doctrine that all are equal in the Body of Christ, and 6) Possibly, a subjecting of the Christian community to disrepute in the overall community by women publicly disputing men, including their husbands, as opposed to taking their disagreements home.

(As an aside, we might try to apply Speech-Act Theory to 1 Timothy 2:8-15. I am certainly not an expert in the use of that Theory, and anything I say here will have to face scrutiny and, very likely, modification and enhancement. That said, the basic theory is dependent upon finding, in any act of speech, its *Locution* (meaning what was actually said), its *illocution* (meaning what was the intent behind the Locution, or what action or change of actions did the speaker intend to initiate by way of the Locution), and its *Perlocution* (the desired effects of the Locution (with that Perlocution as the goal, the desired result)) upon the original audience. One of the problems here is that there is no certain translation of these passages which can give us a certain *Locution*. Do we go with the NIV version, which, leaving aside all situational, historical and cultural contexts seems to clearly provide that Paul would not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man and that women are easily deceived and that a “woman will be saved by childbearing”? To the contrary, do we go with the translation or interpretation given by Peterson in “The Message”, or N.T. Wright’s translation? Do we, to the contrary, use the translations of several of our other authors, whose works are cited and discussed above, in which event, we use the words “I am not permitting”, instead of “I do not permit”, implying a temporary situational instruction, and the words “aggregate to themselves authority”, or “assume for themselves authority”, or “take authority”, instead of the word “authority”, and we use a conjunctive, “and”, instead of the disjunctive “or”, so that the sentence seems to read: “I am not at this time permitting a woman to teach and assume authority over a man”? Darn it, we are, in trying to establish our “Locution” very dependent upon the

work of the translators we rely upon. Admittedly I can be wrong, but in trying to take into account the works of all of the authors whose books and papers are cited and discussed above, I, in my words, would state the actual Locution (admittedly expanded by me) to be: "I am not, at this time, permitting a woman who has not had the opportunity to learn the Gospel to teach and to assume to herself authority over a man; until she has learned in quietness and full submission; she must be silent. Just look at Adam and Eve. Eve, the woman who was formed from Adam, the man who was first formed, was deceived by the serpent, and she caused Adam, the man, who knew exactly what he was doing, to eat the forbidden fruit. Women cannot be saved or helped through childbearing by an idol, Artemis, but will be saved and protected through childbearing by Christ if they continue in their faith in him, and in love and holiness and with propriety." True, these words are my version of the Locution, and I submit them for discussion and correction. However, in trying to work through this problem I am, admittedly, mixing the Locution and the Illocution. In our use of Speech-Act Theory we always note that the Locution of words in the Bible can contain errors or be unclear, but that it is the ILLOCUTION WHICH IS WITHOUT ERROR. The Illocution which we are seeking is that of the Divine Author, God, who speaks through the words, the Locution, of the human author. What was the Intention of the Divine Author which He, God, inspired Paul to try to convey through Paul's words in 1 Timothy 2:8-15? In this case, the Divine Author is speaking of His Church. Remember that Paul said that he acquired his knowledge of the Gospel directly from Jesus, and that he was, in effect, speaking for Jesus. Jesus is the Head of the Church, His Church. So, taking into account the weight of the entirety of Scripture, and what we know of Jesus' relationships with women (and including what we know about Paul's relationships with women as demonstrated by Romans 16 and other pericopes of his epistles and of the Book of Acts which we have discussed above), can we reasonably conclude that the Illocution, the Intention of the Divine Author here was to forever, everywhere, preclude women from teaching, or having authority in a church, and to require that they remain forever silent and just take care of childbearing? I respectfully submit that we cannot reasonably conclude that such is the desired Illocution behind these passages. What I think we can conclude, on the basis of all that we know to this point, is that the desired Illocution, the intention, the Divine Intention behind 1 Timothy 2:8-15, was to achieve a *Perlocution*, a result among the assembly in Ephesus that would prevent women in the Ephesian church, who, very likely had been participants if not in fact leaders in the cult of Artemis, and who had, through no fault of their own been unable to have a proper religious education, from unwittingly misleading the Ephesian congregation by false teachings. Rather, they were to be given the opportunity to be educated and to learn. Additionally, both the women and the men of the congregation were to avoid DISRUPTIONS of the congregation and its worship, and from adversely impacting the UNITY of the congregation, by argumentative, unholy conduct and garbing themselves in ways which would bring attention to themselves and cause themselves to be held out as being, in some-way, superior to other members of the congregation. The Divine Perlocution would appear to be that: 1) All Teaching in the church, whether by men or women, will be free of False Teachings and will provide the true Gospel and Christian Doctrine, and will be edifying of the congregation, and 2) Disruption of the worship and of the Unity of the church will be avoided, and 3) All members of the congregation, while exercising their individual giftings in an appropriate manner, will see themselves, all of themselves, as being equal in the Body of Christ. There, I have taken a probably totally incomplete use of Speech-Act Theory to make some points which are subject to your review and criticism.)

So, in our words, and in view of all that is set forth above, what was Paul's advice to Timothy (and, very likely the Ephesian church's congregation)? I think it was as follows:

- 1) No actions in prayer or otherwise should be allowed to detract from Christ centered worship, so men should keep their lives Holy and not raise hands in Holy prayer, when those hands are unclean, meaning are raised by one who is not observing appropriate Christian conduct, and, likewise women should dress appropriately and not in a manner calculated to draw attention to themselves, thereby detracting from the worship of Christ and from the equality of all in the Body of Christ regardless of class or social standing,
- 2) You must give women, who have not had the opportunities afforded to men, the opportunity to be educated and to learn the Gospel and the teachings of the apostles, and such women should seek to learn with an attitude of quiet attention and submission to God,
- 3) Women, regardless of their prior standing in the community at large, and who are not knowledgeable in the Gospel and the teachings of the apostles, should not be permitted to teach or to aggregate to themselves the authority to teach men (or anyone else for that matter),
- 4) Women should look to God, to Jesus, and not to Artemis for help and protection in childbearing, which is a Godly status, and for help and provision in childbirth.

E) FINAL CONCLUSIONS ABOUT 1 TIMOTHY 2:8-15:

These passages, 1 Timothy 2:8-15 absolutely do not stand for the universal command to all Christian churches and congregations everywhere, for all times and under all circumstances that a woman may not, solely by reason of her gender, preach or teach from the pulpit, or teach (including teaching of men), or occupy any position of Senior Leadership in the church or congregation, including the positions of Senior Pastor or Church Board Elder. So, what wisdom can we take from these passages which does apply to every Christian church, everywhere, for all times:

- a) Anyone, male or female, who seeks perform any role or occupy any position in the church or its congregation, must be properly Called by God, and properly trained and equipped, by education or otherwise, to perform that role or occupy that position, and must be effective in that role or position,
- b) Teaching or Preaching from the pulpit or in any other capacity in the church or congregation by someone who does not know what they (male or female) are talking about, cannot be allowed,
- c) Any action, activity or speech in the church or the congregation which is or will be Disruptive of the Unity of the church or congregation or Disruptive of the worship services cannot be allowed,
- d) The church and its congregation should do everything, within its reasonable powers to stand for the proposition, and to encourage its participants to stand for the proposition, that everyone in the congregation, and in the pastoral staff for that matter, while having and exercising different spiritual gifts for the edification and benefit of the church and the congregation, is totally, 100%

equal before God and in the Family of Jesus, regardless of ethnicity, race, gender, economic standing, class standing or any other cultural sources of division of people.

Do these passages stand for the proposition that A WOMAN CAN OCCUPY ANY POSITION OR PERFORM ANY ROLE IN CHRISTIAN MINISTRY? I think that, properly interpreted in light of their cultural, situational and historical contexts, they do stand for this proposition. Such proposition is buttressed by the histories of women in the church as described by N.J. Gupta in his book, *Tell Her Story/How Women Led, Taught And Ministered In The Early Church*, which is cited and described above, and by his refutations, as set forth therein, of the theories which would restrict the roles of women in the church, and by his conclusion, based on his research, that the Gender of women, in and of itself, does not prevent women from performing certain roles in Christian Ministry. However, we need to be careful here. Notwithstanding everything which has been said in this paper to this point, I would respectfully submit that just because a woman cannot be precluded from holding some position or performing some role in Christian ministry solely by reason of her gender, does not mean that a woman must, in every church everywhere, for all times and under all circumstances and situation be given the opportunity to perform some role or occupy some position. I, with great trepidation, say that we are not to be guided with the principles of DEI here. When it comes to filling positions (including Senior Positions in the Pastoral Staff, or positions on the Board of Elders) or calling upon someone to perform some role, the church needs to seek the most qualified, most equipped, most truly called, most effective person, who meets every reasonable requirement of reputation and demonstrated morality and ethics, to occupy that Position or perform that role. Just because a woman can occupy a position or perform a role does not mean that she should do so. Women and Men are to be evaluated equally, without regard to their Gender. While some congregations (apparently including that of Reverend Campbell who gave the Sermon that is discussed above, and that of a local, Columbia church) seem to find that men and women are equal in the church and should be equal in matters of church leadership, they still find that, somehow, men have been assigned by Tradition to some ROLE of ultimate, Senior Leadership, and yet they still submit that, when it comes to senior positions or roles, the Traditionally Assigned ROLES of men must be respected. I would argue that there is no reference to ROLES in Scripture, and that women and men are to be treated as complete equals, meaning that their qualifications are to be considered without regard to their gender. Women have been placed in subordinate positions in church- leadership positions, not because of some requirements of Scripture, but rather by reason of some church Traditions, the reasons for and justifications for no longer exist. (See Liefeld's paper and Payne and Huffaker's, *Why Can't Women Do This*, which are cited and discussed above) All of this said, however, I would also respectfully submit that we must strongly consider and account for Paul's (and Jesus' through Paul) strong admonitions against threats to the UNITY OF THE CHURCH AND OF ITS INDIVIDUAL CHURCHES, and against DISRUPTIONS in the churches, and against those actions which can subject the Church or any of its churches or Christianity in general to reputational damage, although, of course, the basic tenets of Jesus, the Faith and its Doctrines cannot be disregarded or watered down. So, while I am really loathe to so state, if there are circumstances or situations where placing a woman in some position or role will have a substantial, adverse effect upon the furthering of the Gospel, or the Unity of the congregation, then, perhaps, the better course of action is to try to bring about a proper education of the congregation before a woman is

placed in that position or role. Keeping in mind the fact that we live in a highly imperfect world, an ALREADY BUT NOT YET WORLD, a World between the Resurrection of Christ and the Eschaton when the Kingdom of God that has been announced by Jesus will be consummated, we sometimes have to take imperfect actions that we would prefer not to take, but which keep the Gospel moving forward and which preserve church Unity and avoid unnecessary Disruptions, while trying to provide Loving Christian Teaching which will allow us to take the more perfect action. Sometimes, small steps forward towards the ultimately proper conclusion are required.

IX) MOVING ON TO THE OTHER PROHIBITION TEXT, 1 CORINTHIANS 14:33-37:

Now, let's turn to 1 Corinthians 14:33-37), "Women should keep silent in the assemblies and are not permitted to speak....." How do we deal with these passages? Read literally, they would not permit a woman to speak at all in church as a teacher, preacher, pastor or in any capacity. Do these passages then stand for the proposition that women can have no speaking role in Christian Ministry, and that women are just to keep quiet and submit to the men? The statements in this pericope of 1 Corinthians seem to be totally contrary to Paul's recognition of the fact that women will openly pray and prophesy in the assembly during worship (1 Corinthians 11:2-16), and to be inconsistent with Paul's language in 1 Corinthians 12 wherein Paul describes Spiritual Gifts without making any distinction between women and men, and to be completely inconsistent with what we know about Paul's relationships with women co-workers, whose work he celebrated (See Romans 16 and the pericopes of the Book of Acts which we have cited and discussed above). Somehow, there is either something wrong with these statements of 1 Corinthians 14:33-37, or there was something going on in the Corinthian church of which we are not aware, or at least about which we have to guess. Each of these possibilities is discussed by N.T. Wright in his commentary on 1 Corinthians, *Paul for Everyone, 1 Corinthians*, which has been cited and discussed above. See pages 197-200 of that commentary. There Wright refers to the conclusions of some of the other scholars, as follows: 1) That this pericope was not written by Paul and did not appear in the initial versions of 1 Corinthians, but was rather added by some scribe at a later date (See Payne and Huffaker's *Why Can't Women Do That*, (which is cited and discussed above, at pages 116-120)), or 2) That the women in Corinth, who were not educated and who could not understand the formal Greek Language in which the teachings were being provided in the worship service, tended to get bored and began to chatter and gossip among themselves (and, by custom they might have been separated from the men) and, perhaps, to even engage in disagreements and arguments with their husbands, an activity which would, in the prevailing culture of Corinth, bring about scandal and would bring about shame and dishonor upon themselves and their husbands (see Kenneth Bailey's *Paul through Mediterranean Eyes* which is cited and discussed above in this paper), or 3) That Paul did write these passages in order to confront a particular problem posed from within the cultural setting of the time, his overriding concern being for order, peace and mutual upbringing in the worship service (See N.T. Wright's *Paul for Everyone, 1 Corinthians* at page 200, or 4) That these passages of 1 Corinthians 14:33-38, and the following parts of 1 Corinthians 14 represent the use by Paul of a Pauline Quotation-Refutation Device, which he, Paul, sometimes used (meaning that he would quote a statement made to him and then refute that statement, and that he was doing so here as Paul's purpose in 1 Corinthians was to deal with issues, particularly

issues of worship, in the Corinthian church which had been brought to his attention by a letter to him from some in that church, a letter which we, unfortunately, do not have (and we also do not have an earlier letter from Paul to the Corinthians), and meaning here that this statement about women being silent was a statement contained in a letter to Paul from some in the church of Corinth, a statement which Paul then refuted, beginning with his statements in 1 Corinthians 14:36 that “Did the word of God originate with you”.) (Further Note: I would also offer a proposition, which I think is supported by Sandra Glahan in her book, *Nobody’s Mother*, that when Paul said in 1 Timothy 2:8-15 “women will be saved through childbearing...” he, Paul, was quoting a local Ephesian statement about the goddess Artemis, and was refuting that statement.) Regardless of which of the opinions of N.T. Wright and the other authors outlined in 1) through 4) above we adopt, it appears clear that the passages of 1 Corinthians 14:33-37 do not set forth a permanent, timeless, for all times, for all churches everywhere command that women cannot speak in church. So, what wisdom can we gain from these passages? I submit that it is: 1) Disruption of church worship services is to be avoided, 2) It would be wise for married Christians, not just for those in a church service, but for those in any public settings, to avoid open arguments or disagreements between themselves, and to take such arguments or disagreements to a private setting (in fact this would be good wisdom for anyone), and 3) everything which is done or said in church should be done with an eye to focusing attention on Christ and the worship of God and to building up the church.

X) THE HOUSEHOLD CODES/WIFE SUBMISSION TEXTS:

I think that we have now dealt with at least the primary passages which are used to support any proposition that women must somehow occupy positions of submission to men and the leadership of men in Christian ministry, and that women cannot preach, or teach or occupy a Senior leadership position in a Christian church. So, I guess that brings us to the so-called “Household Codes”, or the “wifely submission passages”, or Scriptural passages which seem to provide that women should submit to men and to the leadership of men. We have dealt with some of these passages in the above parts of this paper. Candidly, I am of the opinion that each of these passages which we have not dealt with yet is so reflective of the societal, and cultural and situational contexts of the times and places in which they were written, and of the customs and traditions of the people who were being addressed, as to require little if any consideration in this paper which deals with the question of whether they are passages of Scripture which prohibit women, by reason of their gender, from occupying certain positions or performing certain roles in Christian Ministry. In other words, if it were left to me, I would just disregard these “submission texts” for purposes of this paper. However, because some of those who advocate for the position that the Bible requires that the roles of women in the church be limited and that women, solely by reason of their gender, are precluded from occupying certain positions or performing certain roles in Christian ministry (a position which I believe to be fundamentally wrong), I have concluded that my feelings about these passages notwithstanding, we should address them here. In summary, it is my view that the societies and cultures of the first century second temple Jews and of the first century Greco-Roman cities, the churches or people of which were being addressed in these passages, were, unlike our modern, western cultures, heavily patriarchal. Women had few rights. “When it came to judicial matters, women’s rights were widely limited, such as those regarding adultery and divorce. For example,

first-century Palestinian Jewish women, in general, could not divorce their husbands, but husbands could divorce their wives.” (See Payne and Huffaker’s *Why Can’t Women Do That* at page 73) There is no denying the fact that the ancient Greco-Roman world was a man’s world, and that men had more power, at almost every level, over women. The standard operating principle in the Greco-Roman world of the 1st century was such that the household codes of this world revolved around the leadership of the father, the “*paterfamilias*” and women were expected to be wise and just, but their stereotypes were that they were simple minded and easily deceived and that their celebrated roles were as a supportive wife and nurturing mother.” (See, Gupta’s *Tell Her Story, Chapter 3, pages 30, et. Seq.* where the status of women in the Greco-Roman world is discussed, extensively, both with the stereotypes and their exceptions, including the exceptions dictated by “social class”, where some upper social class women did, in fact, occupy important roles, including as priests in some pagan temples (e.g. the temple of Artemis)). This was the world in which Jesus, Paul and the other apostles and disciples found themselves. This was the world in which they wanted to further the Gospel without bringing their people and assemblies into such disrespect in the world in general as to make their messages totally ineffective. If we take these societal, cultural factors into account, together with the fact that the relevant 1st century societies and cultures were heavily honor-shame oriented, in which honor was to be sought and protected at all costs, and in which a woman’s engaging in a public dispute with a man, particularly her husband, could bring shame upon both the man and the woman, and also take into account the fact that the authors of the Epistles which contain the so-called “submission texts” were extremely concerned that the early Christian assemblies and their members would offer a respectable witness to the wider world, we ought not to take the admonitions of the “submission texts” as being universal Christian laws, any more than we ought to have slaves today just because some early Christians had slaves. (See Gupta, *Tell Her Story, Postscript at page 201*). If we just look at the huge differences between the roles and rights of women, including wives, in the relevant 1st century cultures, and the roles and rights of women in our modern-day culture (including rights before the law, and their roles in the home, marriage, the market place and the greater world in general), then I would respectfully argue that there is, quite simply, no way to conclude that any of the so-called “submission texts” can be held to provide for a universal, for all Christians (men, women and their churches), everywhere, for all times commands requiring that women are to fully, in every matter, submit to their husbands or to men and be under the control of their husbands or men. If you want to create Disruption, and Damages to Unity, just try preaching that the Bible requires that wives are fully subject to, and must be submissive to their husbands, as opposed to preaching that which the “submission texts” (properly read in light of their cultural contexts) seem to properly require or command, which is that their shall be full mutual submission between spouses, with each submitting to the other and with their operating as the “one flesh” spoken of in Genesis and by Jesus. So, before moving on with a more “serious” discussion of the so-called “submission texts”, let’s try to be mindful that in the highly patriarchal, *paterfamilias*” cultures of the times of the writers of the Epistles, women had few rights and were expected to be highly submissive to their husbands and other men. These were highly class conscious and honor-shame cultures that the writers of the “submission texts” were confronting, while trying to meet their huge concerns for the maintenance of unity within the Church and their congregations, and for the avoidance of disruptions within those congregations and their worship services, and for the need to offer a respectable witness to the wider world. Let’s also be mindful of the

fact that these texts were written in an “already, but not yet” time (as we also live today), where the imperfections of the prevailing cultures had to be allowed for. If we just keep these factors in mind, then I think that the fact that the “submission texts” were not intended by their human authors, and certainly not by their divine (Godly) inspiration to provide for permanent, universal, everywhere commands for every Christian couple and every Christian congregation.

So, now that I have engaged in some personal “preaching”, let’s look at some of the “submission texts” as follows:

- A) 1 Corinthians 7:1-7, sometimes referred to as the “Life Within Marriage Passages”: First note that these passages, like others of 1 Corinthians, were written by Paul in order to deal with questions addressed to him, or issues raised with him, by way of a letter to him from some in the Corinthian congregation. The opening verse is “Now for the matters you wrote about:”. We do not have this letter from the Corinthians to Paul, nor do we have an earlier shorter letter written by Paul to the Corinthians, which is unfortunate as, if we had those letters, we might be able to better determine the purposes of Paul’s statements and admonitions to the Corinthians. So, to some extent, we have to guess about the questions and issues or situations which Paul was seeking to address. That said, it appears abundantly, abundantly clear that these passages, verses 1-7, do not stand for some requirement that a wife be in submission to her husband. In fact, these verses clearly stand for the proposition that, at least in matters of sexual relations between spouses, the spouses are each to submit to the other. The submission is to be mutual. The “mutual submission” requirements of these texts were radical in the times and cultures of the Corinthians, and the 1st Century Greco-Roman world. Note (from NIV): 1) “Each man shall have his own wife, and each woman her own husband...(and)...the husband shall fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband....(as)...the wife’s body does not belong to her alone, but also to her husband,(and)....in the same way, the husband’s body does not belong to him alone, but also to his wife.” Furthermore, note the following statement which was made in cultures where a man could divorce his wife, but a wife could not divorce her husband: “A wife must not separate from her husband, but, if she does she must remain unmarked or else reconciled to her husband (and) a husband must not divorce his wife.” As stated by N.T. Wright in his *Paul For Everyone, 1 Corinthians* commentary at page 78, “What he (meaning Paul) has in mind, is a striking statement of equality between husband and wife”.
- B) Colossians 3:18-4:1: “Wives, submit your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. ...Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord, but not for men.Masters provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.” These passages might well be considered as a model for the other so-called “submission texts”, as they are similar in language and content and style to the other household code passages. In fact, Gupta, in his *Tell Her Story Book* (in pages 182, et. Seq), considered it as such a model. Gupta admits that it is difficult to get around the terse nature of Paul’s statements in these verses, but he points out that these terse

statements are not just about wives being submissive to their husbands, but also about slaves obeying their earthly masters. Certainly, these seeming requirements of wives and slaves are, read today, off-putting. So, Gupta raises the question: “How could Paul, the great apostle of human liberty, write such conformist nonsense?” Gupta is of the opinion that “These household statements are about power and control—who has the power and how to maintain order in the house”, but that these statements do not trace back to the Old Testament or Hebrew Tradition, but rather are grounded in ancient Greek Philosophy regarding ideal human lives and politics, the individual and the city. So, in Gupta’s view these passages, as well as the other “household code”, “submission texts” reflect the then prevailing social standards. “The fact that the New Testament contains Greco-Roman-style household codes at all means that the writers (i.e. Paul and Peter) were borrowing from the culture, and that early Christians reinforced, to at least some degree, household relationships according to wider cultural expectations....(as)....they wanted to maintain the respect of their neighbors as best they could (Rom. 12:18, Gal. 6:10, 1 Pet. 2:12).....but there is a key point to be made here....Paul appears to have been caught between the values of the surrounding culture and social order and the new freedoms which were happening in Christ.” (page 187 of Gupta’s book) In other words, Paul was caught in the competition between the in-between, already but not yet, imperfect culture of his time, and the culture of Christian freedom (Gal. 3:28) and equality of all persons, Jew and Gentile, Slave and Free, Male and Female before Christ. Payne and Huffaker in their *Why Can’t Women Do That* (beginning at page 135), admit that, we must concede that, unlike most of the other household-code, submission texts, which identify the reasons for the therein stated requirements that wives submit to their husbands, such reason being either that such submission is called for as a part of mutual submission (e.g. 1 Corinthians 7, Ephesians 5, and 1 Peter 3, which call for Mutual Submissions), or is called for in order to fit into the surrounding culture so as to not impede the spreading of the Gospel (e.g. Titus 2:5, 1 Peter 3), no such reason appears in these Colossian passages. However, Payne and Huffaker submit that we need to look at the other passages of Colossians and of Paul’s other Epistles wherein Paul speaks of the treatment of slaves. Early in Colossians 3, we find Paul speaking about how the Christian community should be: “Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all” (Colossians 3:11). Payne and Huffaker then go on to say: “We need to be sensitive to Paul’s audience, whether slaves with harsh masters or believing slave owners, but we also need to distinguish ‘God’s desire for how we should live’ from ‘What God has allowed to happen’, and most notably here: ‘How to make the best out of what God has allowed to happen’, (and, therefore the)....instructions for households in 1 Colossians 3:18 do not describe the full picture of God’s ideal for husbands and wives...(but)...rather, God’s ideal comes from the same earlier verses, Colossians 3:8-17, which describe a loving mutual submission among all believers.” Payne and Huffaker further submit that, in order to get a full description of Paul’s views for proper relations between husbands and wives, we should not rely on the single passages in Colossians 3:18-4:1 but should go to some of Paul’s other passages such as Ephesians 5 and 1 Corinthians 7 “which contain more complete and

precise descriptions of how husbands and wives should relate to each other” (i.e. by mutual submission).

- C) 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, the most striking verse of which is (for our purposes in this paper), 1 Corinthians 11:3: “But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.” Does this passage stand for the proposition that women must submit to their “head”, meaning their husband or a man? Frankly, I find this passage, and much of 1 Corinthians 11 to be confusing at best. Much of these verses speak about “head coverings” for both men and women. Certainly, these passages are not without controversy. In approaching these, and some other passages of Paul’s epistles one is tempted to just side with the Apostle Peter, and his statement in 2 Peter 3:14-16: “just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do other Scriptures, to their own destruction.” As tempted as we may be to say about 1 Corinthians 11 that it just does not make sense, when it comes to talking about head coverings, “heads” and similar matters, we have to seek to understand these texts and find the wisdom which God is trying to teach us through these texts. N.T. Wright in his *Paul For Everyone, 1 Corinthians* and his commentary about these passages as those commentaries appear beginning at page 137 of his book states: “Now I have to admit that I didn’t understand this passage then, and I’m not sure I’ve understood it yet. But I think we can see the main point Paul wanted to make, even if the reasons why he put it like this may still be puzzling.” (My Note: Many of the passages of Scripture, particularly Paul’s epistles, which were intended to deal with specific situations (in the case of 1 Corinthians problems and situations existing within the Corinthian church) are difficult for us to understand because we sometimes have to make an educated “guess” about just what the situation being addressed might have been.) Wright goes on to note that in any culture, including our Western cultures, there are many, sometimes subtle assumptions, pressures and constraints about what people should wear in given situations, and how they should wear their hair and how they should conduct themselves. We can reasonably surmise that “in Paul’s day (as, in many ways, in ours), gender was marked by hair and clothing styles.....There was social pressure to maintain appropriate distinctions” (meaning gender distinctions between male and female in the manner of dress, the manner of wearing hair, etc.). He argues that since Paul had been preaching “Freedom In Christ”, and equality before Christ (e.g. Galatians 3:28) of male and female, some of the women in Corinth “had been taking him literally, so that when they prayed and prophesied aloud in church meetings (which Paul assumes they will do regularly....they had decided to remove their normal headcovering, perhaps also unbraiding their hair, to show that in the Messiah they were free from the normal social conventions by which men and women were distinguished.” Then Wright approaches the text of primary interest here, 1 Corinthians 11:3, which is quoted above. He concedes that we, in Western society, don’t like the implications of this text as it is customarily translated and understood, that understanding being that the Messiah is the “head” of every man and the husband is the “head” of every woman, and the “head” of the Messiah is God. However, in Wright’s view “..a good case can be made for saying

that in verse 3 he is referring not to 'headship' in the sense of sovereignty, but to 'headship' in the sense of source, like the 'source' or 'head' of a river". "In fact, in some of the key passages where Paul explains what Paul is saying (verses 8, 9 and 12a) he is referring explicitly to the creation story, Genesis 2, where woman was made from the side of man." Wright goes on to submit that "the underlying point then seems to be that in worship it is important for both men and women to be their truly created selves, to honor God by being what they are and not blurring lines by pretending to be something else....(with) his main point (being) that in worship men should follow the dress and hair codes which proclaim them to be male, and women the codes which proclaim them to be female." Let me make a personal observation. In this verse, verse 3, Paul states that "the head of Christ is God." Does this mean that Christ is permanently subordinated to the Father, or, rather, does it mean that Christ was begotten by the Father (as Scripture says) and that the Father is, therefore, the source of Christ, not that Christ is permanently subordinated to the Father. So, the conclusion that "head" refers to "source" not to "sovereignty" seems to be a solid conclusion based on the text alone. Payne and Huffaker, in their *Why Can't Women Do That*, beginning at page 90, argue that the proper usage or definition of "head" in 1 Corinthians 3 is "source", noting that if we take "authority" or "sovereignty" as the proper definition or usage here, then "Paul would be saying that God is the authority over the risen Christ. But nowhere does the Bible teach a hierarchy with the eternal persons of the Trinity...(and that)...early church councils affirmed that the persons of the Trinity are equal, being, power and glory and called the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father heresy." Payne and Huffaker go on to make further observations of other texts wherein the word "head" is used by Paul to describe Christ as the "source" of the church or the source of its growth. (e.g. Ephesians 4:15-16 and Colossians 2:19). So, I have, at least to my own satisfaction, concluded that 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, and particularly 1 Corinthians 11:3, do not stand for the proposition that women are subordinated to and are subject to the sovereignty of men. I would, however, further note that it would be very helpful to us if we had the letter which the Corinthians had written to Paul seeking Paul's advice (see 1 Corinthians 7:1 "Now for the matters you wrote about...") and the "reports" given to Paul prior to his writing of 1 Corinthians (see 1 Corinthians 5:1: "It is actually reported.."). If we had these sources of information we might, perhaps, better understand just what was going on in the Corinthian church. We, might also note that in 1 Corinthians 1:10-12, Paul, at a very early stage of his letter, a location where he generally gives us some good information about what he is concerned about, says: "I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. My brothers, some of Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you...". So, we see from the very beginning of 1 Corinthians Paul's overwhelming concerns for maintaining UNITY in the church, and avoiding DIVISIONS and disagreements in the church, and avoiding quarrels in the church. Something was going on in the Corinthian church, possibly including the ways in which women were dressing and wearing their hair when openly praying and prophesying, that was causing quarrels, disunity and disruption. If we take the entirety of 1 Corinthians and what we know about why Paul wrote it (i.e. to deal with problems and situations

- in the Corinthian church) and the overall weight of Scripture, including all of Paul's Epistles, which reflects upon Jesus' relationships with women, and Paul's apparent admiration for women (e.g. Romans 16) it is difficult to conclude that 1 Corinthians 11:2-17, and particularly verse 3, stand for the proposition of male superiority over and sovereignty over women. I would also respectfully submit that we must account for: 1) the patriarchal culture that existed in Corinth, 2) the prevailing Greco-Roman Household Codes which stood for male leadership in the home, 3) the desire of Paul and the other apostles that the church and those within it conduct themselves in such a way as to not bring disrespect upon the church and to provide a positive witness to the surrounding world and culture. Very likely, Paul and other Epistle writers, in order to provide for the furthering of the Gospel and the avoidance of impediments to its advance, had to make some accommodations to the tenets of the surrounding cultures. To say that no one could own slaves, or that women should head up the household or have leadership over men would have been like telling folks today that they have to give up electricity, TV or the internet. These arguments just would not fly and folks would abandon the church like flies. So, the arguments against slavery, and for male-female equality, were made, more subtly.
- D) 1 Peter 3:1-7: In 1 Peter 3, Paul commands wives to submit themselves to their husbands, and describes wives as the "weaker partner". Payne and Huffaker, in *Why Can't Women Do That*, beginning at page 161, discuss these passages. As we all should do, they indicate that we should first identify the context of, and the first audiences for these passages, so that we can try to understand the purpose of the passages, and the manner in which they would have been received by the first audiences. They note that "Peter is now writing to those exiles who are living among non-Christian authorities, to encourage them during their time of suffering....(understanding that)....life is difficult for Christian exiles, (but that) most of them have no viable alternative, so they are stuck in their present situation, however dangerous or painful it may be." Payne and Huffaker go on to say that "the best Peter can do is to encourage them to stay strong in the faith and to GIVE THEM HOPE THAT IF THEY LEAD EXEMPLARY LIVES, THEY MAY BE ABLE TO WIN OVER UNBELIEVERS..." (emphasis added). They are to submit to whatever authorities they find themselves to be under, and, specifically, in trying to offer hope to Christian wives and slaves who are living among pagans, he calls on wives to submit to their husbands "in the same way...so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over by the behavior of their wives, when they see purity and reverence in your lives". (1 Peter 3:1-16). "Peter wants wives to submit to their husbands to win them over to Christ." However, Peter also urges that husbands, "...in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers." (1 Peter 3:7). Payne and Huffaker argue, in conclusion that "Peter was writing to give guidance to Christians living as exiles in a pagan land (and that) it is striking that just as Paul commands wives and husbands to submit to one another in Ephesians 5:21-22, Peter also commands wives and husbands to submit to one another and for husbands to honor their wives as joint heirs of the gracious gift of life."

At this point, I am about out of energy. Like most authors of any book or paper, I have come to the point where I (like them) I just want to end the project. Sometimes that point is reached at a stage where the ending is not a completely satisfactory one. Such is probably true of this instance. I have read, and cited herein and referred to herein, numerous commentaries about the so-called “prohibition texts”, 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:8-15 which are offered as justifications for, or even as absolute Biblical, Godly requirements for the position that women may not occupy certain positions or perform certain roles in Christian Ministry (i.e. as a Senior Pastor, preaching publicly from the pulpit or being a member of a Board of Elders), and I have argued that these “prohibition texts”, properly read and understood in their historical, cultural, literary and situational contexts cannot be held to stand for or to justify such a “prohibitory” position. I have cited some of the so-called “submission” or “household code” texts which are held by some to stand for propositions which support the “prohibitory” view of the so-called “prohibition” texts or the view that men, husbands, must dominate leadership in the home and marriage, and that wives must submit to that leadership. I hope that I have argued, persuasively and with some expert support, that none of these texts, the “prohibition” texts nor the “submission” texts, can be read and understood (when properly read and understood in their historical, cultural, literary, situational and full Bible (meaning the Bible taken as a whole (Canonically if you will) context to state Godly inspired (remembering that it is God’s intention that we are seeking from the words of the human authors) universal Christian Commands that women may not occupy any position or perform any role in Christian Ministry or that men, husbands, must dominate leadership in the home or marriage, with women, wives, to be submissive to the leadership of men, their husbands. If we try to follow the “Trajectory of Scripture”, as described by William Webb in his *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals*”, which is cited and discussed above, we simply cannot find that this Trajectory points to the proposition that women are barred, by Scripture, from occupying certain positions or roles in Christian Ministry, or that male leadership must dominate in the marriage or home, any more than we can find that this Trajectory points to a justification for slavery. The trajectory is as much for mutuality/equality of men and women in the church, Christian Ministry and the home as it is for the condemnation of slavery.

At this almost concluding point, I think that I need to, with apologies, add yet again, a caution, caveat or clarification of some of the things which I have said above. Those statements, and the ones which follow might be found to be offensive by some of our women. Please, I do not want to cause offense to anyone. However, I fear that some of our approaches to Women In Ministry, and other controversial Christian issues might be representative of our general, American, Westernized approaches to many serious, complex issues. We want plain, simple answers to complex issues; issues for which there are sometimes no simple answers or perhaps any answers. Just look at how we approach many of our political issues, such as immigration, tax policy, welfare policy, etc. How many times have you sat in on a conversation about one of these political matters and heard some participant say something like “well, it is just real simple”, or “it is clear”, or “it is plain”? If someone then tries to point out that the solutions are not all that clear, then that person is oftentimes branded as being on the other side of the political spectrum, if not in fact as an outright idiot. Well, the issues surrounding the “Women in Ministry Issue” are not, always, issues for which there are simple answers, in all locations and under all circumstances and situations. Consulting our Bibles, what we do know is that nothing in the Bible, particularly the Epistles of

Paul and Peter, bars women from holding any position or performing any role in Christian Ministry, or I hope that I have at least presented convincing arguments that such is the case. So, I have submitted herein, and again respectfully submit that women CAN serve in any such position or perform any such role, provided only that they are properly called and equipped and will be effective in that position or role. That said, this does not mean that a Woman SHOULD, in any and all locations, circumstances and situations be placed in a Position, or be called upon to perform a particular Role. I know this statement will cause arguments, but, in my judgment, there is a difference between CAN and SHOULD, and that, if we carefully read what Paul and Peter have said we have to carefully note WHAT THEY ACTUALLY SAID AS OPPOSED TO WHAT THEY DID NOT SAY. We have already argued that they DID NOT SAY that women may not, simply because of their gender, perform certain roles or occupy certain positions in Christian ministry. They also DID NOT SAY that, in all locations, circumstances and situations, wives must be under the dominant control of their husbands or must be fully submissive to their husbands or must submit to the dominant leadership of their husbands, or that women must submit to the leadership or authority of men. Taken in combination from all of their Epistles, what Paul and Peter (and God through Paul and Peter) did say is that: 1) UNITY of the Church and of the congregation must be maintained, and 2) DISRUPTION of that UNITY and of worship must be avoided, and 3) FALSE TEACHING, and teaching which is contrary to the True Gospel or to Proper Doctrine cannot be allowed, and 4) TEACHERS/PREACHERS must be properly educated and learned before they are allowed to Preach or Teach, and 5) To the extent practicable, while maintaining fidelity to the Gospel and proper Christian Doctrine, each congregation and its members should conduct themselves in such manner as to maintain a GOOD REPUTATION AND PROVIDE SOUND WITNESS TO THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY AND THE WORLD AS A WHOLE, and 6) MUTUAL SUBMISSION OF SPOUSES, each to the other, and to the unified ONE BODY of partners to the marriage is to be maintained. We might also add one other Pauline instruction which we can obtain from 1 Corinthians 8, the "Food Sacrificed to Idols" passages, where Paul states: "Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom (meaning Christian Freedom in Christ) does not become a stumbling block to the weak... so that the weak brother or sister is destroyed by your knowledge of your freedom." We can also add the instructions from Paul as provided by 1 Corinthians 10:31-33 (quoting N.T. Wright's translation): "So then, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do everything in God's glory. Be blameless before Jews and Greeks and the church of God, just as I try to please everybody in everything, not pursuing my own advantage, but that of the great majority, so that they may be saved. Copy me, just as I am copying the Messiah." In other words, we might have certain Freedoms and certain Rights, including (and this applies to men and women) the Right to Teach or Have Some Authority, but that does not mean that we Should exercise those Freedoms or Rights if our doing so is going to Disrupt the Unity of the congregation. I don't know if each of you has had the unfortunate experience of being in a wonderful Christian congregation which was destroyed by the actions or failures of one person or several persons. I have, unfortunately, had such an experience, and it is a miserable one. These congregations, like almost any human institution are unbelievably fragile. They are easily destroyed. Regretfully, in this very imperfect world, there are cultures or sub-cultures (including in our "open minded" American, equality seeking culture) where placing a woman, without prior, proper, extended education of the congregation, in a Preaching Position, or Authoritative Position (such as a church elder) can DISRUPT the UNITY of that congregation, and perhaps destroy it. Is that right? No. Is that Godly? No. Is that Biblically

Correct? No. But we have to recognize, as Paul and Peter recognized in the patriarchal, and perhaps misogynistic, and certainly Honor-Shame cultures which they were confronting, that sometimes very imperfect steps had to be taken in order to preserve Unity and avoid Disruption.

Each of us wants immediate perfection, and immediate recognition of our Rights and Freedoms. Unfortunately, this broken world does not always allow for such immediacy. Changes in culture and sub-cultures can take time and extended educational efforts. The more I think about this matter, the more I am becoming convinced that pastor Campbell who delivered the Sermon I have described above, in which he thoroughly analyzed 1 Timothy 2:8-15, and concluded that these verses do not bar women from leadership positions, while, at the same time seeming to be protective of his church's tradition of male leadership in senior positions (including as an elder) but endorsing the church's seeking of a female Teaching Pastor, was actually trying to engage in the opening of a process for the education of his congregation about female leadership roles. My guess, and it is just that, is that if that church engages a woman Teaching Pastor, and she, over time, acquires the love and respect of the congregation, that congregation will then be willing to accept her in any capacity. Just a guess.

If you want to get some idea about the difficulty which pastors face in trying to lead a congregation, and maintain its unity and avoid its disruptions, read a book by Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind, Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion*, Vintage Books, A Division of Random House, 2012. This book is not easy to read. It is not a Christian Book. So, don't read it with some expectation of gaining some marvelous Christian insight. In fact, if you do read it, be prepared for something of a rough slog through huge amounts of information about various psychological studies in the field of "Moral Psychology". So, let me give you just a very brief, inadequate thousand- foot view of this book. What it does is to demonstrate, in a very professional, scientific manner, that, unlike what our so-called "Enlightened Minds" purportedly tell us and what Plato and philosophers asserted for centuries (which is that we make our moral or ethical decisions through the use of our Reason or Reasoning and that proper Reason will result in proper morality or ethics) is just plain wrong, and that, in fact we use our Reasoning in order to justify, in a *Post Hoc* way to rationalize or justify decisions that were dictated for us by our *instincts* which have been ingrained in us since birth and early childhood, and have been strengthened or modified or adjusted (but never lost) by culture nor learning over time. We also have ingrained desires to join with others who are like us. We have virtual "tribal" instincts. We want to be "liked" and "accepted" by our tribe, and we want to defend our tribe against other tribes. We will sometimes defend the views of our tribe to the point of absurdity. Now, picture a pastor who is strongly in favor of having a Woman in a Senior Pastoral or Leadership Position. Picture that pastor as trying to lead a congregation which is located in Saudi Arabia, or some similar patriarchal society, or even in some of the areas of this country (e.g. Southern Missouri). If this pastor simply thrusts a woman into some senior role in such a congregation, that congregation will no longer exist, and people will be scandalized, and any opportunity to bring them to further Christian maturity will be lost.

I think that, perhaps, in confronting an issue about whether or not a woman should, or should not be placed in a Senior Leadership or Pastoral position in a church, one in which there are valid, large concerns about

whether taking this step will subject the congregation to a lot of Disunity, the leaders of that church have to ask whether the placement or non-placement of a woman in that position presents a Million Dollar issue. Candidly, church leaders can, obviously, face the same questions and issues when it comes to placing some certain man in such a position. The question might be: Do we have an issue which is so important to our Christian beliefs as to make it a Million Dollar issue which requires that we immediately place this woman in this position (which, for every reason, she should occupy), even at the risk of Disunity in our congregation which might be quite destructive, or, on the other hand is this a matter which is not an immediate Million Dollar Issue, but is one which we should approach, step by step, by educating our congregation, and by allowing this woman to occupy other important positions and to thereby allow herself to acquire the love and respect of the congregation until we place her in the desired position which she should have occupied in the first place? Should she be immediately placed in the position for which she is eminently qualified? Yes, absolutely. No Question. But, again, perhaps the better course of action is to bring our congregation along, step by step, so that it (by and large and it will never be 100% on this or any issue) almost demands the elevation of this woman to the position in which she should have been placed in the first place. Unfortunately, Christian progress in this imperfect world, sometimes requires that we engage in something of a process in order to move that progress forward.

So, yes, Woman Can (and Really Should) occupy any and all Positions and perform any and all Roles in Christian Ministry, and all of us are benefitted when they do so, but that does not mean that, in every circumstance, everywhere, they Should Do So. Some of our churches walk a fine line when it come to the Women's Issue addressed in this paper. That should not be the case, but it can be the case. Hopefully, through education, prayer and the help and inspiration of the Holy Spirt each of our congregations can come to a conclusion which does not deny the congregation of the wonderful gifts which God has given our marvelous women. I am convinced that our church suffers when it denies wonderful, talented women their proper roles in Christian ministry. Both women and men suffer from such actions.

Thank You.

Dan Simon

