

Seeking Clarity on Complementarianism and Male Eldership

*So God created humanity in his own image, in the image of God he created him;
Male and female he created them. And God blessed them.*

Genesis 1:27-28a

*Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight,
not under compulsion, but willingly.*

1 Peter 4:2

Hope Community Church Elder Paper
Seeking Clarity on Complementarianism and Male Eldership

This paper represents the best efforts of the elders of Hope Community Church to present a biblically faithful witness to the complementary relationship of husbands to wives in marriage and elders to non-elders in church polity. This is of no small importance. The more clearly we see these relationships, the more clearly we will see the complementary relationship between Christ and the church;¹ and the more clearly we can see Christ and the church, the further his glory spreads, and the greater our transformation becomes.²

This is a long paper. But, it is a necessary one. As such, the leaders of Hope want to give strong encouragement to read the paper in its entirety. It won't be easy. But, it is sure to increase comprehension of its contents. Thank you.

May the Lord grant us discernment, love, trust, and grace as we aim to move closer to him and understand his ways!

Instructions on how to approach this topic

The elders of Hope Community Church are very aware of the sensitivity and implications of this issue. As with all matters of Hope theology and polity, the elders feel the weight of their leadership responsibility because their decisions affect the lives of Hope men and women. Theology is never dead doctrine void of real life impact. Thus, the elders have aimed to put forth a paper³ that is biblically sound, grammatically clear, emotionally sensitive, broad enough to refute alternative views, yet focused enough to provide intelligibility of complementarianism, and readily able to “equip his 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 the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”⁴ With this in mind we encourage you:

1. First and foremost be a *biblical*, Berean-type seeker of truth (Acts 17:11) in your understanding of gender. Avoid uncritically adopting whatever Hope believes. Granted, the Bible can sometimes be difficult to understand regarding certain issues, but it is *God's* story. It is shared as a means of revelation, written on God's terms not ours. And, though the evidence contained therein may not always allow for easy, unanimous consensus on certain issues, we are confident that scripture is

¹ Ephesians 5:32

² 2 Corinthians 3:7-4:6

³ This paper has been a year in the works. It has included countless conversations with men and women, elders and non-elders. It has undergone multiple revisions to achieve the best in biblical and theological exegesis. It has benefitted from the help of the grammar police (i.e. Tim Johnson and Naty Severson)! Thank you to everyone who contributed time to strengthen this paper and, more importantly, serve and bless Hope Community Church.

⁴ Ephesians 4:13-14

nonetheless our unique, reliable guide for matters of life, faith and conduct.

2. Regardless of your existing view on gender,⁵ please be open to both confirming *and disconfirming* evidence when you examine the biblical texts regarding the issue of complementarity. Well-intended Christians, without a biblical starting point, will find themselves using the Bible only to justify their existing beliefs. As a result, plain biblical meaning is missed, hermeneutical⁶ oddities arise, and biblical authority is marginalized. Again, start with the Bible and pursue clarity from God through his Word.
3. Pray. Scripture is clear on this point. “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”⁷
4. No doubt this study will be seen and read by many who do not stand in the same interpretive stream with regard to gender complementarity as Hope does. There are two things we ask of those people.
 - a. We understand that Christians of good conscience disagree on this issue; but is it possible to still dialogue in a way that honors God and one another instead of playing into the watching world’s stereotype about Christian infighting? We pray that the answer is “Yes!” As elders, we will hold one another to a high standard in this regard. Complementarianism is a core value of Hope Community, and we are committed to preventing the kind of divisiveness⁸ that negatively impacts the Church's communal effort to make the Gospel known amongst all peoples.
 - b. For those who do not hold this view, it is not enough to simply dismiss the view of Hope Community as too archaic, bigoted, conservative or liberal (yes, we have been assigned all of these labels). In its place, one must also craft a biblical theology of gender that makes better sense of the biblical evidence. It is unhelpful and unfortunate that some choose to deconstruct without doing the careful and necessary work of reconstruction.

The authority of Scripture

We believe that God’s intentions, revealed in the Bible, are the supreme and final authority in testing all claims about what is true, right and good.

⁵ Views on gender are routinely established in childhood due to culture’s modus operandi or family of origin. These may prove healthy or unhealthy, positive or negative, biblical or unbiblical.

⁶ We always want to define big words! Hermeneutics just means the study of the interpretation of written texts, especially texts in the areas of literature, religion and law.

⁷ James 1:5-8

⁸ Though we recognize there may be need for departure for those who can’t accept the church’s position, disparagement need not accompany it. (Acts 15:37-41)

We believe God's intentions are revealed through the intentions of inspired human authors, even when the authors' purpose was to express divine meaning of which they were not fully aware, as in the case of some Old Testament prophecies. Nevertheless, it is never legitimate to burden a Biblical text with an interpretation that God never intended it to bare.

Thus the meaning of Biblical texts is a fixed reality, rooted in the historical, unchangeable intentions of its divine and human authors. In matters not addressed by the Bible, what is true, right and good is assessed by criteria that correlate with the teachings of Scripture.

Therefore, the process of discovering the intention of God in the Bible is a humble and careful effort to find in the language of Scripture what the human authors intended to communicate. Limited abilities, traditional biases, personal sin, and cultural assumptions often obscure the meaning of Biblical texts. Therefore the work of the Holy Spirit is essential for proper understanding of the Bible, and prayer for His assistance is essential in any effort to understand and apply God's Word fittingly.

There are many possible approaches for understanding scripture, so we feel it is important to be clear about our own hermeneutic.

1. Some believe: Everything in the Bible should be obeyed as is. So, whatever is "biblically cultural" should be reproduced in the church setting today.
2. Some believe: The New Testament epistles were written to address very specific issues in very specific situations. If, therefore, the cultural matter is no longer relevant, it is impossible to make proper application for today.
3. Some believe: The Bible contains many things related to ancient cultures that need to be contextualized for today; it is, therefore, the *principles* drawn from this contextualization that provide the means for contemporary application.

Hope's elders hold to number three.

In the present matter, it is our conviction that Scripture fully and clearly addresses the issue of complementarity, that God's intentions in this regard are clear, and that it is our duty as elders to oversee the application of these principles at Hope Community Church.

Biblical clarity - the pertinent texts

To the complementary relationship of husbands to wives in marriage

Genesis 1:26-31

26 Then God said, "Let us make humanity in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created humanity in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." 29 And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. 30 And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. 31 And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

We believe this passage (esp. v. 27) makes clear the biblical teaching that men and women are fully equal in personhood, dignity, and value. Each has been created in the image of God. To choose a hierarchical⁹ (i.e. male dominance) model in marriage or church polity would violate Biblical teaching that upholds the equality of male and female genders with regard to personhood, dignity, and value.

Genesis 2:5-9, 15-25

5 When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up – for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, 6 and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground – 7 then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. 8 And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9 And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

...

15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." 18 Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." 19 Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would

⁹ By "Hierarchical" we mean elevating men over/against women in any area of personhood, dignity, or value.

call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. 20 The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. 21 So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. 22 And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23 Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

In this passage, we see critical pieces of God's created order to which the biblical text will refer in its discussion of men and women.¹⁰ There are several points differentiating the man from the woman that are pertinent. We see these pieces as central, and not tangential, to God's creative order.

1. Adam was formed first.¹¹

In the Bible, sequential ordering matters. Scripture utilizes firstborn language in reference to Jesus to make clear his primacy over all creation.¹² Additionally, it was Jewish custom for the firstborn to inherit the parent's wealth, estate, title, office, etc. and assume responsibility for any further delineation amongst siblings.¹³ This firstborn figurehead is of such prominence that in the Exodus story God carries out national blessing and judgment solely at the level of the firstborn. He consecrates (i.e. blesses) the firstborns of Israel, both human and animal, immediately after plaguing (i.e. judging) Egypt with death of all firstborns.¹⁴

The fact that Adam was formed first is significant.¹⁵ It carried with it decisive responsibility for him in his relationship with his wife and children.

¹⁰ Matthew 19:5, Mark 10:7-8, Ephesians 5:31, 1 Timothy 2:13-14, 1 Corinthians 11:7-9

¹¹ Some may feel that Adam being formed first (and other commentary on Genesis that follows) has nothing to do with complementarianism, marriage, and men's and women's roles in the church. Yet, the creation account is cited in the New Testament (Ephesians 5:31, 1 Tim. 2:13, 1 Cor. 11:8) as Paul's rationale for establishing responsibilities in marriage and the church. Thus, it is addressed herein.

¹² Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:6

¹³ Genesis 25:29-34. The poor choice by Esau does not diminish the custom of male primogeniture.

¹⁴ Exodus 13:1-2, 12:29

¹⁵ If Adam's sequential ordering is of utmost importance, what is one to do with those examples where God does not follow this pattern? Notable examples are Jacob/Esau and David. Such examples serve to reflect God's purpose of election, not because of works, but because of him who calls (Rom. 9:11, 1 Samuel 16:6-13). These serve as parallel reminders of God's sovereign choice in all things, rather than as counter-examples. So, in Genesis, God's sovereign choice to pattern the marriage relationship and church polity after Adam's primacy is supported later in Scripture. Yet, in the cases of Jacob/Esau and David (and others), God's sovereign choice challenges the primacy of the firstborn for a specific purpose (i.e. to uphold his calling in election). This may sound like, "God gets to do whatever he wants." That's exactly what is being said. God put forth a pattern. At times, God altered that pattern by his sovereign free choice. Yet, without clear biblical instruction, such examples cannot overthrow the pattern God has established. Thus, these examples draw attention to God's sovereign choice over all things rather than canceling the pattern he previously established.

2. Eve was taken out of Adam.

God is the source and creator of all life. As such, all things are dependant on him. God is the source in creation of Adam, the animals, and Eve. That is clear.

In the present case, it is noteworthy that Eve is not formed out of the dust as were Adam and the animals. In the examples of Adam and the animals, they are formed out of the dust (2:7), out of the ground (2:19). The animals are of the dust like him. The same is not true of Eve.

Eve is taken out of Adam, out of man (2:21-23). The fact that she was taken out of man displays the man's responsibility toward her. It is an increased responsibility of Adam, more significant than his responsibility to the animals. That woman was taken out of man will prompt him to leave his father and mother and be united to his wife. As she is bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh, it is fitting for a man to initiate movement toward her with aim of making her his wife.

3. Under God, Adam's role is defined in terms of responsibility

The commands of Genesis 1 to subdue the earth and have dominion over the animals are for both the man and the woman. In chapter 2, God further qualifies what this submission and dominion will look like in the lives of the man and the woman.

The primary context God had given Adam was one of responsibility. The man will work and keep the garden (2:8, 15). He will carry with him the command of the Lord (2:16). He will name the animals (2:19) and the woman (2:23). He will leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife (2:25). Each of these typifies the distinctive role Adam will play.

a. Adam worked and kept the garden (2:8, 15)

Adam was given a job of *doing*, patterned after the work of the Lord (2:2-3)—and this was not a result of the fall into sin. It is consistent with the Lord's work in creation and will serve as a poignant piece of his life and responsibility under God.

b. Adam was entrusted with the commandment of the Lord (2:16)

It identified Adam as the spiritual leader, called to hold firmly and teach clearly the instruction of the Lord. His failure to uphold his authority in this manner provides the opportunity for sin and death to enter the world,¹⁶ and God holds him accountable for this.¹⁷

¹⁶ Genesis 3:6

¹⁷ Genesis 3:17

c. Adam named both the animals (2:19) and Woman (2:23)

In Genesis chapter one God creates and then names the different parts of his creation.¹⁸ In Genesis chapter two God gives Adam the responsibility of naming the animals and Eve. At other points in Scripture, God is seen again re-naming people. Examples include Abram (Abraham),¹⁹ Sarai (Sarah),²⁰ Jacob (Israel),²¹ and Simon (Peter).²² In Scripture, the act of naming (and renaming) is very significant, and always indicates authority of some kind (e.g. God in authority over human beings, parents in authority over children). God bestows authority on Adam to name both the animals and the woman that He had created.

d. Adam took for himself a wife.

The man bears the responsibility to leave father and mother and initiate union with his wife. It is important to note that this was not simply a matter of ancient Near Eastern custom, but was a divine mandate affirmed in both the Old Testament²³ and the New Testament.²⁴

4. Under God, Eve's role is defined in terms of relationship

Chapter 2 further clarifies the woman's role. Twice it describes her role as being a fit helper (2:18, 20) to Adam.

There is much debate about what it means for Eve to be a "helper."²⁵ Eve's description as helper is not a denigration. In the Old Testament a helper is one who provides aid or relief,²⁶ most notably the Lord.²⁷ Such a title accurately portrays the value Eve brings to Adam and the value the Lord brings to his people. As fit helpers, both are ably qualified to carry out their roles within these relationships. As such, to be a "helper" should not serve to elevate man above woman, nor woman above man. Rather, God's design is for a relationship of complementarity between Adam and Eve.

In summary, where Genesis 1 makes plain the equality of male and female in personhood, dignity, and value, chapter 2 makes equally clear the distinctions ordained

¹⁸ e.g. God called the light Day and the darkness Night (1:5); He called the expanse Sky (1:8); He called the dry land Earth and the waters Seas (1:10).

¹⁹ Genesis 17:5

²⁰ Genesis 17:15

²¹ Genesis 35:10

²² Matthew 16:18

²³ Genesis 2:24

²⁴ Ephesians 5:31

²⁵ The Hebrew word *āzar*

²⁶ Myers, A. C. (1987). *The Eerdmans Bible dictionary* (480). Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans.

²⁷ Psalm 30:10, 54:4

by God between male and female roles in terms of responsibility, relationship, leadership, authority, and initiation. When we use the term “complementarianism,” it is this view we are describing: men and women have equality in personhood, dignity and value, but differ in terms of their complementary, God-given roles.²⁸

Genesis 3:1-24

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” 2 And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 3 but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” 4 But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. 8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” 10 And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” 11 He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” 12 The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” 13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” 14 The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. 15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” 16 To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.” 17 And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; 18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” 20 The man called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. 21 And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them. 22 Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever – ” 23 therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. 24 He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that

²⁸ “To deny those distinctions is as destructive and dishonorable as it is to discriminate against women.”
Strauch, Alexander. *Biblical Eldership*. Lewis And Roth: Littleton. 1995. 51.

turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

In this passage Adam, Eve and the serpent subvert several critical aspects of God's created order, and disastrous consequences ensue. God, however, acts consistently with his creational intent.

- In verse 1, the serpent approaches Eve—rather than Adam, who was given primary responsibility to hold firmly and teach clearly the commandment of the Lord.
- In verses 2-3, Eve exercises independence but fails to accurately retell the commandment of the Lord.
- In verse 4, the serpent subverts the authority of God lying about the consequences of eating the fruit and deceives the woman.
- In verse 6, the woman eats the fruit despite God's command. The man listens to the voice of his wife and eats of the tree, which he had been commanded, "You shall not eat of it."
- In verse 9, the Lord God called to the man, even though the woman sinned first, which befits the created order where the male has been established as the spiritual leader.²⁹
- In verse 12, the man fails to take ownership of his distrust of God's commandment and his failed spiritual leadership of the woman. Sadly, he then adds to the subversion of God's created order by placing blame on Eve abdicating his God-given role of spiritual authority over her.
- In verse 13, the woman fails to take ownership of her distrust of God's command.
- In verses 14-15, God judges the serpent for his rebellion against God, his commands, his creation and his created order.
- In verse 16, God judges the woman because she "was deceived and became a transgressor."³⁰ God's subsequent judgment against her strikes directly and painfully at her God-given roles of relationship (2:18, 20) both as a wife and mother. She will experience pains in marriage and childbirth.

²⁹ As the head and representative of the human race, Adam's fall became the fall of all his posterity, in such a way that corruption, guilt, death, and condemnation belong properly to every person. All persons are thus corrupt by nature, enslaved to sin, and morally unable to truly delight in God. See: Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22

³⁰ 1 Timothy 2:14

- In verses 17-19, God judges the man because he chose to listen to his wife instead of God, and eat of the tree. God's subsequent judgment against him strikes directly and painfully at his God-given role of responsibility to work the ground (2:8, 15). He will experience pain, sweat and death as he works the ground, which will now yield thorns and thistles.

In summary, Genesis chapter 3 highlights the destruction that can ensue when God's commandments aren't trusted, when God's created order is not upheld, and when male and female fail to bear proper responsibility in their relationship to God and one another. And though judgment comes to both male and female, it is significant that these judgments are specifically tied to the roles established in Genesis 2. As stated elsewhere, "In the home, the husband's loving, humble headship tends to be replaced by domination or passivity; the wife's intelligent, willing submission tends to be replaced by usurpation or servility."³¹ But this judgment does not invalidate or alter God's created order. It is proper to believe that subsequent generations have a responsibility to uphold this created order.

Disclaimer

Other Old Testament texts could be highlighted that further reflect God's original intentions regarding equality in personhood, dignity, and value and yet demarcate distinction between male as leader and female as helper. However, it is prudent at this point to turn to the pertinent New Testament texts that address this issue.

Ephesians 5:15-33

15 Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, 20 giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. 22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. 24Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. 25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. 28In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30because we are members of his body. 31 "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall

³¹ The Danvers Statement-Topic No. 17. July 8, 2003. P. 2

become one flesh." ³²This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. ³³However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

This passage mirrors some of the language of Genesis 2 in which the Bible differentiates the roles of male and female, of husband and wife. Before we address these differences, it is necessary to reiterate that men and women are both created in the image of God – equal in personhood, dignity, and value.³²

Though it is not a primary aim of this study to exhaustively examine biblical submission³³, it is nonetheless beneficial at this point to offer a brief comment about this concept.³⁴ *Submission* does not mean inferiority, inequality or blind obedience to one's husband, though some would argue that it does.³⁵ It does not mean exclusion from the decision-making process, nor does it imply external compliance without internal heart agreement³⁶ – such disingenuous living does not follow biblical mandates.³⁷ Thus, when the word *submission* is invoked in this study, it is never done so to imply or promote any of these perversions of God's perfect design for the relationship between man and woman – nor, certainly, to usurp the creational intention for humankind's relationship with God.

Similarly, loving leadership in marriage is to be patterned after Christ's loving leadership of the church. The husband must not treat his wife as inferior or unequal. The husband also must not exclude his wife from the decision-making process, even though he bears primary responsibility before God for these decisions. The husband must not lead his wife into sin or lead her harshly; instead, he should love and treat her with the same care that he does his own body.

In order to fully appreciate the beauty of the Ephesians passage we need to read it in light of Genesis 3:16, where part of the woman's curse is, "*Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.*" This curse prophesies an ongoing antagonistic relationship between the man and the woman – an antagonism that is mirrored with similar language in Genesis 4:7.³⁸ The result is a battle between the husband and the wife in which the gravitational pull of sin is, sadly, the rule: the wife initiates conflict, and the husband responds with domineering.

³² Genesis 1:27; 1 Peter 3:7, where the passage highlights the wife as an heir with the husband

³³ The nature of submissive obedience is well captured stated in the expressions "disposition to yield" and "inclination to follow," used by Piper and Grudem ("Overview," 61).

³⁴ We have included this to make clear our refutation of the patriarchal (aka: "hierarchical" or "traditional") position.

³⁵ This is an argument held by many egalitarians, biblical feminists, and the Christians for Biblical Equality (CBE). The name CBE carries with it the wrongheaded implication that the concepts of "submission" and "equality" are somehow mutually exclusive.

³⁶ Such as the child's response, who had been told to sit, "I'm sitting down on the outside, but I'm standing up on the inside!"

³⁷ Matthew 5:8, 7:15-20, 23:25-28; Luke 16:14-15; Galatians 5:16-24

³⁸ The Lord speaks to Cain, "Sin is crouching at your door. Its desire is for you." Conflict and antagonism similar to Adam and Eve's are presupposed here as the language is identical to Genesis 3:16b.

Yet, God's response as seen in Ephesians 5 is not to abolish the complementary relationship between husband and wife. If a reconstruction of the complementary marital relationship were necessary to remedy the relational sin problem of Genesis 3,³⁹ a passage such as this would surely reflect it. Instead, godly and loving leadership by the husband is upheld, as is the wife's respectful submission. In the New Testament, this kind of submission, expressed by the Greek word *hupostasso*, "is always submission to an authority."⁴⁰ Wayne Grudem adds to this, "Each of the more than forty New Testament uses of the verb carries an overtone of authority and subjection or submission to that authority."⁴¹ As such, the design, order, and language of Genesis 1 and 2 are upheld.

Though God does not eliminate gender distinctions, he does give instruction about how this relationship is intended to look.⁴² The wife's desire should not be against the husband, rather she should submit and serve willingly. The husband's desire should not be to rule harshly but to love and lead willingly. Far from eliminating gender roles for husbands and wives, this passage upholds them and speaks clearly about what it means to work them out in the context of reverence for Christ.

To the complementary relationship of elders to non-elders in church polity

Mark 3:13-19

13 And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. 14 And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach 15 and have authority to cast out demons. 16 He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); 17 James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); 18 Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Cananaean, 19 and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

Jesus appointed twelve men to be his disciples. In this group he gave them authority to cast out demons, heal the sick, and preach. He called them to exercise leadership and authority. When the betrayal of Judas necessitated a replacement, two were considered – both men.

Egalitarians⁴³ may argue that cultural pressure would dissuade Jesus from appointing females to be his disciples, but this egalitarian argument holds little weight when Jesus'

³⁹ Either to a patriarchal/traditional model of marriage or egalitarian model of marriage

⁴⁰ Grudem, Wayne. *Wives*. P. 204

⁴¹ Grudem, Wayne. *Women*. P. 34

⁴² See also 1 Peter 3:1-9

⁴³ Those who hold to a view that God did not create men and women with complementary roles, but rather leadership can be shared equally without regard for gender.

other counter-cultural interactions with women are considered. He befriended a Samaritan woman,⁴⁴ healed and exercised demons from women,⁴⁵ and allowed a sinful woman to anoint him.⁴⁶ Though women tended to be excluded from receiving theological instruction, Jesus taught Mary,⁴⁷ Martha,⁴⁸ and Mary Magdalene,⁴⁹ and the women who followed him to the cross.⁵⁰ Women played a critical role in announcing his resurrection,⁵¹ financially supporting his earthly ministry,⁵² and forming a tight familial circle around him.⁵³

From these examples, it is clear that if Jesus desired to appoint a female as a disciple, he would have done so without hesitation.

Jesus later appointed Paul to be designated an apostle.⁵⁴ This is significant because Paul wrote most of the letters that best articulate God's intention for gender roles within His church.

1 Timothy 2:11-15

11 Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. 12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve; 14 and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. 15 Yet she will be saved through childbearing – if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

This passage plays a pivotal role in seeking clarity on complementarianism.

The only command in 2:11 is directed to Timothy and his co-leaders, presumably in Ephesus. The charge is “to let” or “to allow” the women to learn. Those receiving Paul's instruction were to create an environment in which women can learn. They were to ensure for the women an ethos suitable for learning.

This learning⁵⁵ is qualified by the phrases “quietly”⁵⁶ and “with all submissiveness.”⁵⁷ So, the leaders of the church create a suitable environment in which the women learn quietly with all submissiveness.

⁴⁴ John 4:7-26

⁴⁵ Luke 8:40-56, 13:10-17

⁴⁶ Luke 7:36-50

⁴⁷ Luke 10:39

⁴⁸ John 11:20-27

⁴⁹ John 20:16

⁵⁰ Luke 23:27-31

⁵¹ Matthew 28:1-10

⁵² Luke 8:1-3

⁵³ John 11:5

⁵⁴ Acts 9. See also: 1 Corinthians 15:8; Romans 1:1

⁵⁵ manthaneto

⁵⁶ hesychia

This learning of v. 11 is juxtaposed with a restriction of women in “teaching”⁵⁸ and “exercising authority”⁵⁹ found in verse 12. The remainder of the section speaks to Paul’s rationale for this restriction (vv. 13-14) and his explanation of the kind of character they should exhibit (v. 15).

There are several questions that need answering for greater clarity to be achieved.

1. What did it mean for a woman to learn “quietly” and “with all submissiveness?”
2. What did it mean that Paul did not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man?
3. What is Paul’s reasoning (or argument) for this restriction?
4. Does this passage have relevance for us? And others like it: Is this a cultural command specific only to Timothy and the church at Ephesus? Or, is this a temporary injunction on a woman? In other words, is she restricted in teaching because she is unlearned? If so, once she receives learning can she then provide teaching and exercise authority?
5. How does this passage influence the application of complementarianism at Hope?

1. What did it mean for a woman to learn “quietly” and “with all submissiveness?”

Again, the charge is “to let” or “to allow” the women to learn. This is significant for it was not common for women to be put in a position to receive instruction. Yet, this is exactly what Paul is advocating for.

“Quietly” and “with all submissiveness” serve to qualify how or to whom women are to learn. Why were these included in Paul’s instruction of women? It’s not exactly clear. There are two likely possibilities. The first possibility focuses on the *manner* in which the learning is to take place. It points to cultural behavior in need of change. It could be that noise and disruption were normative rather than quietness and submissiveness. So, let the learning happen with quietness and let it be received in submissiveness, or with full acceptance. Such interpretation is straightforward and acceptable.

A second possibility focuses on *whom* the learning is to be received from with quietness and submissiveness. That whom could be the woman’s husband,⁶⁰ the elders of the church,⁶¹ or God⁶² himself. A rendering of God or husband in this passage is dubious.

⁵⁷ pas⁻e hypotag⁻e, or full submission

⁵⁸ didaskein

⁵⁹ authentain

⁶⁰ It is believed so because Paul will use a marriage relationship, Adam and Eve, to give clarity to his comments.

⁶¹ It is advocated that 2:8-15 speak to the church assembled (e.g. men lift holy hands in prayer in v. 8, teach and exercise authority in v. 12) where elders would be in authority.

⁶² Earlier in 2:3-5 Paul highlights God as the central figure of the narrative. It is he to whom men lift up holy hands (v. 8) and to whom women ought to learn quietly with all submissiveness (v. 11).

Quite obviously, God is first and foremost to be the one learned under. Yet, contextually Paul's point will be to highlight who⁶³ does teach under God. Similarly, the point is not for wives to learn under their husbands though other passages advocate for this. An interpretation of learning under those who exercise authority or teach is best. The point is to differentiate who is to teach and who is to learn and the manner in which both should be carried out.

Thus, the most fitting interpretation has in mind both the manner of and need for quietness in learning and that this learning should take place under the authority of the elders.

2. What did it mean that Paul did not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man?
 - What did it mean that Paul did not permit a woman to teach?

Let's begin with what it *cannot* mean. Does it restrict teaching *of any kind* by a woman? No. It should be clear that what Paul is espousing is not the restriction *of any kind* of teaching by a woman. Scripture specifically endorses women teaching children⁶⁴ and it urges that older women be trained to teach younger women.⁶⁵ In Colossians 3:16, Paul exhorts the people to "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another." Certainly all the members of the church, male and female, do some type of teaching and admonishing.

Further, it is evident that in some biblical contexts women taught men with divine approval. What did this teaching look like? There were female prophets in the early church⁶⁶ in fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel that "your sons and daughters shall prophesy."⁶⁷ Further, Priscilla and her husband Aquila are both mentioned as those who instructed Apollos more accurately concerning the Word of God.⁶⁸ So, it should be clear that Paul is not espousing the restriction *of any kind* of teaching by a woman.

Then, what type of teaching is being restricted? We believe the *specific* kind of teaching being restricted is that of teaching and preaching with authority over the church, and a number of clues from this passage support that interpretation.

First, this restriction is cited within a series of verses dedicated to public gatherings and worship.⁶⁹ In this section, men and women are addressed separately regarding behavior that appropriately honors the Lord in this corporate setting. Paul says, "I do

⁶³ V. 2:12-13, 3:1-7

⁶⁴ 2 Timothy 1:5

⁶⁵ Titus 2:3-5

⁶⁶ Acts 21:9, 1 Corinthians 11:5

⁶⁷ 2:28

⁶⁸ Acts 18:24-28

⁶⁹ 2:8-15

not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority” in this type of setting. This would not hold for all settings, as discussed previously, because no similar restriction is biblically mandated.

Second, immediately following this passage Paul speaks of two types of leaders in the church – elders and deacons. Given Paul’s instructions for women one might conclude that since women are restricted in their teaching it must follow that *all men* are allowed to teach with authority. No. God has placed upon a *few godly and qualified men who are able to teach* – the elders – the responsibility to labor in the ministry of preaching and teaching with authority. Thus, corporate teaching and preaching of the church is reserved for the elders and is the specific type of teaching Paul advocates a restriction of in 1 Timothy 2:12.

- What kind of exercising authority did Paul deny to women in 1 Timothy 2?

This is the only place in the New Testament where the word “authentein” is used. As such, we must take the immediate context as our first and best hope for accurate interpretation. It is the elders that Paul has in mind here – both in terms of teaching with authority⁷⁰ and in the exercise of authority. Similar to Paul’s restriction on teaching with authority above, Paul commands that the authority of women be restricted in the church’s corporate gatherings. The exercise of authority in such situations is reserved for elders.

Does this interpretation agree with extra-biblical uses of the word? A study of “authentein” in extra-biblical literature would support such a view. Andreas J. Köstenberger comments,

Detailed comparisons of the NT and extra-biblical Greek literature have shown that *didaskhein* (to teach) and *authentein* (exercise authority) are linked in 1 Timothy 2:12 by the coordinating conjunction *oude* (“nor”) in a way that requires them to share either a positive or negative force. Thus 1 Timothy 2:12 could either be rendered as “I do not permit a woman to teach nor to exercise authority over a man” (both terms share a positive force) or “I do not permit a woman to teach error nor to usurp a man’s authority” (both terms share a negative force). Moreover, since *didaskhein* in the Pastorals always has a positive force (cf. 1 Tim. 4:11; 6:2; and 2 Tim. 2:2), *authentein*, too, should be expected to have a positive force in 1 Timothy 2:12, so that the rendering “I do not permit a woman to teach nor to exercise authority over a man” is required.

So, Paul does not permit a woman to exercise elder-level, church-wide authority over men.

3. What is Paul’s reasoning (or argument) for this restriction?

⁷⁰ See previous: What did it mean that Paul did not permit a woman to teach?

Paul's rationale for this restriction is tied to the *creational order*. The restriction on women with regard to the specific type of teaching and exercise of authority is because "Adam was formed first, then Eve."

Paul highlights God's design found in Genesis 2⁷¹ for why he does not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man. Thus, it is rightly said that the restriction of 1 Timothy 2 is consistent with the divine order in creation in Genesis 2. When God's design for complementarianism was disobeyed "the woman was deceived and became a transgressor."

So, in the church, for a woman to teach in this specific way and exercise authority over a man, it would be tantamount to replaying Genesis 3. Paul is essentially saying, "I command the elders to create an environment in which the 1 Timothy 2 woman is not led to repeat the sin of Eve." Thus, the 1 Timothy 2 woman must not teach and exercise authority.

4. Regarding the continuing relevance of this passage:

- Is this a cultural command specific only to Timothy and the church at Ephesus?

As already stated, the argument for Paul's restriction is rooted in the *creational order*. Thus, it cannot be the case that Paul's teaching is no longer relevant, culturally conditioned or a temporary injunction. The restriction cannot be due to sin, injustice, gifting (or non-gifting), intelligence (or lack thereof), or any other host of possibilities marshaled by those who do not hold to this restriction. Paul makes it clear he does not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man because God formed Adam first, then Eve.

- Regarding temporary injunction: is she restricted in teaching because she is unlearned? If so, once she receives learning shouldn't she be allowed to provide teaching and exercise authority?

This question wrongly assumes that a certain level of intellectual development is the litmus test for who is granted the role of elder-pastor. Rather, Paul's concern is that men with certain qualities⁷² exercise Godly leadership within the gathered church that supports – rather than subverts – the creational order set out by God in Genesis.

- Does the teaching of Galatians counter Paul's thinking in 1 Timothy?

Galatians 3:28 is often used as a counterweight to 1 Timothy 2 by those who are opposed to complementarian church polity. It reads, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ

⁷¹ See above pp. 4-7

⁷² 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9, 1 Peter 5:1-3

Jesus.” The traditional interpretation of this verse holds that Paul is speaking to the sufficiency and exclusivity of Christ’s justification and salvation for all those who believe in him.

However, some scholars have recently suggested that this passage of Galatians pertains to more than just salvation, advocating that being one in Christ Jesus necessitates that distinctions be abolished. One author writes, “One cannot speak of Galatians 3:28 as if it merely pertains to salvation...Gentiles, slaves, and women are granted access and standing in Christ on the same footing and with the same valuation, privileges, and responsibilities as Jewish and free men.”⁷³ The thinking goes: there must be something of a physical, or relational, or tangible social gain for women becoming Christians. There must not be any roles and responsibilities that a man holds (e.g. elder-pastor) that would be withheld from a woman. According to this view, a complementarian understanding of gender is not just wrongheaded – it is *discrimination*.

But, does this Galatian passage demand an abolition of distinctions, or responsibilities?⁷⁴ There are three reasons to answer “no” to that question.

First, theologian and scholar N.T. Wright, who stands in support of female pastors,⁷⁵ is firm that proper hermeneutical convention does *not* allow for such an interpretation of Galatians 3:28. This is striking. He writes,

The first thing to say is fairly obvious but needs saying anyway. Galatians 3 is not about ministry. Nor is it the only word Paul says about being male and female, and instead of taking texts in a vacuum and then arranging them in a hierarchy, for instance by quoting this verse and then saying that it trumps every other verse in a kind of fight to be the senior bull in the herd (what a very masculine way of approaching exegesis, by the way!), we need to do justice to what Paul is actually saying at this point.⁷⁶

Given Wright’s comments, and the fact that there is no language beyond that of our common salvation, it is an unhelpful passage for egalitarians to draw from regarding the abolition of distinctions.

⁷³ Klyne R. Snodgrass, “Galatians 3:28: Conundrum or Solution?” in *Women, Authority, and the Bible*, ed. Alvera Mickelsen, Intervarsity Press: Downers Grove, 1986; pp. 174, 178

⁷⁴ Lesly Massey, along with many others of this persuasion would answer an unequivocal, “yes” to that question. Massey writes, “If the equalizing force of Christ pertains only to spiritual relationships (i.e. salvation) then it has no practical merits at all in terms of human conduct and social relationships. In almost every religion of the ancient world, including Judaism, women enjoyed the same spiritual blessings received from and in relationship to their deities...But invariably, it was the outward form of spiritual expression which discriminated against women...If acknowledgement by God as the spiritual equal of men was her only benefit, a Jewess would have little to gain by converting to Christianity.” Massey, *Women and the New Testament*, McFarland & Company: Jefferson, 1989; p 128.

⁷⁵ In other words, even though Wright would hold to an egalitarian understanding of gender, he would say that an egalitarian understanding of gender should not flow out of Galatians 3:28.

⁷⁶ Wright, ‘Women’s Service in the Church: The Biblical Basis. A conference paper for the Symposium, ‘Men, Women and the Church’’, (4 September, 2004)

Second, the subject is unity, “all one,” not equality, “all equal.” Richard Hove argues that the lexical range of the Greek word for “one” does not afford a rendering of equality. He states, “There is no known example of ‘one’ being used in this way.”⁷⁷

Third, a proper interpretation of Galatians 3:28 is not meant to eliminate distinctions. The differences are, or should be, readily apparent in the three examples Paul utilizes – Jew/Greek, slave/free, and male/female. It is not his intent to hold up oneness in Christ in order to abolish all such obvious distinctions between these groups. Rather, the charge is that our oneness in Christ is sufficient to provide unity given the presence of such diverse objects. It is used to communicate the one element they are known to have in common, namely, Christ, affords oneness in the midst of such great diversity as Jew/Greek, slave/free, and male/female.

For these reasons, Galatians 3:28 does not undermine the biblical design of complementarity in gender. Rather, the call is to keep such differences from resulting in disunity. Truly, those who have Christ in common, despite a host of differences, have a common salvation and are one in him.

5. What then?

Admittedly, this is a difficult passage, but we must resist the temptation to either dismiss Paul’s teaching because of this difficulty, or to construct unbiblical restrictions for godly female leaders. The work of applying this teaching in church life is complex and requires a large degree of humility.

As delineated above, the type of *specific* teaching restricted from women refers to the doctrinal authority held by the elders for the welfare of the church. In other words, they set⁷⁸ and maintain the doctrine of the local church. Additionally, it refers to the disciplinary authority given to the elders should a member of the church be teaching or speaking in a manner inconsistent with the doctrine of the church. For example, when an elder says to a member: “You are telling everyone that they must be baptized in order to be saved – that is a destructive, non-Biblical teaching which is hurting people spiritually. You must desist from it or you will have to leave the church.” In this scenario, the elder performed the dual function of setting/maintaining the church’s doctrine (saved by faith apart from baptism) and exercising authority (desist or leave).⁷⁹

1 Timothy 3:1-7

⁷⁷ Hove, ‘Equality in Christ? Galatians 3:28 and the Gender Dispute’, p. 108 (1999)

⁷⁸ This to mean that they are “stewards of” and “guardians of” and are put in a place “protect, promote, and defend” the doctrines outlined in Scripture.

⁷⁹ This example provided by Timothy Keller, Women and Ministry, 11/89. <http://www.upc-orlando.com/resources/written/doctrines/doctrine06.html>

1The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. 2Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. 4He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, 5for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? 6He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

What does it take to be an overseer of a local church? Paul answers that with a myriad of character qualities, personal abilities, and relational assessments with God, his family, and outsiders.

The current passage is noteworthy for what is excluded, namely, there are no specific instructions included for women. Why is this and why is this significant?

In the passage that follows, 1 Timothy 3:8-13, the biblical qualities of deaconhood are established. Guidelines are established specific to men⁸⁰ and then specific to women⁸¹ and then true for both genders.⁸² Now, in verse 11, the Greek word "gune" could be interpreted either wives or women. So, contextual indicators must determine which interpretation fits best. Against an interpretation of wives here is that in the previous section on elders no such directives are given to the wives of elders. It would not be the case that wives of deacons were held to certain standards where the wives of elders are not. Thus, it is fitting to render "gune" as women in the present context. In other words, both men and women are to function as deacons.

Given this, the exclusion of "gune" in the current passage on overseers would strengthen the case for male eldership. If Paul were to have specific instructions for female elders, as he did for female deacons, he would have included them while laying out the qualifications for eldership. But, Paul did not forget to include women in this section. The exclusion was intentional. The eldership is reserved for godly qualified males.

1 Timothy 5:17

17Let the elders who lead well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.⁸³

⁸⁰ 3:8-10

⁸¹ 3:11

⁸² 3:12-13

⁸³ See footnote 62.

The task of preaching and teaching with authority falls squarely on the shoulders of the elders. Thus, we view understand these roles as being reserved solely for the elders of the church.

1 Corinthians 11:3-16

3But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. 4Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, 5but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven. 6For if a wife will not cover her head, then she should cut her hair short. But since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her head. 7For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. 8For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. 9Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. 10That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. 11Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; 12for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. 13Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered? 14Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him, 15but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering. 16 If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice, nor do the churches of God.

Like 1 Timothy², this is also a complicated passage to understand. Tom Schreiner writes, "The difficulties with this text could lead one to say that it should not be used to establish any doctrine or teaching on the role relationship of men and women."⁸⁴ Craig Blomberg expresses a similar sentiment, "This passage is probably the most complex, controversial, and opaque of any text of comparable length in the New Testament. A survey of the history of interpretation reveals how many different exegetical options there are for a myriad of questions and should inspire a fair measure of tentativeness on the part of the interpreter."⁸⁵ The tenuousness of the language in 1 Corinthians 11 should cause us to proceed with caution, but the complexities must not serve as an excuse to simply ignore this passage. Rather, any insights gleaned should be carefully balanced against those texts in which there exists a higher degree of exegetical certainty.

Recalling Hope's hermeneutical approach, meaning of the cultural artifacts, practices, and church order in Corinth must be sought. After this background work, we will be on a firmer footing in applying the principles of this passage for the church today.

Several things are known for certain. There were many problems with Corinth's public worship. Specifically in Chapter 11, one of these problems involved the way men and

⁸⁴ Tom Schreiner, *Head Coverings, Prophecies, and The Trinity*: an article from *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. John Piper, p 117.

⁸⁵ Craig Blomberg, *The NIV Application Commentary on 1st Corinthians*, page 214.

women dressed (or what their appearance communicated) in public worship. So, while Hope cares very little about head coverings or shaven heads, the church cares much about the resulting principles regarding men, women, appearance, and public worship that Paul is explicating.

We need to answer several questions in order to achieve greater clarity.

1. What does Paul mean by the word “head” in verse 3?
2. Isn’t Paul’s confirmation of women praying and prophesying in verse 4 sufficient to refute the claims of male-only elders/preachers?
3. Can we identify the custom regarding the adornment of women in the passage? In what sense is woman the glory of man (verse 7)?
4. Why in verse 10 does Paul switch from woman to wife when it is the same Greek word?
5. Can we comprehend the reason why a woman is required to have a sign of authority on her head, namely, because of the angels (verse 10)?
6. And finally, what does the word *nature* mean in verse 14?

1. What does Paul mean by the word “head” in verse 3?

It reads, “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.” What does Paul mean when he utilizes the word “head” in this passage?

There are four possible definitions:

- Head (like on the top of your neck)
- Source (like the “Head waters of the Mississippi,” absent of authority) – often interpreted as such by egalitarians
- Rule (ruler – sometimes harshly – over/against non-rulers) – often interpreted as such by traditionalists
- Positional Authority (a unique combination of authority being given yet qualified by love, care, and service) – often interpreted as such by complementarians

While there is little doubt that verses 4-10 speak of a literal, physical head, verse 3 appears to reference one of the three remaining possibilities. So, which is it – source, rule, or positional authority? Asked differently, is equality stressed (i.e. source), or hierarchy stressed (i.e. rule), or complementarity stressed (i.e. positional authority)?

The argument for positional authority, or complementarity, is seen most fully in verse 3 where the “head” of Christ is God. In the relationship between the Father and the Son the only translation of “head” appropriate to this relationship is one of positional authority. An interpretation in which the “source” of Christ is God or where the “ruler” of Christ is God fails to accurately depict the relationship between Father and Son.

Both equality and hierarchy exist within the Trinity and are mutually accounted for in Scripture. When the Bible says, “all authority in heaven and on earth has been given” to Jesus by God the Father, hierarchy is clearly implied.⁸⁶ Jesus has been granted this authority, which is over everything and everyone except the Father.⁸⁷ Yet, the equality of the Son with the Father is also established in Scripture. Jesus performs functions otherwise held for God alone when he exercises judgment and gives life; he is, therefore, worthy of the same worship and honor.⁸⁸ He says, “For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.”⁸⁹ To render the Greek word *kephale* in 1 Corinthians 11:3 as “source” or “rule”⁹⁰ does not make sense of the context. The best interpretation is one that defines “head” as positional authority.

The use of “head” in other New Testament texts implies this same interpretation of positional authority.

Against “head” as “source”, Ephesians 1:9-10 reads, “And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment – to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one *head*, even Christ.” This makes clear that it is Christ who has authority over others. Additionally, Christ is “far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be *head* over everything for the church.”⁹¹ Again, Christ is not just the church’s source, he is also appointed to be over everything. Finally, he “is the head over every power and authority” over and against philosophy, deceit, tradition and elemental spirits of the world.⁹² These evil rulers and authorities have been disarmed, put to open shame, and triumphed over.⁹³ Christ has established his *authority* over them through the cross. So, in opposition to the egalitarian perspective, the word “head” can – and more often than not does – carry a more robust meaning than “source.”

Yet, “head” as “rule” is also not a sufficient definition, because this authority is

⁸⁶ Matthew 28:18; John 3:35, 5:27

⁸⁷ 1 Corinthians 15: 27-28

⁸⁸ John 5:26; Revelation 4:8, 11, 5:9-10, 12

⁸⁹ John 5:21-23

⁹⁰ “[Head] implies one who stands over another in the sense of being the ground of his being. Paul could have used [ruler] if there had not been a closer personal relationship in [head].” Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-c1976), 3:679-680.

⁹¹ Ephesians 2:19-23

⁹² Colossians 2:8-10

⁹³ Colossians 2:15

established and carried out with love, sacrifice, and giving up of oneself for the sake of those under authority. Jesus, the one in authority over all, establishes peace and reconciliation for those under his authority through his shed blood on the cross.⁹⁴ As Ephesians 5:23 states, “The husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church.” How ought the husband carry out his headship over his wife? Ephesians 5 continues, “Husbands, love your wives, *just as* Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” Jesus loved the church and died for her. Similarly, husbands are to lovingly lead their wives and exercise authority over them with love, understanding, and care in an honorable manner.⁹⁵ Truly, the husband is to love his wife as himself.⁹⁶ Christ’s authority is carried out with loving and sacrificial servant leadership. So, in opposition to the traditionalist perspective, “head” carries a fuller and more self-sacrificial meaning than the word “rule” could communicate.

As such, the rendering of “head” as “positional authority” in the current passage is very similar to the definition of complementarity advanced throughout this study.

2. Isn’t Paul’s confirmation of women praying and prophesying in verse 4 sufficient to refute the claims of male-only elders/preachers?

It is important to note that in the passage Paul is actually commanding women to pray and prophesy publically. Contra traditionalists (or even against certain conservative complementarians), he is not attempting to limit the presence of women prophesying or praying in the midst of a public worship gathering. Paul is, in fact, affirming that women do have a God-given and God-blessed right to pray and prophesy publicly.⁹⁷ Rather, Paul’s primary concern in this context is to preserve orderly worship – that is, worship that does not cause unnecessary social offense.⁹⁸

Yet, contra egalitarians, the affirmation of this type of ministry by women (e.g. public prayer and prophecy) does not necessitate affirming all types of public ministerial roles by women (e.g. elder/preacher). Why? First, there is no Scriptural evidence to suggest that prayer and prophecy must be reserved exclusively for elders. Thus, non-elder men and women can pray and prophesy because Scripture affirms it. Second, three chapters later⁹⁹ Paul restricts women from a certain-type of speaking within public gatherings. His restriction in chapter 14 has a similar tenor to the restriction of 1 Timothy 2. While it cannot mean all kinds of speech in public worship gatherings, it does mean a certain type of speaking reserved for the elders (i.e. preaching and teaching with authority). Affirmation in one ministry does not necessarily mean affirmation in all ministries.

⁹⁴ Colossians 1:20, 2:14

⁹⁵ 1 Peter 3:7

⁹⁶ Ephesians 5:28

⁹⁷ Acts 2:17; Joel 2:28

⁹⁸ Walter Liefeld, “Women, Submission, and Ministry” in *Women, Authority & The Bible*, p. 146.

⁹⁹ Please, see the following section’s exegesis of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40.

So, while Paul affirms the public prophesying and praying of women, such affirmation need not cast aside other biblical directives regarding male-only elders/preachers.

3. Can we identify the custom regarding the adornment of women in the passage? In what sense is woman the glory of man (verse 7)?

Verses 4-6 speak to some type of cultural norm being challenged with regard to the covering and uncovering of one's head. It is very likely that, in keeping with the cultural norms of the day, women were expected to keep their heads covered with a shawl, hat or just their hair. To not do so would be to blur the lines of gender distinction that would have identified a woman as a female in that culture. In a similar way, for the men, to cover their heads would have been to blur gender distinctions that were the norm of the culture. Thus, Paul's basic conclusion – one which he roots firmly in the ground of Genesis 2 – is that it is improper for men and women to blur the lines of gender because gender itself is a good gift given by God to humanity. Thus, a woman who blurs these distinctions does so at the cost of dishonoring the man. Likewise, a man who blurs these distinctions does so at the cost of dishonoring God himself.

This back-story leads to verse 7. In what sense is the woman the glory of man? The text says that she is such because she was made from man. Paul's claim is that the failure in Corinth is a failure to understand God's creative design.

Building on our previous study of Genesis 1-3,¹⁰⁰ Paul speaks to the importance of the created order as the means by which we can understand first century relationships between men and women. Where Genesis 1 makes plain the equality of male and female in personhood, dignity, and value, chapter 2 makes equally clear the distinctions between male and female in responsibility, relationship, leadership, authority, and initiation. In this account, we observe that man is taken from the ground, but the woman is taken from the man.¹⁰¹ The fact that she was taken out of man displays the man's responsibility toward her. It is an increased responsibility of Adam to leave his father and mother and be united to his wife. Chapter 2 further clarifies the woman's role. The primary context God had given her was one of relationship. Twice it speaks of her role as being a fit helper (2:18, 20) to Adam. Thus, the man is described in terms of responsibility (as leader), while the woman is described in relational terms (as helper). The man and woman are equal yet with differing and complementary roles.

The woman is the glory of man in 1 Corinthians 11:7 in that she was taken out of man (v.8), created to be a fit helper, created for him (v.9) wherein her primary context established by God is one of relationship to her husband. That is why she ought to maintain a symbol of authority on her head, and why she ought to uphold the creative design of God.

¹⁰⁰ See above pp. 3-7

¹⁰¹ Genesis 2:21-23

In other words, any manner – whether in physical appearance or something else – that serves to undermine, devalue, or disregard God’s creational intention for gender, must be stopped.

4. Why in verse 10 does Paul switch from “woman” to “wife” when in the Greek it is the same word?

It is likely that verse 10 should be translated “wife” rather than “woman.” Context determines which word should be used. In verse 3 the head of a wife is her husband. Verses 4-9 then move to general discussion of men and women, either in Corinth or creation. Verse 10 appears to bring it back to the situation whereby a woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head. What is that situation? Marriage. The head of the wife is her husband and, thus, if she is married she should have a symbol of authority on her head. As a married woman she should uphold the honorable calling of wife as depicted in creation.

5. Can we comprehend the reason why a woman is required to have a sign of authority on her head, namely, “because of the angels” (verse 10)?

Paul then adds that she ought to have this symbol of authority because *of the angels*. This is an already difficult passage made more difficult by this phrase. It could mean, “She ought to do this as is consistent with those who worship God as do the angels.” Or it could mean, “she ought to do this because of the messengers sent to observe and report” on the happenings of Corinth. Either interpretation is tenuous at best and does not serve to undermine the argument already advanced – that of God’s creative design being usurped by the men and women of Corinth.

6. And, finally, what does the word “nature” mean in verse 14?

Paul closes his argument by reminding the Corinthian church that both men and women are equal and interdependent in God (vv. 11-12).

Paul then introduces a question for which he expects a positive answer,¹⁰² and he does so by citing what he feels is obvious, natural and proper for the time. Essentially, he is asking: is it not true that our culture, our circumstances, and our understanding of that which is proper hold that women should pray with head covered; also, is it not true that it is proper for men to have shorter hair, and women longer hair? Paul asks a rhetorical question – rather than arguing his point – because he knows the answer is an obvious “yes.”

¹⁰² V.14-15

In summary, what are the principles that can be gleaned from this passage and applied to today's church – or more specifically, to Hope? The following are some basic observations:

- 1.) Women *do* prophesy and pray at the church in Corinth with apostolic and divine approval. There is no indication that Paul wants women to refrain from *all* kinds of public speech in the Corinthian worship gatherings.
- 2.) Head coverings and certain hairstyles communicated certain things about authority and gender in the first century, but these style choices most certainly do not communicate the same things today. Then what is the principle? Paul reminds the Corinthian church of God's creational intent for masculinity, femininity and orderly worship based on unchanging gender distinctives.
- 3.) Even so, Paul states that man and woman are interdependent, and that both depend on God.

As such, the view of gender complementarity advanced by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthian church allows women an opportunity to pray and prophesy in a manner consistent with God's creative design for marriage and church polity.

1 Corinthians 14:26-40

26What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. 27If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. 28But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God. 29Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. 30If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent. 31For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged, 32and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. 33For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, 34 the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. 35If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. 36Or was it from you that the word of God came? Or are you the only ones it has reached? 37 If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord. 38If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized. 39So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. 40 But all things should be done decently and in order.

In this passage, Paul is describing the need for orderliness in public worship gatherings for the church at Corinth. He places certain restrictions on the public use of tongues, prophecy (or word of instruction or teaching), revelation and women's speech. Though the entire passage is valuable in providing context, we will only consider verses 33b-35 because of their pertinence for this study.

The important question that arises from this passage is: in what manner is Paul restricting the speech of women? Is he restricting women's use of tongues and prophecy in a general sense? That is highly unlikely, because there is no scriptural precedent for that kind of blanket restriction against women speaking in—or interpreting—tongues. As was observed in 1 Corinthians 11 prophecy by women is met with divine approval when it is done with respect to God's creational intent. In 1 Corinthians 12, spiritual gifts—including speaking in tongues, interpreting tongues, and prophecy—are distributed regardless of gender. As such, while the passage is by no means clear, the most likely interpretation is that Paul is restricting women from evaluating prophecy.

Craig Blomberg, professor of New Testament, writes:

"To begin with, "speak," in twenty of the twenty-one appearances of this verb in this chapter outside of vv 34-35, refers either directly or by analogy to one of four very particular kinds of speech: tongues, their interpretation, prophecy or its evaluation. But the first three of these are spiritual gifts, distributed regardless of gender. And authoritative evaluation of prophecy, however, while requiring input from the whole congregation, would ultimately have been the responsibility of the church leadership (what Paul elsewhere calls elders or overseers), who, at least in the first century, seem to have been exclusively male. This interpretation also explains why these verses come where they do. The sequence of topics from verses 27-33 has been precisely: tongues, their interpretation, prophecy, and its evaluation, in that order."¹⁰³

So, while biblical complementarianism should not be exclusively built on the teaching of chapter 14, it is certainly not discarded by Paul's instruction in this section.

This concludes the biblical evaluation of relevant and primary texts on the issue of the complementarian relationship of husbands to wives in marriage and of elders to non-elders in church polity.

The application of biblical complementarianism within Hope Community

Some people, eager to understand what Hope believes about gender and its implications for vocational ministry, may skip forward to this section. They may wonder, after all the biblical and theological discussion, what does complementarianism actually look like in practice at Hope? While passing over the first three sections of this study is understandable, such an approach does not do justice to the sizable struggle Hope's leaders have experienced in order to be faithful to the scriptures on this issue. Certainly, it is our aim not just to be clear about our perspective on complementarianism, but also to grapple with and carefully interpret all the pertinent biblical evidence relevant to this topic.

While it is the conviction of the eldership that this issue has been fully addressed in Scripture—and that God's intention is clear—that does not mean this is an *easy* issue.

¹⁰³ Emphasis added. Blomberg, NIV Application Commentary: 1 Corinthians, Zondervan. 1995. 281.

Therefore, we will not demean those who, through biblical exegesis, have arrived at a different theological conclusion than the one advanced in this study – whether traditional, egalitarian, or biblical feminist.¹⁰⁴ Some who are engaged in this debate, including complementarians, feel that their position is so obvious as to warrant disparagement of those who do not hold their position. We disagree. It is our heartfelt hope that any disagreement over doctrine would not necessarily lead to disunity, disparagement, or divisiveness.

With that said, what does complementarianism look like at Hope Community?

At Hope, we believe that the elders¹⁰⁵ are the “spiritual authority” in the church. In other words, the elders are the ones who teach, promote, protect and defend the vision, values and theology of Hope. We believe that each local church should recognize and affirm the divine calling of spiritually qualified men to give leadership to the church through the role of elder in corporate teaching, preaching, and exercise of authority. Women should not fill the role of pastor-elder in the local church. But, all non-elders are encouraged to use their gifts in appropriate roles that edify the body of Christ and spread the gospel.

The following is put forth in order to assist Hope people in seeing the fence lines differentiating *elder* ministry leadership and influence from *non-elder* ministry leadership and influence. What follows is not intended to be an exhaustive list, so, any further questions should be directed to one of Hope’s elders.

1. Spiritual authority reserved exclusively for the elders includes establishment of doctrine for the church. In this manner, the elders seek to preserve Hope Community theologically purity. Elder influence is most visibly exhibited in the church’s constitution, bylaws, statement of faith, elder statement of faith, public preaching, and process for covenant membership.

- a. As such, the task of preaching within Sunday worship services is reserved exclusively for the elders. This is the primary way in which the elders promote sound doctrine, thereby protecting the church from harmful heterodox teaching.

A common question is, would Hope ever have a non-Hope elder preach at a Sunday worship service? Examples often asked about are future church planters, elders in training, elders/pastors from other other churches, missionaries, or leaders of para-church ministries. Such cases, admittedly, are

¹⁰⁴ Though not addressed often within this paper, biblical/evangelical feminists believe women, not men, should hold authority in marriage, church, and society.

¹⁰⁵ Included here are cursory eldership qualifications and descriptions. Please, reference either the elder statement of faith and/or the church’s bylaws article 9 for more thorough detail.

rare¹⁰⁶ and have become even more so as God has established a larger number of godly qualified elders able to teach at Hope.

The decision by the elders of Hope to give pulpit platform to a non-Hope elder would only be true if such a person: (1) fit the biblical qualifications of elder delineated above, inclusive of character and teaching ability, and (2) taught, promoted, protected and defended the vision, values and theology of Hope. Essentially, they would be an elder at Hope were they to be a part of our church body, though for various reasons¹⁰⁷ they are not.

For example, a church planter affiliated to us or commissioned by us would be expected to fit these two requirements in a way that a church planter from a different denomination would likely not. The former may be permitted to preach but the latter would most certainly not be. A foreign missionary returning to the U.S. on home assignment affiliated to us or commissioned by us would be expected to fit these two requirements in a way that a foreign missionary from a different denomination would likely not. Again, the former may be permitted to preach but the latter would most certainly not be.

- b. An elder's role is also important and necessary in Hope's covenant membership process. "What does Hope believe about...?" is a common question during membership interviews, and it is a question about the established doctrine of the church. The elders are uniquely equipped to help prospective members understand both the church's doctrine and the theological/exegetical underpinnings that gave it rise.

We do not believe that 1 Timothy 2:11 or 1 Corinthians 14:35-36 completely preclude women from teaching the Bible or speaking publicly. How can this be? Biblical teaching or public speaking by non-elders does not *establish doctrine*. Rather such non-elder leadership aims to *articulate the doctrine* already established by the elders. As such, non-elders should teach or speak *under* authority rather than *with* authority. They must *preserve* the doctrine of the church rather than *introduce* it.¹⁰⁸

2. Spiritual authority reserved exclusively for the elders includes providing overarching vision for the application of doctrine. In this manner, the elders keep Hope Community culturally relevant and tethered to the vision and mission for the church. Hope elders are responsible for saying, "we believe this" (#1 above) and "it should look like *this* at Hope." Just because two churches align in established doctrine does not mean they agree on the application of that same doctrine. Such

¹⁰⁶ There has not been an example of this kind since May 2nd, 2010.

¹⁰⁷ Reasons include God's call to go to a different vicinity, to serve a different demographic than Hope, to pursue a different ministry focus, etc.

¹⁰⁸ This paragraph represents a significant nuance in our position. It is the reason why Hope often does not fit with other more conservative Complementarians who do not allow for such leadership from non-elders.

leadership influence is most visible in public preaching, setting of core values, casting of corporate vision, founding of new ministries, and helping established ministries maintain alignment with the church's vision.

- a. Public preaching affords the elders the opportunity to continually highlight what we believe and how we should corporately respond to those beliefs. An example might be an elder preaching biblical support for the sanctity of human life (establishment of doctrine) and that Hope *is* supporting efforts of a local crisis pregnancy center but *is not* picketing outside an abortion facility (application of doctrine).
 - b. The casting of church-wide vision necessitates an elder. Casting vision for the church is seen in public preaching, the church's annual meeting, or special meetings/vignettes¹⁰⁹ effecting most all of Hope. An example in recent past was when the cost of installing air conditioning in the sanctuary doubled or tripled from the original quote. The Governance Team,¹¹⁰ who handles the finances of the church, started evaluating whether or not to move forward with the installation. The elders and senior pastor had to re-communicate that the decision was already made. Air conditioning was a part of the *vision*¹¹¹ for the church decided upon by the elders. The Governance team's task was not to evaluate that vision; it was to implement it. This same vision was then communicated to the congregation on a subsequent Sunday morning.
 - c. Periodically, new ministry opportunities are presented to the elders. These may be for new ministry *inside* Hope or for new partnerships *outside* of Hope. The elders' discretion determines which of these ministries should be approved for church-wide participation, and that decision is made on the basis of how well these opportunities align with Hope's vision. In 2010, the elders approved Urban Homeworks as one of Hope's ministry partners as a result of this process.
 - d. The elders are expected to see the overarching mission of the church clearly and to consider how each ministry contributes to that mission. Occasionally, existing ministries of Hope are reviewed. As needed, the elders will give course corrections to ministry leaders to keep their leadership and ministries aligned with the missional purposes of the church.
3. Spiritual authority reserved exclusively for the elders includes the discipline of Hope's members. In this manner, the elders help Hope Community uphold the

¹⁰⁹ A vignette is a short speech. At Hope, the senior pastor will take 5-10 minutes immediately before the sermon or at the close of the service. It does not happen often, maybe a couple times per year.

¹¹⁰ Formerly called the Leadership Team

¹¹¹ Those who were at Hope before the AC installation would call it a "no-brainer!"

spiritual welfare of the church membership, support it's call to be holy as God is holy, and shepherd the flock of God.¹¹²

Biblical standards for confronting another in sin¹¹³ hold for elders and non-elders and must precede possible church discipline. Intervention and discipline by the elders would follow only after such attempts at biblical restoration have proven unfruitful.

Hope elders will correct those members found to be in persistent, unrepentant sin. This will be done with a concern for redemption, reconciliation, and confidentiality rather than punishment, ostracism, and publicity. Biblical authority for discipline and the process of disciplinary action toward a member can be found in article 7 of the church bylaws. Sins requiring discipline that may eventually result in exclusion from membership and leadership as decided by the elders include:

- a. *Sins that violate the truth of God by promoting false doctrine (i.e. established doctrine).* Examples would be promoting Universalism, denying the deity of Christ, or any other teaching contrary to the elder statement of faith (2 Peter 2:1-3),
- b. *Sins that bring confusion to the work of the church (i.e. doctrine application) or divisiveness.* Examples would be gossiping about church attendees, staff, and leadership, slandering others, or not keeping confidential issues private. (Romans 16:17); and
- c. *Sins of human character that obscure the holiness of God.* Examples would be unrepentant sexual sin, unlawful business practices, or using alcohol or drugs in a way that would bring harm upon the body. (1 Corinthians 5:11-12).

Just as elders are present at the beginning of a potential member's journey admitting them into the covenant community, they must also be present should dismissal from the church's community prove necessary.

In conclusion, *if the ministry or task does not require an elder as delineated above, gender is not a factor.* There are many ministries and opportunities that do not need an elder's direct leadership. These include teaching an education hour or LDI class, leading a small group, speaking at a men's or women's event, publicly welcoming the church to worship, serving as a Sunday School teacher, leading the junior or senior high youth groups, writing small group material, administering the ordinances of baptism or communion and many others.

Tim Keller, in his paper, *Women and Ministry*,¹¹⁴ accurately highlights the challenge for churches that aim for healthy, holy, and life-giving application of complementarianism.

¹¹² 1 Peter 5:1, Hebrews 13:17

¹¹³ Matthew 18:15-17

¹¹⁴ <http://www.upc-orlando.com/resources/written/doctrines/doctrine06.html>

The real challenge will not be to create a structure, but to create a climate in which men and women truly work together as equal ministry partners in the church, still recognizing the principle of male headship in the eldership. Will we really let women lead ministries? Will we really release women's gifts to witness, nurture, and serve in the church? Will we incorporate the wisdom of all the mature Christians into the planning of the church? Or will we have a paternalistic attitude which in thousands of subtle ways puts women down and does not listen to their advice or concerns? That remains to be seen! But that is our goal – to create a community that even non-believing feminists recognize as not oppressive, yet one that honors the Biblical distinction between the genders.

This serves as a great exhortation for us at Hope Community.