

has also demanded, as was done similarly by the Apostle Peter (1 Peter 3:1-7), that the respective roles be carried out with all the graciousness that the redeeming grace of Christ has brought to each and continues to accomplish in each in their respective roles as a wife and as a husband. In short, as analogues of Christ and His church, the husband is asked to exercise, with love, a headship over his wife and the wife is asked to submit, with respect, to her husband.

## What Does It Mean Not to Teach or Have Authority Over Men?

1 Timothy 2:11-15

*Douglas Moo*

The New Testament makes it plain that Christian women, like men, have been given spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:7-11). Women, like men, are to use these gifts to minister to the body of Christ (1 Peter 4:10); their ministries are indispensable to the life and growth of the church (1 Corinthians 12:12-26). There are many examples in the New Testament of just such ministries on the part of gifted Christian women (see Chapter 5 in this volume). To be true to the New Testament, then, the contemporary church needs to honor those varied ministries of women and to encourage women to pursue them.

But does the New Testament place any restrictions on the ministry of women? From the earliest days of the apostolic church, most orthodox Christians have thought so. One important reason they have thought so is the teaching of 1 Timothy 2:8-15:

<sup>8</sup>I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing. <sup>9</sup>I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, <sup>10</sup>but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God. <sup>11</sup>A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. <sup>12</sup>I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. <sup>13</sup>For Adam was formed first, then Eve. <sup>14</sup>And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. <sup>15</sup>But women will be kept safe through childbearing, if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

Has the church been right to think that this passage imposes certain permanent restrictions on the ministry of women? Certainly this is what the passage, as translated above, seems to say. Women are not to teach or to have authority over men. They are not to do so because of the order in which God created man and woman and because of how man and woman fell into sin. However, many in our

... passage does not require the contemporary church to limit the ministry of women. Others think it may limit only certain women from certain ministries in certain circumstances.

Many people refuse to apply this passage to the church today because they question whether it has authority over us. For example, non-evangelical New Testament scholars generally believe that all three pastoral epistles (1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus) were written by an unknown person in Paul's name long after he was dead. While this unknown author admired Paul and wanted to use his authority, he also contradicted Paul. In such cases, if anyone is to be able to speak to the church today with authority, it is the "true Paul," not the "pseudo-Paul" of the pastoral epistles. And the "true Paul" taught that in Christ there is neither male nor female (Galatians 3:28).

We are not, however, concerned here with those who hold this view, or others like it.<sup>1</sup> For such a viewpoint can only be refuted at a basic critical and theological level. We would want to show why Paul should be considered the author of the pastoral epistles; how the teaching of these epistles, although different in tone and emphasis from other letters of Paul, is nevertheless compatible with their teaching; and, most basically, why Christians should accept whatever Scripture says as holding unquestioned authority for the church today.

Yet there are many sincere Christians who agree with everything we have just said but still do not think that 1 Timothy 2:8-15 puts any general restriction on the ministry of women in the contemporary church. Are they right? Has the position of the Christian church on this issue for twenty centuries been the product of cultural conditioning from which we finally are able to free ourselves?

We do not think so. We think 1 Timothy 2:8-15 imposes two restrictions on the ministry of women: they are not to teach Christian doctrine to men and they are not to exercise authority directly over men in the church. These restrictions are permanent, authoritative for the church in all times and places and circumstances as long as men and women are descended from Adam and Eve. In this essay, we will attempt to justify these conclusions. In doing so, we will be concerned particularly to show why the arguments for alternative interpretations are not convincing.

## The Setting

Paul writes this first letter to his disciple and coworker Timothy to remind him "how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God" (1 Timothy 3:15). Paul must send this reminder because the church at Ephesus, where Timothy has been left to continue the work of ministry, is beset by false teaching (see 1:3). Certain people from within the church have departed from the true teaching of the gospel, have become quarrelsome and argumentative, and are propagating doctrines that are erroneous. Many interpretations of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 rely heavily on the nature of this false teaching at Ephesus in explaining what Paul means in these verses. There is nothing wrong with this in principle; good exegesis always takes into consideration the larger context in which a text appears. However, Paul tells us remarkably little about the specifics of this false teaching, presumably because he knows that Timothy is well acquainted with the problem. This means that we cannot be at all sure about the precise nature of this false teaching and, particularly, about its impact on the

women in the church—witness the many, often contradictory, scholarly reconstructions of this false teaching.<sup>2</sup> But this means that we must be very careful about allowing any specific reconstruction—tentative and uncertain as it must be—to play too large a role in our exegesis.

We will, then, take a cautious approach to this matter. In our exegesis, we will use only those aspects of the false teaching that may be clearly inferred from the pastoral epistles and related New Testament passages to shed light on the text. Some of the aspects specifically relevant to 1 Timothy 2:11-15 are:

1. The false teachers sowed dissension and were preoccupied with trivialities (1 Timothy 1:4-6; 6:4-5; cf. 2 Timothy 2:14, 16-17, 23-24; Titus 1:10; 3:9-11).
2. The false teachers stressed asceticism as a means of spirituality. They taught abstinence from certain foods, from marriage, and probably sex generally (1 Timothy 4:1-3). In keeping with these ascetic tendencies, they may also have stressed physical training as a means of spirituality (4:8).
3. The false teachers had persuaded many women to follow them in their doctrines (1 Timothy 5:15; 2 Timothy 3:6-7).
4. The false teachers were encouraging women to discard what we might call traditional female roles in favor of a more egalitarian approach to the role relationships of men and women. This is not stated explicitly as a plank in the false teachers' platform anywhere in the pastoral epistles. Nevertheless, it is an inference with a high degree of probability for the following reasons:

First, an encouragement to abstain from marriage, which we know was part of the false teachers' program, is likely to include a more general denigration of traditional female roles. Second, the counsel in 1 Timothy 5:14 to young widows "to marry, to have children, to manage their homes"—i.e., to occupy themselves in traditional female roles—is issued because some "have . . . turned away to follow Satan" (verse 15). Since Paul labels the false teaching as demonic (1 Timothy 4:1), it is likely that this turning away to follow Satan means following the false teachers and that they were teaching the opposite of what Paul commands in 5:14.

Third, the false teaching that is besetting the church at Ephesus sounds very similar to the general problem that seems to lurk behind 1 Corinthians. In both situations, the problem arose from within the church, involved the denial of a future, physical resurrection in favor of a present, "spiritual" resurrection (see 2 Timothy 2:18; 1 Corinthians 15, coupled with 4:8), and led to incorrect attitudes toward marriage and sex (1 Corinthians 7; 1 Timothy 4:3), toward food (1 Corinthians 8:1-13; 1 Timothy 4:3, although the specific issues are a bit different), and, most importantly, to a tendency on the part of the women to disregard their appropriate roles, especially vis-à-vis their husbands (see 1 Corinthians 11:2-18; 14:33b-36; 1 Timothy 2:9-15; 5:13-14; Titus 2:3-5).

While we cannot be sure about this, there is good reason to think that the problem in both situations was rooted in a false belief that Christians were already in the full form of God's kingdom and that they had accordingly been spiritually taken "out of" the world so that aspects of this creation, like sex, food, and male/female distinctions, were no longer relevant to them.<sup>3</sup> It may well be that these beliefs arose from an unbalanced emphasis on Paul's own teaching that Christians were "raised with Christ" (Ephesians 2:6; Colossians 2:12; 3:1) and that in Christ there is neither "male nor female" (Galatians 3:28). What Paul would be doing in both 1 Corinthians and the pastoral epistles is seeking to right the balance by reasserting the importance of the created order and the ongoing

significance of those role distinctions between men and women that he saw rooted in creation. Whether this specific interpretation of the data of 1 Corinthians and the pastorals is correct or not, the similarity between the battery of problems in the two situations strongly suggests that in Ephesus, as in Corinth, a tendency to remove role distinctions between men and women was part of the false teaching.<sup>4</sup> Very likely, then, Paul's teaching about the roles of men and women in church ministry in 1 Timothy 2:11-15 is occasioned by the need to counter the false teachers on this point.

### Appropriate Behavior for Christian Women—Verses 5-11

In order to understand 1 Timothy 2:11-15, we need to back up and begin with verse 8, where Paul requests that "men everywhere . . . lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing." The word *everywhere* would be translated better "in every place" (*en parti topō*). Paul is probably referring to the various "places" (house-churches) in which Christians at Ephesus met for worship. With the word *likewise* (*hōsautōs*, verse 9), Paul connects this verse with his admonitions regarding the deportment of Christian women. This may suggest that Paul wants the reader to carry over from verse 8 both the verb *want* (*boulomai*) and the verb *pray*; hence: "Likewise, [I want] women [to pray], in modest dress. . . ." But it is more likely that we should carry over only the verb *want*, making verse 9 an independent exhortation directed to women: "Likewise, I want women to dress modestly. . ." (see the NIV). This reading is to be preferred both because of syntax—since both *pray* (verse 8) and *adorn* (verse 9) are infinitives, it is natural to think they both depend on the verb *want*—and context—at the end of verse 8 Paul's focus has shifted to appropriate behavior ("without anger or disputing"), and he does not come back to the topic of prayer.

This caution about anger and quarreling during prayer is almost surely occasioned by the impact of the false teaching on the church, for one of the most obvious results of that false teaching was divisiveness and discord (see 1 Timothy 6:4-5). The exhortation of verses 9-10, in which Paul encourages Christian women to "dress modestly, with decency and propriety," with "good deeds" rather than with elaborate hair styles and ostentatious clothes, might also be directed against the impact of the false teaching in Ephesus. For ostentatious dress, in the ancient world, sometimes could signal a woman's loose morals and independence from her husband. These connections are clear in a passage from the intertestamental Jewish book, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, Reuben 5: "Women are evil, my children, and by reason of their lacking authority or power over man, they scheme treacherously how they might entice him to themselves by means of their looks. . . . They contrive in their hearts against men, then by decking themselves out they lead men's minds astray. . . . Accordingly, my children, flee from sexual promiscuity, and order your wives and your daughters not to adorn their heads and their appearances so as to deceive men's sound minds."<sup>6</sup> The problem addressed in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 is of the same general nature, in which the Christian women were adopting a style of dress (or hairstyle) that implicitly proclaimed their independence from their husbands. And, as we have seen, the situation at Ephesus is very similar to that at Corinth some years earlier.

Having reminded Timothy that Christian women are to adorn themselves

with "good deeds," Paul now warns them about certain activities that do not fall into this category. In verse 11, he commands them to "learn in quietness and full submission." That Paul wants Christian women to learn is an important point, for such a practice was not generally encouraged by the Jews. But this does not mean that Paul's desire for women to learn is the main point being made here. For it is not the *fact* that they are to learn, but the *manner* in which they are to learn that concerns Paul: "in quietness" and "with full submission." The situation may be compared to my saying to my wife: "Please have the children watch TV quietly and without fighting." My wife or I might or might not already have given permission for the children to watch television, but in this sentence, the stress falls not on the command to watch it, but on the manner in which it is to be done.

How, then, were the women to learn? First, Paul says, "in quietness." The word Paul uses (*hēsuchia*) can mean "silence," in an absolute sense, or "quietness," in the sense of "peaceableness" (a cognate word, *hēsuchia*, is used in 1 Timothy 2:2: ". . . that we may live peaceful and quiet lives. . .").<sup>7</sup> Although the point is much the same in either case, there is good reason to think that the word should be translated "silence" in this context, since its opposite is "teaching." Clearly, Paul is concerned that the women accept the teaching of the church "peaceably"—without criticism and without dispute. Certainly, as Aida Besancon Spencer argues, Paul is encouraging the women at Ephesus to be "wise learners."<sup>8</sup> But the encouragement does not come in a vacuum—almost certainly it is necessary because at least *some* women were *not* learning "in quietness." These women had probably picked up the disputatious habits of the false teachers, and Paul must therefore warn them to accept without criticism the teaching of the properly appointed church leaders. But there is probably more to the problem than this. There is good reason to think that the underlying issue in verse 11 is not just submission to the teaching of the church but the submission of women to their husbands and, perhaps, to the male leadership of the church. This is suggested by Paul's use of the word *submission* (*hypotagē*). Submission is the appropriate response of Christians to those who are in authority over them (e.g., to government [Titus 3:1] and, for those who were slaves, to masters [Titus 2:9; the government [Ephesians 5:21 is debated—see Chapter 8 of this volume]). The word (or its related verb) is a consistent feature in passages dealing with the appropriate response of wives to husbands (see Ephesians 5:24; Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:5; 1 Peter 3:1, 5; perhaps 1 Corinthians 14:34). The facts that this verse is directed only to women and that verses 12-14 (and perhaps also 9-10) focus on the relationship of men to women incline us to think that the submission in view here is also this submission of women to male leadership. (Reasons for thinking that this submission in this context is not just to husbands but to male leaders in the church generally are given below.) In light of our suggestions about the nature of the false teaching at Ephesus, we may surmise that women at Ephesus were expressing their "liberation" from their husbands, or from other men in the church, by criticizing and speaking out against male leaders. (The basic issue may, then, be roughly the same as in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36.) This tendency Paul encourages Timothy to counter by enforcing the principle of submission of the women to the appropriate male leadership.

Spencer further argues that the very fact that women were to learn implies that they should eventually teach, since many ancient texts emphasize that the

purpose of learning is to prepare one to teach.<sup>9</sup> But two replies may be made to this reasoning. First, we can grant the point without damage to our interpretation of the text, since we think Paul is only prohibiting women from teaching *men*. For women to be prepared to teach other women (see Titus 2:3-4), they would naturally need to learn and learn well. But, second, can we really conclude that learning must lead to teaching? Certainly if we mean by *teaching* an officially recognized activity of expounding and applying a section of Scripture, this is not the case. Neither do the texts cited by Spencer prove this. All Jewish men were encouraged to study the law; did they all become rabbis? Similarly, all Christians are encouraged to study the Scriptures; but Paul expressly limits "teaching" to a restricted number who have the gift of teaching (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:28-30). Of course, if we define *teach* in a broader sense—the communication of Christian truth through private conversation, family devotions, etc.—we may conclude that all Christians do indeed "teach."

But this is not the kind of teaching Paul is talking about in this context. Neither does it seem to be what Spencer means, for her point is that this verse validates women as teachers even in positions of authority in the church. It is manifest, then, that the encouragement to women to learn gives no reason to think that they were also to be engaged in expounding and applying Biblical truth to men.

### Prohibitions on the Ministry of Women—Verse 12

The phrase *full submission* is the hinge between the command in verse 11—"A woman should learn in quietness and full submission"—and the prohibitions in verse 12—"I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man." The word that connects these verses is a particle (*de*) that usually has a mild adversative ("but") force. But, as so often with this word, its mild adversative force arises from the transition from one point to another rather than from a contrast in content.<sup>10</sup> In this case, the transition is from one activity that women are to carry out in submission (learning) to two others that are prohibited in order to maintain their submission (teaching and having authority). We may, therefore, paraphrase the transition in this way: "Let the women learn . . . with full submission; *but* [de] 'full submission' means also that I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man."

Verse 12 is the focus of discussion in this passage, for it is here that Paul prohibits the women at Ephesus from engaging in certain ministries with reference to men. There are six distinguishable issues that must be decided at the exegetical level: (1) the significance of the verb *permit* (*epitrepō*), which is in the present tense; (2) the meaning of *teach* (*didaskainō*); (3) whether the word *man* (*andros*) is the object of the verb *teach*; (4) the meaning of the verb translated in the NIV "to have authority" (*authentein*); (5) the syntactical and logical relationship between the two words *teach* and *have authority* (they are connected by *oude*, "neither"); and (6) whether the Greek words *gynaike* and *aner* mean, respectively, "woman" and "man" or "wife" and "husband."

#### A. The Word *Permit*

Paul's use of the word *permit*—instead of, for instance, an imperative—and his putting it in the present tense are often taken as indications that Paul views the

injunction that follows as limited and temporary.<sup>11</sup> The fact is, however, that nothing definite can be concluded from this word. No doubt Paul viewed his own teaching as authoritative for the churches to whom he wrote. Paul's "advice" to Timothy is the word of an apostle, accredited by God, and included in the inspired Scriptures. As far as the present tense of the verb goes, this allows us to conclude only that Paul was *at the time of writing* insisting on these prohibitions. Whether he means these prohibitions to be in force *only* at the time of writings, because of a specific situation, or—as in Romans 12:1: "I urge [present tense] you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices . . ."—to be applied to any church at any time cannot be known from the verb *permit*, but must be decided by the context in which it occurs.<sup>12</sup> It certainly is *not* correct to say that the present tense in and of itself shows that the command is temporary; it does not.

#### B. The Meaning of *Teach*

In prohibiting women from teaching, what exactly is Paul prohibiting? And is he restricting them from all teaching or only from teaching *men*? The word *teach* and its cognate nouns *teaching* (*didaskalia*) and *teacher* (*didaskalos*) are used in the New Testament mainly to denote the careful transmission of the tradition concerning Jesus Christ and the authoritative proclamation of God's will to believers in light of that tradition (see especially 1 Timothy 4:1: "Command and *teach* these things;" 2 Timothy 2:2; Acts 2:42; Romans 12:7). While the word can be used more broadly to describe the general ministry of edification that takes place in various ways (e.g., through teaching, singing, praying, reading Scripture [Colossians 3:16]), the activity usually designated by *teach* is plainly restricted to certain individuals who have the gift of teaching (see 1 Corinthians 12:28-30; Ephesians 4:11). This makes it clear that not all Christians engaged in teaching.<sup>13</sup> In the pastoral epistles, teaching always has this restricted sense of authoritative doctrinal instruction. As Paul's own life draws to a close, and in response to the false teaching, Paul is deeply concerned to insure that sound, healthful teaching be maintained in the churches. One of Timothy's main tasks is to teach (1 Timothy 4:1-16; 2 Timothy 4:2) and to prepare others to carry on this vital ministry (2 Timothy 2:2). While perhaps not restricted to the elder-overseer, "teaching" in this sense was an important activity of these people (see 1 Timothy 3:2; 5:1-7; Titus 1:9).

At this point the question of application cannot be evaded. What functions in the modern church would be considered teaching in this sense? Some have suggested that we have no modern parallel to it since, as the argument goes, the New Testament canon replaces the first-century teacher as the locus of authority.<sup>14</sup> However, it does seem right to claim that we have teaching that is substantially the same as what Paul had in mind here as he advised the first-century church. The addition of an authoritative, written norm is unlikely to have significantly altered the nature of Christian teaching. Certainly the Jewish activity of teaching that probably serves as a model for the early Christian teaching was all along much dependent on the transmission and application of a body of truth, the Old Testament Scriptures, and the developing Jewish tradition.<sup>15</sup> Before the New Testament Scriptures, early Christian teachers also had authoritative Christian traditions on which to base their ministries, and the implication of passages such

as 2 Timothy 2:2 is that teaching, in the sense depicted in the New Testament, would continue to be very important for the church. Moreover, the Scriptures should be regarded as replacing the apostles, who wrote Scripture, not the teachers who expounded and applied it. Certainly, any authority that the teacher has is derived, inherent in the Christian truth being proclaimed rather than in the person of the teacher. But the *activity* of teaching, precisely because it does come to God's people with the authority of God and His Word, is authoritative.

In light of these considerations, we argue that the teaching prohibited to women here includes what we would call preaching (note 2 Timothy 4:2: "Preach the word . . . with careful instruction" [teaching, *didachē*]), and the teaching of Bible and doctrine in the church, in colleges, and in seminars. Other activities—leading Bible studies, for instance—may be included, depending on how they are done. Still others—evangelistic witnessing, counseling, teaching subjects other than Bible or doctrine—are not, in our opinion, teaching in the sense Paul intends here.

### C. Is Every Kind of Teaching Prohibited, Or Only Teaching of Men?

Is Paul prohibiting women from all teaching? We do not think so. The word *man* (*andros*), which is plainly the object of the verb *have authority* (*authentein*), should be construed as the object of the verb *teach* also. This construction is grammatically unobjectionable,<sup>16</sup> and it alone suits the context, in which Paul bases the prohibitions of verse 12 on the created differences between men and women (verse 13). Indeed, as we have argued, this male/female differentiation pervades this passage and comes to direct expression in the word that immediately precedes verse 12, *submission*. Paul's position in the pastoral epistles is, then, consistent: he allows women to teach other women (Titus 2:3-4),<sup>17</sup> but prohibits them to teach men.

### D. The Meaning of *Have Authority*

The verb translated in the NIV "have authority" (*authentein*) has generated a great deal of discussion. We will confine ourselves to three points that we think are most important. First, the frequent appeal to etymology—the roots that make up the word—in explaining this word is understandable, given the limited number of relevant occurrences, but must always remain a precarious basis for conclusions. Not only is the etymology of the word debated, but also the usage of words often departs, in unpredictable ways, from their etymological meaning (e.g., the word *butterfly*). Second, the occurrences of this word—the verb—that are closest in time and nature to 1 Timothy mean "have authority over" or "dominate" (in the neutral sense of "have dominion over," not in the negative sense "lord it over").<sup>18</sup> Third, the objection that, had Paul wanted to say "exercise authority," he would have used the word *exousiazō*<sup>19</sup> does not bear up under scrutiny. Paul's three other uses of that verb hardly put it in the category of his standard vocabulary, and the vocabulary of the pastoral epistles is well known to be distinct from Paul's vocabulary elsewhere. For these reasons, we think the translation "have authority over" is the best English rendering of this word.

Again, we must ask the question of application. What kind of modern church practice would Paul be prohibiting to women in saying they are not to have authority over a man? First, we must, of course, recognize that it is not a question of a woman (in the New Testament or in our day) exercising ultimate author-

ity over a man; God and the Scriptures stand over any Christian in a way no minister or human authority ever could. But, within these spheres of authority, we may nevertheless speak legitimately of a governing or ruling function exercised *under* God by some Christians over others (see 1 Thessalonians 5:12; Hebrews 13:17). In the pastoral epistles, this governing activity is ascribed to the elders (see 1 Timothy 3:5; 5:17). Clearly, then, Paul's prohibition of women's having authority over a man would exclude a woman from becoming an elder in the way this office is described in the pastoral epistles. By extension, then, women would be debarred from occupying whatever position in a given local church would be equivalent to the pastoral epistles' governing elder (many churches, for instance, call these people deacons). This would be the case even if a woman's husband were to give her permission to occupy such a position, for Paul's concern is not with a woman's acting independently of her husband or usurping *his* authority but with the woman's exercising authority in the church over *any man*.

On the other hand, we do not think Paul's prohibition should restrict women from voting, with other men and women, in a congregational meeting, for, while the congregation as a whole can be said to be the final authority, this is not the same thing as the exercise of authority ascribed, e.g., to the elders. Nor do we think Paul would intend to prohibit women from most church administrative activities. But what about women teaching or having authority over men in other activities in society generally (for example, in government, business, or education)? While this broader issue is addressed in another essay in this volume (see pages 50-52, 88-89, and 388-393), it is appropriate to note here that Paul's concern in 1 Timothy 2:11-15 is specifically the role of men and women in activities *within the Christian community*, and we question whether the prohibitions in this text can rightly be applied outside that framework.

### E. Are Teaching and Having Authority Two Activities or One?

Thus far we have spoken of Paul's prohibiting women from two specific activities: "teaching" men and "having authority over" men. It has been argued, however, that the two verbs should be taken together, in a grammatical relationship called hendiadys, such that only one activity is prohibited: teaching in an authoritative (*authentein*) way.<sup>20</sup> If the meaning of *authentein* is "exercise authority," this interpretation would not materially change the first prohibition identified above—for the teaching Paul has in mind here has, as we have argued, some authority in itself—but it would eliminate entirely the second prohibition (against having authority over a man). We do not, however, think this interpretation is likely. While the word in question, *oude* ("and not," "neither," "nor"), certainly usually joins "two closely related items,"<sup>21</sup> it does not usually join together words that restate the same thing or that are mutually interpreting, and sometimes it joins opposites (e.g., Gentile and Jew, slave and free; Galatians 3:28).<sup>22</sup> Although teaching in Paul's sense here is authoritative in and of itself, not all exercising of authority in the church is through teaching, and Paul treats the two tasks as distinct elsewhere in 1 Timothy when discussing the work of elders in the church (3:2, 4-5; 5:17). That teaching and having authority are "closely related" is, of course, true, as it is true that both ministries often are carried out by the same individuals, but here and elsewhere they are nonetheless distinct, and in 1 Timothy 2:12, Paul prohibits women from conducting either activity, whether jointly or in isolation, in relation to men.

## F. Are Only Husbands and Wives in View?

The final item on our list of exegetically significant issues in verse 12 is the relationship intended by the words *gynē* and *aner*. The difficulty arises from the fact that these words are used to describe both the marital relationship (wife/husband) and the larger gender relationship (woman/man). If, as many think,<sup>23</sup> Paul is here using the words in the former sense, then what he is prohibiting is not the teaching or exercising of authority of women in general over men in general, but only of wives over their own husbands. However, the wording and the context both favor the broader reference. If Paul had wanted to confine his prohibition in verse 12 to wives in relationship to their husbands, we would have expected him to use a definite article or possessive pronoun with *wan*: "I am not permitting a woman to teach or to exercise authority over *her* man." (Paul readily made a similar distinction elsewhere in writing of male/female relationships. Women, he said, are to submit to "their own [*idhois*] husbands" [Ephesians 5:22, NASB; cf. Colossians 3:18].) And the context (verses 8-9) clearly addresses men and women generally as members of the church, not (as in Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18-19) as husbands and wives, as members of family units; it is not only husbands who are to lift holy hands in prayer, but all the men, and not only wives who are to dress modestly, but all the women (verses 9-10). Therefore, the prohibitions of verse 12 are applicable to all women in the church in their relationships with all men in the church.

## The Basis of the Instruction: Creation and the Fall—Verses 13-14

In verse 12 Paul prohibits women in the church at Ephesus from teaching men and having authority over them. But we now face the crucial question: Does this prohibition apply to the Christian church today?

We cannot simply assume that it does. The New Testament contains many injunctions that are intended only for a specific situation, and when the situation changes, the injunction may change its form or lose its validity. For instance, most Christians agree that we are no longer required to "Greet one another with a holy kiss" (1 Corinthians 16:20); forms of greeting have changed, and in our day, to obey this injunction, we may, as J. B. Phillips puts it, "shake hands all round as a sign of Christian love."<sup>24</sup>

On the other hand, it is not a matter simply of identifying a local or temporary circumstance to which a text is directed and concluding that the text is therefore limited in its application. Almost the entire New Testament is written to specific circumstances—correcting certain false teachings, answering specific questions, seeking to unify specific church factions, etc.—but this does not necessarily mean that what is written applies *only* to those circumstances. For instance, Paul develops his doctrine of justification by faith in Galatians in response to specific, Judaizing teachers for a specific group of first-century Christians. But the specific nature of these circumstances in no way limits the applicability of his teaching. We might say that the circumstances give rise to his teaching but do not limit it. This point is particularly important, because some studies of 1 Timothy 2:12 imply that if one can identify local or temporary circumstances against which the passage is written then one can conclude that the text has only limited application. This is manifestly not true. Therefore, the ques-

tion to be asked of 1 Timothy 2:12 is, Can we identify circumstances that limit its application to certain times and places?

Many think so, and the suggestions about local circumstances that have been proposed are legion. Lacking space to deal with all of them, we will focus on the two that are both the most popular in recent literature and that we think have the best claim to be accepted: that Paul is addressing only women who have succumbed to the false teaching at Ephesus, and that he is requiring only conformity to existing cultural conceptions of the woman's role.

The first suggestion emphasizes that 1 Timothy is directed throughout to the false teaching at Ephesus and that 1 Timothy 2:9-15 must, therefore be interpreted against this background. While we think the claim that "the whole of 1 Timothy . . . is dominated by this singular concern [that is, the false teaching]"<sup>25</sup> is exaggerated, we may grant the point without being any further along on the issue at hand. In fact, it is likely that the false teaching does give rise to Paul's instruction in 2:9-15;<sup>26</sup> but the crucial question is, How does it affect his instructions? As we have suggested above, we think Paul is correcting the erroneous views of the place of women *vis-a-vis* men taught by the false teachers (although our conclusions do not depend on this) and that verse 12 restates Paul's customary position on this issue in response to the false teaching. In other words, it was Paul's position in every church that women should not teach or have authority over men. He must give explicit teaching on the subject here simply because it has surfaced as a problem in this church. Yet this would be his position in any church, whether or not some false teaching required him to write about it. We think this reading of the situation is well-grounded in the actual evidence of 1 Timothy and that any other reading must import ideas that are not plainly present.

But the advocates of the view we are now examining go further, insisting that verse 12 is directed only against women who had fallen prey to the false teaching. Paul's purpose, then, is not to debar all women at all times from teaching or "domineering over" men, but to prohibit women who have succumbed to false teaching from teaching and propagating these doctrines. In our day, we obey Paul's injunction by preventing women who are ill-trained and under the influence of false teaching from teaching such doctrine.<sup>26</sup>

What are the reasons for accepting this specific interpretation of the situation Paul addresses? The advocates of this view, which has become by far the most popular approach among those who do not think that 1 Timothy 2:12 has general application, point particularly to verse 14. Here, they argue, Paul cites Eve as typical of what the women at Ephesus were doing: teaching false doctrine and doing so without adequate preparation. Eve taught the man to eat of the tree, bringing the ruin of falling into transgression; the women at Ephesus must not repeat her mistake by propagating false teaching and bringing ruin to the church. But this argument falls completely short of being convincing. Paul's reference to Eve in verse 14 is difficult, but there are two emphases in the verse that must be factored into any adequate interpretation: the focus on the relationship between man and woman ("Adam was not the one deceived, it was the woman . . .") and the focus on deception. This latter point suggests that Eve stands not as a "type" of Ephesian women who were teaching false doctrine, but as a type of Ephesian women who were being deceived by false doctrine—hence the need to warn them about learning "in quietness and full submission" (verse 11). Paul says nothing here about Eve's teaching of Adam, which, had this been his point,

he could easily have done. Moreover, there is no evidence in the pastoral epistles that the women were teaching these false doctrines.<sup>27</sup> If the issue, then, is deception, it may be that Paul wants to imply that all women are, like Eve, more susceptible to being deceived than are men, and that this is why they should not be teaching men! While this interpretation is not impossible, we think it unlikely. For one thing, there is nothing in the Genesis accounts or in Scripture elsewhere to suggest that Eve's deception is representative of women in general. But second, and more important, this interpretation does not mesh with the context. Paul, as we have seen, is concerned to prohibit women from teaching *men*; the focus is on the role relationship of men and women. But a statement about the nature of women *per se* would move the discussion away from this central issue, and it would have a serious and strange implication. After all, does Paul care only that the women not teach *men* false doctrines? Does he not care that they not teach them to other women? More likely, then, verse 14, in conjunction with verse 13, is intended to remind the women at Ephesus that Eve was deceived by the serpent in the Garden (Genesis 3:13) precisely in taking the initiative over the man whom God had given to be with her and to care for her. In the same way, if the women at the church at Ephesus proclaim their independence from the men of the church, refusing to learn "in quietness and full submission" (verse 11), seeking roles that have been given to men in the church (verse 12), they will make the same mistake Eve made and bring similar disaster on themselves and the church.<sup>28</sup> This explanation of the function of verse 14 in the paragraph fits what we know to be the general insubordination of some of the women at Ephesus and explains Paul's emphasis in the verse better than any other alternative.

There is a more serious problem with the viewpoint according to which verse 12 may be applied only to women who are seeking to teach falsely: verse 13. It is telling that most of the advocates of this general approach pass over verse 13 very quickly, explaining it as simply an "introduction" to verse 14,<sup>29</sup> or ignoring it entirely. Yet this verse provides the first reason ("for" [gar]<sup>30</sup>) for the prohibitions in verse 12. Paul emphasizes that man was created "first, then" Eve; the temporal sequence is strongly marked (*protos*, "first," and *eita*, "then"). What is the point of this statement? Both the logic of this passage and the parallel in 1 Corinthians 11:3-10 make this clear: for Paul, the man's priority in the order of creation is indicative of the headship that man is to have over woman. The woman's being created after man, as his helper, shows the position of submission that God intended as inherent in the woman's relation to the man, a submission that is violated if a woman teaches doctrine or exercises authority over a man. Some accuse Paul, or the "unknown author" of the pastorals, of using the Genesis accounts of creation unfairly for these purposes.<sup>31</sup> But Paul's interpretation can be shown to be a fair extrapolation from Genesis 2 (see Chapter 3 of this volume).<sup>32</sup> This is an extremely important indicator of how Paul understood the prohibitions in verse 12. For by rooting these prohibitions in the circumstances of creation rather than in the circumstances of the fall, Paul shows that he does not consider these restrictions to be the product of the curse and presumably, therefore, to be phased out by redemption.<sup>33</sup> And by citing creation rather than a local situation or cultural circumstance as his basis for the prohibitions, Paul makes it clear that, while these local or cultural issues may have provided the *context* of the issue, they do not provide the *reason* for his advice. His *reason* for the prohibitions of verse 12 is the created role relationship of man and woman, and we

may justly conclude that these prohibitions are applicable as long as this reason remains true.

It is sometimes said in opposition to this line of reasoning that even an appeal to creation does not demand that the prohibition involved be permanent.<sup>34</sup> This may be granted, in the sense that New Testament authors will sometimes appeal to creation, or to the Old Testament generally, to establish a principle on which a specific form of behavior is demanded. In these cases, while the principle always remains in effect, the specific form of behavior will not. This seems to be the situation, for instance, in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, where the appeal to creation grounds the headship of man, a theological principle, which is in turn applied to the specific issue of women's head coverings.<sup>35</sup> But the difference between this and 1 Timothy 2:12-13 is simply this: in 1 Timothy 2:12-18, the principle cannot be separated from the form of behavior. In other words, for a woman to teach a man or to have authority over a man is, by definition, to void the principle for which Paul quotes the creation account. Granted this and granted the complete absence of explicit temporal or cultural references in the whole paragraph, the prohibitions of verse 12 can be ignored only by dismissing the theological principle itself.

This last point also calls into question the other main attempt to confine the teaching of verse 12 to a local or limited situation. On this view, Paul wants the women to refrain from teaching or exercising authority over men because such activities would have been considered offensive to the great majority of people in Ephesus.<sup>36</sup> Now, the concern about Christians avoiding behavior that would bring the gospel into ill repute is mentioned in the pastoral epistles (see 1 Timothy 6:1; Titus 2:5), and, as we have seen, the false teachers were propagating an anti-traditional view of the role of women. But, in reacting against such false teaching in 2:9-18, we must ask a crucial question: does Paul restrict women's activities *only* because such activities would be offensive in that culture? Certainly it is clear that Paul requires many forms of behavior in the pastoral epistles that are both in keeping with the culture of the day *and* are part of God's eternal will for His people. That the behavior required in 1 Timothy 2:11-12 falls into this category is clear from (1) the lack of any reference in this context to a concern for cultural accommodation, and (2) the appeal to the order of creation—a manifestly trans-cultural consideration—as the explicit basis for the behavior.

A further variant of this last interpretation holds that Paul does require submission of women to men as a permanent fixture of Christian life and that the Old Testament references in verses 12-14 ground this general demand only. The principle of submission would have been violated in the first century if women had taught men or exercised authority over them, but it would not be in our day because of our different conceptions of what constitutes submission.<sup>37</sup> However, not only is the requirement of submission a little further away (verse 11) than we might expect if verses 13-14 give the basis for it, but we must question whether changing conceptions of men's and women's roles affect the nature of the activities Paul prohibits here. However a society might view these matters, the person who teaches in the sense Paul has in mind here and, obviously, the person who exercises authority over someone else is by definition in a position of authority with respect to that other person. For any woman in any culture to engage in these activities with respect to men means that she is violating the Biblical principle of submission.

## Women's Role in a Positive Light—Verse 15

Before concluding, we must say something about the notoriously difficult verse 15. While we do not think that the interpretation of this verse is decisive for the meaning of the verses that precede it, the verse does conclude the paragraph and may shed some light on the whole.

One view of verse 15 holds that Paul is promising that women will be kept physically safe during childbirth, and this interpretation appears to be reflected in the NIV rendering: "women will be kept safe through childbirth. . . ." However, this is an unusual meaning for *save* (*sōzō*), which elsewhere always refers to salvation, in the theological sense, in Paul, and does not fit well with the qualifications that follow: "if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety." A second interpretation links this verse closely with the material about Eve that immediately precedes. Just as the curse that came upon Eve is mentioned in verse 14, so verse 15 alludes to the salvation that Eve (and other women) experience "through *the* childbirth," that is, the birth of the "seed" promised to the woman in Genesis 3.<sup>38</sup> This interpretation does more justice to Paul's language and to the context, but we must question whether a reference to the birth of Christ is naturally denoted by the word *childbirth*, or *bearing of children* (*teknotomia*), even when it is preceded by the article. The verbal form of this word (infinitive) is used in 1 Timothy 5:14 (albeit without the article) to denote bearing or raising children generally, and this is the meaning we would expect it to have in 2:15 also.

Another interpretation of verse 15 that depends on the reference to Eve in verse 14 is that the "bearing of children" is the trial, or hindrance through (*diá*) which women will experience salvation.<sup>39</sup> However, we must question whether child-bearing can be considered a hindrance to the salvation of women. We think it is preferable to view verse 15 as designating the circumstances<sup>40</sup> in which Christian women will experience (work out; cf. Philippians 2:12) their salvation—in maintaining as priorities those key roles that Paul, in keeping with Scripture elsewhere, highlights: being faithful, helpful wives, raising children to love and reverence God, managing the household (cf. 1 Timothy 5:14; Titus 2:3-5).<sup>41</sup> This is not to say, of course, that women cannot be saved unless they bear children. The women with whom Paul is concerned in this paragraph are all almost certainly married, so that he can mention one central role—bearing and raising children—as a way of designating appropriate female roles generally. Probably Paul makes this point because the false teachers were claiming that women could *really* experience what God had for them only if they abandoned the home and became actively involved in teaching and leadership roles in the church. If this interpretation is correct, then verse 15 fits perfectly with the emphasis we have seen in this text throughout. Against the attempt of the false teachers to get the women in Ephesus to adopt "Iibertarian," unbiblical attitudes and behavior, Paul reaffirms the Biblical model of the Christian woman adorned with good works rather than with outward, seductive trappings, learning quietly and submissively, refraining from taking positions of authority over men, giving attention to those roles to which God has especially called women.

## Conclusion

We want to make a final, very important point about all attempts to limit the application of 1 Timothy 2:12. The interpreter of Scripture may validly question

whether any given command or teaching is to be applied beyond the situation for which it was first given. But the criteria used to answer that question must be carefully formulated. It is surely not enough simply to suggest local or cultural factors that may restrict the application of a text, for with such a methodology any teaching in Scripture could be dismissed. In the case of 1 Timothy 2:12, none of the factors that we have considered above, nor any of the many others that have been proposed (women were not educated enough to teach, Jews would have been offended by it; etc.) is stated, or even hinted at, in the text. Is it not a dangerous procedure to import such factors without clear warrant in the text? To be sure, there are commands of Scripture that we do not consider applicable today without any explicit restriction in the context; 1 Corinthians 16:20 ("greet one another with a holy kiss"), cited earlier, is an example. And we obey Titus 2:9-10 today in principle rather than literally. But the difference between such texts and 1 Timothy 2:12 is twofold. The activities involved in 1 Timothy 2:12 are, by definition, transcultural in the sense that they are permanent ministries of the Christian church, and the prohibitions of 1 Timothy 2:12 are grounded in theology. When we add to these factors the fact that the New Testament teaching on these matters is consistent (see other essays in this volume), we are justified in requiring very good reasons *from the text itself* to limit the application of this text in any way. We find no such reasons. Therefore, we must conclude that the restrictions imposed by Paul in 1 Timothy 2:12 are valid for Christians in all places and all times.



lie beyond the horizons of the original readers and writers alike.<sup>51</sup>

The positive elements in Ephesians are to be characteristic of both partners: a mood of subordination in which each partner subordinates their own interests to their spouse's, the motivation of sacrificial love in which each partner strives to help the other achieve the sanctification that is God's will for them, and the consciousness that this loving relationship is the nearest thing on earth to the relationship between Christ and the church.

These elements are possible within an egalitarian relationship. Indeed, they are more attainable within such a relationship, since the roles of both husband and wife are more fully spelled out than in the patriarchal setting. For what is being done is not to deny that wives should submit to their husbands as to the Lord but to add that husbands also must submit to their wives as to the Lord. And whereas Paul tells only husbands to show love and only wives to show respect, now both realize that they are called to love each other with the kind of love Christ has shown to the church. Within this context of total submission flowing out of love on both sides, there can develop a freedom for each to be what Christ wants them to be in their high calling as his people.

### Conclusion

Paul wrote as he did about marriage because in his world he did not know any other form than the patriarchal. As he did with other relationships, he worked within the structures of his time and gave directions for Christian behavior within them. The danger is to think that this validates the setup for all time. Christians have rightly seen that slavery and unrepresentative government are inconsistent with the implications of the gospel. They have also recognized that the relation of children to parents can take different forms in different cultures and times. They have been less certain about marriage and the place of women in leadership and teaching in the church, because many have thought that the New Testament sanctioned a patriarchal, subordinatist structure.

My contention is that in the passages we have examined, when rightly understood, patriarchy is not given a theological grounding as the only possible structure, and that the gospel itself leads us out of patriarchy into a different kind of relationship that mirrors more adequately the mutual love and respect that is God's purpose for his redeemed people.

<sup>51</sup>Thus it is appropriate to look for answers that will be in accordance with Scripture to questions such as the status of the unborn child and people in a so-called vegetative state.

## TEACHING AND USURPING AUTHORITY

### 1 Timothy 2:11-15

Linda L. Belleville

The battle over women leaders in the church continues to rage unabated in evangelical circles. At the center of the tempest sits 1 Timothy 2:11-15. Despite a broad spectrum of biblical and extrabiblical texts that highlight female leaders, 1 Timothy 2:11-15 continues to be perceived and treated as the Great Divide in the debate. Indeed, a hierarchical interpretation of this passage has become for some a litmus test for the label *evangelical* and even a necessity for the salvation of unbelievers.<sup>1</sup>

The complexities of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 are many. There is barely a word or phrase that has not been keenly scrutinized. The focus here will be on the key interpretive issues (context, translation, the Greek infinitive *authentēin*, grammar, cultural backdrop) and some common concerns regarding what this text says about men and women in positions of leadership and authority. This analysis will make use of a wide array of tools and databases now available with the advent of computer technology that can shed light on what all concede to be the truly abstruse, head-scratching aspects of the passage.

### Context

In getting a handle on 1 Timothy 2:12, we must be clear about where the verse sits in the letter as a whole. Paul begins by instructing his stand-in, Timothy, to stay

<sup>1</sup>A case in point is Andreas Köstenberger's rationale for *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15*, ed. Andreas Köstenberger, Thomas Schreiner and H. Scott Baldwin (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1995), pp. 11-12. He argues that a hierarchical view of men and women is necessary for "a world estranged from God" to "believe that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself."

put in Ephesus so that he can command certain persons "not to teach false doctrines any longer" (1:3). That false teaching is Paul's overriding concern can be seen from the fact that he bypasses normal letter-writing conventions (such as a thanksgiving section and closing greetings) and gets right down to business (cf. Galatians). It is also obvious from the roughly 50 percent of the letter's contents that Paul devotes to the topic of false teaching.

Some believe that false teaching is a minor concern compared with that of "church order." To be sure, Paul does remind Timothy of "how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household" (1 Tim 3:15). It is critical mass, however, that determines the overriding concern.<sup>2</sup> Also, a lack of details about leadership roles and an absence of offices steer us away from viewing church order as the primary matter.<sup>3</sup> Paul's posture throughout is corrective rather than didactic. For example, we learn very little about what various leaders do, and what we do learn, we learn incidentally. Yet there is quite a bit about how not to choose church leaders (1 Tim 5:21-22) and what to do with those who stumble (1 Tim 5:19-20). There is also little interest in the professional qualifications of church leaders. Instead we find a concern for character, family life and commitment to sound teaching (1 Tim 3:1-13). This is perfectly understandable against a background of false teaching. Then there are the explicit statements. Two church leaders have been expelled (1 Tim 1:20). Some elders need to be publicly rebuked due to continuing sin, while the rest take note (1 Tim 5:20).<sup>4</sup> There are malicious talk, malevolent suspicions and constant friction (1 Tim 6:4-5). Some, Paul says, have in fact wandered from the faith (1 Tim 5:15; 6:20-21).

Were women specifically involved? Women receive a great deal of attention in 1 Timothy. Indeed there is no other New Testament letter in which they figure so prominently. Behavior befitting women in worship (1 Tim 2:10-15), qualifications for women deacons (1 Tim 3:11), appropriate pastoral behavior toward older and younger women (1 Tim 5:2), support of widows in service of the church (1 Tim 5:9-10), correction of younger widows (1 Tim 5:11-15) and familial responsibility

<sup>2</sup>For further discussion, see Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy*, Tins, NIBC (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1988), pp. 20-23.

<sup>3</sup>Qualifications for leaders are outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and 5:9-10, but there is no instruction as to who they are or what roles they fill.

<sup>4</sup>Since the tense and mood are present indicative, Paul is dealing with a present reality not a hypothetical possibility. Thus TNIV reads: "But those who are sinning you are to rebuke before everyone" (cf. NRSV, "As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all"), replacing the NIV's "Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly so that the others may take warning."

ities toward destitute widows (1 Tim 5:3-8, 16) are all concerns of Paul. Moreover, Paul speaks of widows who were going from house to house speaking things they ought not (1 Tim 5:13). That something more than nosiness or gossiping is involved is clear from Paul's evaluation that "some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan" (1 Tim 5:15).

Some are quick to point out that there are no explicit examples of female false teachers in 1 Timothy, and they are correct. No women (teachers or otherwise) are specifically named. Yet this overlooks the standard principles that come into play when we are interpreting the genre of "letter." The occasional nature of Paul's letters always demands reconstruction of one sort or another, and this from only half of the conversation. The cumulative picture, then, becomes that which meets the burden of proof. All told, Paul's attention to false teaching and women occupies about 60 percent of the letter. It would therefore be foolish—not to mention misleading—to neglect considering 1 Timothy 2 against this backdrop. "They [the false teachers] forbid people to marry" (1 Tim 4:3) alone goes a long way toward explaining Paul's otherwise obscure comment "Women will be saved [or 'kept safe'] through childbearing" (1 Tim 2:15), as well as his command in 1 Timothy 5:14 that younger widows marry and raise a family (which is different from his teaching elsewhere, e.g., 1 Cor 7:8-9, 39-40).

The grammar and language of 1 Timothy 2 also dictate such a backdrop. The opening "I exhort, therefore" (1 Tim 2:1 NASB, *parakalō oun*) ties what follows in chapter 2 with the false teaching of the previous chapter and its divisive influence (1 Tim 1:3-7, 18-20). The subsequent "therefore I want" (NASB, *boulomai oun*) eight verses later does the same (1 Tim 2:8). Congregational contention is the keynote of 1 Timothy 2. A command for peace (instead of disputing) is found four times in the space of fifteen verses. Prayers for governing authorities are urged "that we may lead peaceful and quiet lives" (1 Tim 2:2). The men of the church are enjoined to lift up hands that are "without anger or disputing" (1 Tim 2:8). The women are commanded to show sound judgment (1 Tim 2:9, 15, *sōphrosynēs*), to learn in a peaceful (not quarrelsome) fashion (1 Tim 2:11; see below) and to avoid Eve's example of deception and transgression (1 Tim 2:13-14). The language of deception, in particular, calls to mind the activities of the false teachers. A similar warning was given to the Corinthian congregation. "I am afraid," Paul says, "that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ" (2 Cor 11:3).

In Corinth the false teaching involved preaching a Jesus, Spirit and gospel dif-

ferent from what Paul had preached (2 Cor 11:4-5). What was it in Ephesus? One pointer is Paul's command that women learn "quietly" (1 Tim 2:11) and behave "quietly" (1 Tim 2:12 Phillips, NEB, REB, NLT). Some translations render the Greek phrase *en hēsychia* as "in silence," and Paul is understood to be setting forth public protocols for women. In public, women are to learn "in silence" and be "silent" (KJV, NKJV, RSV, NSRV, CEV, NIV, JB; cf. "keep quiet" TEV; "remain [or be] quiet" BBE, NAB, NJB, TNIV). But does this make sense? Silence is not compatible with the Socratic dialogical approach to learning in Paul's day.<sup>5</sup> Also, Paul does not use the Greek term *hēsychion* this way nine verses earlier: "I urge . . . that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made . . . for kings and all in authority, so that we may lead peaceful and quiet [*hēsychion*] lives in all godliness and holiness" (1 Tim 2:1-2).<sup>6</sup>

Yet all too often it is assumed that Paul is commanding women not to speak or teach in a congregational setting as a sign of "full submission" to their husbands. On what grounds, though? "A woman should learn . . ." does not suggest anything of the sort (1 Tim 2:11). In a learning context, it is logical to think in terms of submission either to teachers or to oneself (cf. "the spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets," 1 Cor 14:32). Submission to a teacher well suits a learning context, but so does self-control. A calm, submissive spirit was a necessary prerequisite for learning back then (as now).

Some translations seek a way out by narrowing "women" and "men" to "wives" and "husbands" (e.g., Knox, Young, Williams). Lexically this is certainly possible. *Gynē* can mean either "woman" or "wife," and *anēr* can mean "man" or "husband" (see BDAG s.v.): "I permit no wife to teach or to have authority over her husband." Yet context determines usage, and "husband" and "wife" do not fit. "I want the men everywhere to pray" (1 Tim 2:8) and "I also want women . . ." (1 Tim 2:9-10) simply cannot be limited to husbands and wives. Nor can the verses that follow be read in this way. Paul does refer to Adam and Eve in 1 Tim 2:13-14; but it is to Adam and Eve as the prototypical male and female, not as

<sup>5</sup>See chapter nine in this volume.

<sup>6</sup>Nor does Paul use the term *hēsychia* to mean "silence" elsewhere. When he has absence of speech in mind, he uses *sigōē* (Rom 16:25; 1 Cor 14:28, 30, 34). When he has "calmness" in view, he uses *hēsychia* and its cognate forms (1 Thess 4:11; 2 Thess 3:12; 1 Tim 2:2). This is also the case for the other New Testament authors. See *sigōē* in Luke 9:36; 18:39; 20:26; Acts 12:17; 15:12-13; and *sigē* in Acts 21:40 and Revelation 8:1. For *hēsychia* (and related forms) meaning "calm" or "testful," see Luke 23:56; Acts 11:18; 21:14; 1 Thessalonians 4:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:12; 1 Peter 3:4. For the sense "not speak," see Luke 14:4 and, perhaps, Acts 22:2.

a married couple ("formed first," "deceived and became a sinner").

Paul's commands for peaceable and submissive behavior suggest that women were disrupting worship. The men were too. They were praying in an angry and contentious way (1 Tim 2:8). Since Paul targets women who teach men (1 Tim 2:12) and uses the example of Adam and Eve as a corrective, it would be a fair assumption that a bit of a battle of the sexes was being waged in the congregation.

### Translation

Without a doubt, the most difficult clause to unpack is *didaskain de gynaiti outē epitēpō oudē authentein andros*—although the average person in the pew wouldn't know it. English translations stemming from the 1940s to the early 1980s tend to gloss over the difficulties. A hierarchical, noninclusive understanding of leadership is partly to blame. Women aren't supposed to be leaders, so the language of leadership, where women are involved, tends to be manipulated. One of the primary places where this sort of bias surfaces is 1 Timothy 2:12. Post-World War II translations routinely render the clause as "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have [or exercise] authority over a man" (e.g., RSV, NRSV, NAB, NAB, TEV, NASB, CU, JB, NJB, NKJV, NCV, God's Word, NLT, Holman Christian Standard, ESV, TNIV)—although some, such as the BBE, qualify it with "in my [Paul's] opinion."

Earlier translations were not so quick to do so. This was largely owing to dependence on ancient Greek lexicographers and grammarians. In fact, there is a virtually unbroken tradition, stemming from the oldest versions and running down to the twenty-first century, that translates *authentein* as "to dominate" rather than "to exercise authority over":<sup>7</sup>

- Old Latin (2nd-4th cent. A.D.): "I permit not a woman to teach, neither to dominate a man [*neque dominari viro*]"
- Vulgate (4th-5th): "I permit not a woman to teach, neither to dominate over a man [*neque dominari in virum*]."

<sup>7</sup>There are two notable exceptions. (1) Martin Luther (1522): "Einem Weibe aber gestatte ich nicht, dass sie lehre, auch nicht, dass sie des Mannes Herr sei." Luther, in turn, influenced William Tyndale (1525-1526): "I suffer not a woman to teache neither to have auctoritee over a man." (2) Rhems (1582): "But to teach I permit not vnto a woman, nor to haue dominion ouer the man." Rhems, in turn, influenced the ASV ("nor to have dominion over a man") and subsequent revisions of Cardoso de Reina's Santa Biblia. See, for example, the 1602 Valera revision: "ni jeteret dominio sobre" ("neither to exercise dominion over").

- Geneva (1560 edition): "I permit not a woman to teache, nether to *yfyrre* authority over the man."
  - Casiodoro de Reina (1569): "I do not permit the woman to teach, neither to take [tomar] authority over the man." *No permito á la mujer enseñar, ni tomar autoridad sobre el hombre.*<sup>8</sup>
  - Bishops (1589): "I suffer not a woman to teach, neither to *usurpe* authority over the man."
  - KJV (1611): "I suffer not a woman to teach nor *usurp* authority over a man."
- A wide range of modern translations follow the same tradition:<sup>9</sup>

- L. Segond (1910): "I do not permit the woman to teach, neither to take [prendre] authority over the man." *Je ne permets pas à la femme d'enseigner, ni de prendre autorité sur l'homme.*
- Goodspeed (1923): "I do not allow women to teach or to dominate over men."
- La Sainte (1938): "I do not permit the woman to teach, neither to take [prendre] authority over the man." *Je ne permets pas à la femme d'enseigner, ni de prendre de l'autorité sur l'homme.*
- NEB (1961): "I do not permit a woman to be a teacher, nor must woman dominate over man."
- JBCEf (1973): "I do not permit the woman to teach, neither to lay down the law for the man." *Je ne permets pas à la femme d'enseigner ni de faire la loi à l'homme.*
- REB (1989): "I do not permit women to teach or dictate to the men."
- New Translation (1990): "I do not permit a woman to teach or dominate men."
- CEV (1991): "They should . . . not be allowed to teach or to tell men what to do."
- *The Message* (1993): "I don't let women take over and tell the men what to do."

There are good reasons for translating *authentem* this way. It cannot be stressed

<sup>8</sup>Compare this with "exercise authority" (*gizra autoridad*—*La Biblia de las Américas* 1986) and "exercise dominion" (*gizra dominio*—Reina-Valera 1960, 1995).

<sup>9</sup>Technically, *vir* in Latin and *Mébe* in German (like *gyné* in Greek) can mean either "woman" or "wife." Consequently, some translations opt for "wife." See, for example, Charles B. Williams's 1937 translation: "I do not permit a married woman to practice teaching or domineering over a husband"

enough that in *authentem* Paul picked a term that occurs only here in the New Testament. Its cognates are found merely twice elsewhere in the Greek Bible. In the Wisdom of Solomon 12:6 it is the noun *authentes* (murderer) used with reference to indigenous peoples' practice of child sacrifice:

Those [the Canaanites] who lived long ago in your holy land, you hated for their detestable practices; their works of sorcery and unholy rites . . . these parents who murdered [authentias] helpless lives. (NRSV)

In 3 Maccabees 2:28-29 it is the noun *authentia* ("original," "authentic"). The author recounts the hostile measures taken by the Ptolemies against Alexandrian Jews toward the end of the third century B.C., including the need to register according to their original status as Egyptian slaves and to be branded with the ivy-leaf symbol in honor of the deity Dionysus.<sup>10</sup>

All Jews [in Alexandria] shall be subjected to a registration [*logographian*]<sup>11</sup> involving poll tax and to the status of slaves. . . . Those who are registered are to be branded on their bodies by fire with the ivy-leaf symbol of Dionysus and to register [*katachrisai*] in accordance with their [Egyptian] origin [*authentian*] of record [*prosynestahnenēn*].<sup>12</sup>

These two uses in the Greek Bible should give us pause in opting for a translation such as "to have [or exercise] authority over." If Paul had wanted to speak of an ordinary exercise of authority, he could have picked any number of words. Within the semantic domain of "exercise authority," biblical lexicographers J. P. Louw and Eugene Nida have twelve entries and of "rule," "govern" forty-seven entries.<sup>13</sup> Yet Paul picked none of these. Why not? The obvious reason is that *authentem* carried a nuance (other than "rule" or "have authority") that was particularly suited to the Ephesian situation.

<sup>10</sup>Branding in honor of a deity was a common practice in antiquity. See Bruce Metzger and Roland Murphy, eds., *The New Oxford Annotated Apocrypha* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 289 n. 28.

<sup>11</sup>*Logographia* (registration) is a rare word found in the Greek papyri from Egypt with reference to the registration of people of the lower classes and slaves. See *ibid.*

<sup>12</sup>R. H. Charles's "they shall also be registered according to their former restricted status" does not fit the lexical range of possibilities for *authentia* (*The Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. [London: Oxford University Press, 1913]).

<sup>13</sup>Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988-1989), 37.35-47, 37.48-95. *Authentem* is noticeably absent from both of these domains.

*Nouns: Greek literary materials.* So what is the nuance? Lexicographers, for the most part, agree that the root of *authēnēs* is *auto* + *enēs*, meaning "to do or to originate something with one's own hand" (LSJ *autoenēs*). Usage confirms this. An *authēnēs* is someone who originates or carries out an action. During the sixth to second centuries B.C., the Greek tragedies used it exclusively of murdering oneself (suicide) or another person(s).<sup>14</sup> The rhetoricians and orators during this period did the same.<sup>15</sup> The word is rare in the historians and epic writers of the time, but in all instances it too is used of a "murderer" or "slayer."<sup>16</sup>

During the Hellenistic period the primary meaning of *authēnēs* was still "murderer,"<sup>17</sup> but the semantic range widened to include "perpetrator,"<sup>18</sup> "sponsor,"<sup>19</sup> "author,"<sup>20</sup> and "mastermind"<sup>21</sup> of a crime or act of violence. This is the case regardless of geographical location, ethnicity or religious orientation. For instance, the Jewish historian Josephus speaks of the *author* (*authēnēs*) of a poisonous draught (*Jewish Wars* 1.582; 2.240). Diodorus of Sicily uses it of (1) the sponsors (*authēntas*) of some daring plans (*Bibliotheca historica* 35.25.1), (2) the perpetrators (*authēntais*) of a sacrilege (*Bibliotheca historica* 16.61) and (3) the mastermind (*authēntas*) of a crime (*Bibliotheca historica* 17.5.4.5). By the first century A.D., lexicographers

<sup>14</sup> Aeschylus (2x) *Agamemnon* 1573, *Eumenides* 212; Euripides (8x) *Frgmenta* 20.645, *Andromachē* 39.172, 614, *Heracles* 43.839, 43.47, post 1312, *Trachis* 44.660, *Iphigenia aulideis* 51.1190, *Rhesus* 52.873. For a detailed study of the nominal forms of *authēntein*, see Leland Wilshire, "The TLG Computer and Further Reference to AVΘENTEN in I Timothy 2.12," *NIS* 34 (1988): 120-34, and "I Timothy 2.12 Revisited: A Reply to Paul W. Barnett and Timothy J. Harris," *EQ* 65 (1993): 43-55.

<sup>15</sup> There is a disputed reading of *authēntas* in Euripides' *Suppliant Women* 442. Arthur Way (*Euripides Suppliants* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971], p. 534) emends the text to read *authyntas* ("when people pilot the land"), instead of *authēntas*. David Kovacs (*Euripides: Suppliant Women, Elektra, Heracles* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998], p. 57) deletes lines 442-55 as not original. Thus Carroll Osburn erroneously cites this text as "establishing a fifth century BC usage of the term [*authēntēs*] meaning 'to exercise authority'" and mistakenly faults Catherine Clark Kroeger for not dealing with it ("AVΘENTEN" [I Timothy 2:12]—Word Study," *RevQ*, 1982, p. 2 n. 5).

<sup>16</sup> Anthonon (6x) *Ternologies* 23.4.6, 23.11.4, 24.4.3, 24.9.7, 24.10.1, *On the Murder of Herod* 111.6; Lycias (1x) *Orations* 36.348.13.

<sup>17</sup> Thucydides (1x) *History of the Peloponnesian War* 3.58.5.4; Herodotus (1x) *Historia* 1.117.12, *Apollonius* (2x) *Argonautica* 2.754, 4.479.

<sup>18</sup> Appian (5x) *Mithridatic Wars* 90.1, *Civil Wars* 1.7.61.7, 1.13.115.17, 3.2.16.13, 4.17.134.40; Plutarch (1x) *Quad. Dicitur* *Palioi* *Insularti* *Solani* 78.7.

<sup>19</sup> Josephus (1x) *Jewish Wars* 1.582.1; Diodorus (1x) *Bibliotheca historica* 11.6.61.1.3.

<sup>20</sup> Posidonius (1x) *Frgmenta* 165.7 (= Diodorus *Bibliotheca historica* 3.3435.25.1.4).

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Josephus (1x) *Jewish Wars* 2.240.4; Diodorus (1x) *Bibliotheca historica* 17.5.

<sup>22</sup> E.g., Diodorus *Bibliotheca historica* 17.5.4.5.

defined *authēntēs* as the perpetrator of a murder committed by others (not the actual murderer himself or herself).<sup>22</sup>

Was there a meaning that approached anything like the ESV's "exercise authority over" and the NIV's "have authority over"? "Master" can be found, but it is in the sense of the "mastermind" of a crime rather than one who exercises authority over another. For example, in the first and second centuries B.C. historians used it of those who masterminded and carried out such exploits as the massacre of the Thracians at Maronea<sup>23</sup> and the robbing of the sacred shrine at Delphi.<sup>24</sup>

*Greek nonliterary materials.* A search of the nonliterary databases (Duke papyri, ostraca tablets and inscriptions of the Packard Humanities Institute [PHI]) produces quite different results. While *authent-* appears quite regularly in Greek literature from the sixth century B.C. on, it first appears in nonliterary materials in the first century B.C.<sup>25</sup> The popular form is *authēntikos* (from which we derive our English word *authentic*) and not *authēntēs* (murderer). Numerous examples of *authēntikos* can be found in Greek inscriptions and papyri of the Hellenistic period.<sup>26</sup>

*Verbs* Verb forms contemporary with or prior to Paul (including the verbal noun [infinitive] and verbal adjective [participle]) are rare to nonexistent in Greek literary and nonliterary materials. There are a mere handful in the TLG (Thesaurus Linguae Graecae) and PHI (Packard Humanities Institute) databases. But these are of critical importance for shedding light on the verbal noun *authēntein* in I Timothy 2:12.

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, Harpocration *Lexicon* 66.7 (1st cent. A.D.): "Authēntēs: Those who commit murders [in *plonous*] through others. For the perpetrator [*ho authēntēs*] always makes evident the one whose hand committed the deed."

<sup>23</sup> Polybius *Historias* 22.14.2.3 (2nd cent. B.C.).

<sup>24</sup> Diodorus of Sicily *Bibliotheca historica* 17.5.4.5 (1st cent. B.C.). In the patristic writers the noun *authēntēs* does not appear until the mid to late second century A.D. and then in Origen in the third century—far too late to provide a linguistic context for Paul. Predominant usage is still "murderer" (Gleason 3x) but one also finds divine "authority" (Trenaeus 3x; Clement 2x; Origen 1x) and "master" (*Siphnd of Hermas* 1x; for the second-century dating of the *Siphnd* 5.82, see Michael Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1992], p. 331). The rest—the vast majority—are uses of the adjective ("authentic," "genuine"). The verb does not occur until well into the third century A.D. (Hippolytus *Short Exegetical and Homiletical Writings* 29.7.5).

<sup>25</sup> The root *authent-* appears six times in first-century A.D. inscriptions, ostraca and tablets: (1) *authēntei/ authēntia* ("power," "sway," "mastery"; *Sybilis* [12]5; *Mylasa* 10), (2) *authēntikos* (*Mylasa* 2, 6) and (3) *authēntēs* (*Trois Asiae Minoris* V 23; *Ephesos* 109). It surfaces in the first-century B.C. papyri only once (see above). It picks up steam in the first century A.D., but virtually all are the term *authēntos* ("genuine," "authentic"; 22x).

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, Oxyrhynchus Papyri 2.260.20 (A.D. 59): "I, Theon, son of Onophrios, assistant, have checked this authentic [*authēntikei*] bond."

The first is found in the fifth to first centuries B.C. *Scholía* (or explanatory remarks) on a passage from Aeschylus's tragedy *Emmenides*: "His [Orestes'] hands were dripping with blood; he held a sword just drawn [from avenging the death of his father by killing his mother]" (42). The commentator uses the perfect participial form of *authenēō* to capture the intentional character of the deed: "Were dipping" is explained as "The murderer [*ho phonētēs*], who just now has committed an act of violence [*authenēkota*] . . ."

The second use of *authenēō* is found in the first-century B.C. grammarian Aristonicus. Commenting on a portion of Homer's *Iliad* ("So he [Odysseus] spoke and they [King Agamemnon and his people] all became hushed in silence, marveling at his words; for so masterfully did he address their gathering"), he states, "This line, which appears in other places, does not fit well here; for it usually is spoken, when the author [*ho authenēn*] of the message delivered something striking. But now, however, he [the author] would speak for Odysseus, who relates the things which had been spoken by Achilles."<sup>27</sup>

The third use of *authenēō* is found in a 27/26 B.C. letter in which Tryphon recounts to his brother Asklepiades the resolution of a dispute between himself and another individual regarding the amount to be paid a ferryman for shipping a load of cattle: "And I had my way with him [*authenēkotos pros auton*] and he agreed to provide Calatrytis the boatman with the full fare within the hour" (BGU IV 1208). Evangelical scholarship has been largely dependent for its understanding of *authenēō* on George Knight III's 1984 study and his translation of *authenēkotos pros auton* as "I exercised authority over him."<sup>28</sup> Yet this hardly fits the mundane details of the text—payment of a boat fare. Nor can *pros auton* be understood as "over him." The preposition plus the accusative does not bear this sense in Greek. "To/toward," "against" and "with" (and less frequently "at," "for," "with reference to," "on" and "on account of") are the range of possible meanings.<sup>29</sup> Here it likely means something like "I had my way with him" or perhaps "I took a firm stand with him."<sup>30</sup> This certainly fits what we know of the Asklepiades archive. As John White notes, this part of the archive (BGU IV 1203-9) is a series of seven letters written between family members—three brothers, Asklepiades, Paniskos

<sup>27</sup> Aristonicus *De signis Iliadis* 9.694 (1st cent. B.C.).

<sup>28</sup> George Knight III, "AVBENTEN in Reference to Women in I Timothy 2.12," *NTS* 30 (1984): 145.

<sup>29</sup> See LSJ, 1497 C, with the accusative.

<sup>30</sup> See Friedrich Preisigke, *Wörterbuch der griechischen Papyriurkunden* (Berlin: Papyrusurkunden Berlin, 1925), s.v. *fest aufsetzen* (to stand firm).

and Tryphon, and one sister, Isidora. Although various business matters are discussed in the correspondence, it is evident that these are private letters, written for the most part by Isidora, who is representing her family's interests abroad.<sup>31</sup>

The fourth use of *authenēō* occurs in Philodemus, the first-century B.C. Greek poet and Epicurean philosopher from Gadara, Syria. Philodemus wrote against the rhetoricians of his day and their penetration into Epicurean circles. Rhetors were the villains; philosophers were the heroes of the Roman Republic. He states, "Rhetors harm a great number of people in many ways—'those shot through with dreadful desires.' They [rhetors] fight every chance they get with prominent people—'with powerful lords [*syn authen[ou]sin anaxin*]' . . . Philosophers, on the other hand, gain the favor of public figures . . . not having them as enemies but friends: . . . on account of their endearing qualities" (*Rhetorica* 2 Fragmenta Libri [5] fr. 4 line 14).

Once again Knight's analysis falls short. He states that "the key term is *authen[ou]sin*" and claims that the rendition offered by Yale classicist Harry Hubble is: "they [orators] are men who incur the enmity of those in authority."<sup>32</sup> But Hubble actually renders *authen[ou]sin* rightly as an adjective meaning "powerful" and modifying the noun *lords*: "they [rhetors] fight with powerful lords [*diamaxontai kai syn authenousin anaxin*]."<sup>33</sup>

The fifth use of *authenēō* is found in influential late-first- and early-second-century astrological poet Dorotheus. He states that "if Jupiter aspects the Moon from trine . . . it makes them [the natives] leaders or chiefs [some of civilians and others of soldiers] especially if the Moon is increasing; but if the moon decreases, it does not make them *dominant* [*authentas*] but subservient [*hyperetomenous*]" (346). Along similar lines, second-century mathematician Ptolemy states: "Therefore, if Saturn alone takes planetary control [*tēn oikeodespotian*] of the soul and *dominates* [*authentetas*] Mercury and the moon [who govern the soul] [and] if Saturn has a dignified position toward both the solar system and its angles [*ta ken-*

<sup>31</sup> John White, *Light from Ancient Letters* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), p. 103.

<sup>32</sup> Knight, "AVBENTEN," p. 145. Knight also overlooks the fact that *syn authen[ou]sin anaxin* is actually a quote from an unknown source, not Philodemus's own words. Fallacies have the tendency to perpetuate themselves. See, for example, H. Scott Baldwin, who cites Knight's inaccuracy (instead of checking the primary sources firsthand), "Appendix 2. *Authenēō* in Ancient Greek Literature," in *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2.9-15*, ed. Andreas Köstenberger, Thomas Schneider and H. Scott Baldwin (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1995), p. 275.

<sup>33</sup> Harry Hubble, trans. and commentary, "The Rhetorica of Philodemus," *Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences* 23 (1920): 306.

tra],<sup>34</sup> then he [Saturn] makes [them] lovers of the body . . . *ditatorial, ready to punish*. . . . But Saturn allied with Jupiter . . . makes his subjects good, respectful to elders, sedate, noble-minded . . . (*Tetrabiblos* 3.13 [no. 157]). Although Dorotheus and Ptolemy postdate Paul, they provide an important witness to the continuing use of *authentēō* to mean “to hold sway over, to dominate.”

Ancient Greek grammarians and lexicographers suggest that the meaning “to dominate, hold sway” finds its origin in first-century popular (“vulgar” versus literary) usage. That is why second-century lexicographer Moeris states that the Attic *autodikein*, “to have independent jurisdiction, self-determination,” is to be preferred to the Hellenistic (or Koine) *authentēs*.<sup>35</sup> Modern lexicographers agree: Those who have studied Hellenistic letters argue that *authentēō* originated in the popular Greek vocabulary as a synonym for “to dominate someone” (*strateinimos*).<sup>36</sup> Biblical lexicographers J. P. Louw and Eugene Nida put *authentēō* into the semantic domain “to control, restrain, domineer” and define the verb as “to control in a domineering manner”: “I do not allow women . . . to dominate men” (1 Tim. 2:12).<sup>37</sup> Other meanings do not appear until well into the third and fourth centuries A.D.<sup>38</sup>

So there is no first-century warrant for translating *authentēin* as “to exercise authority” and for understanding Paul in 1 Timothy 2:12 to be speaking of the carrying out of one’s official duties. Rather the sense is the Koine “to dominate to get one’s way.” The NIV’s “to have authority over” therefore must be under-

<sup>34</sup>Knight misreads (or perhaps misinterprets) F. E. Robbins’s (transl. LCL) “angles” as “angels” (“ANGELI,” p. 145). Baldwin once again quotes Knight’s inaccuracy rather than doing a fresh analysis of the book’s title claims (“Appendix 2: *Authentēō*,” p. 275).

<sup>35</sup>Moeris, *Attic Lexicon*, ed. J. Pierson (Leiden, 1759), p. 58. Cf. thirteenth- to fourteenth-century Aristotelian Thomas Magister, who warns his pupils to use *autodikein* because *authentēin* is vulgar (*Commentarius* 18.8).

<sup>36</sup>See, for example, Theodor Nageli, *Der Wörterwitz des Apostels Paulus* (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1905), pp. 49–50; cf. James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930), s.v., and the Persens Project, *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “to have full power over *hinos*.” <http://www.persens.trufts.edu>

<sup>37</sup>Louw and Nida also note that “to control in a domineering manner” is often expressed idiomatically as “to shout orders at,” “to act like a chief toward” or “to bark at.” The use of the verb in 1 Timothy 2:12 comes quite naturally out of the word “master, autocrat” (*Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 91), cf. BDAG, which defines *authentēō* as “to assume a stance of independent authority, give orders to, dictate to.”

<sup>38</sup>The noun *authentēs* used of an “owner” or “master” appears a bit earlier. See, for example, the second-century *Shepherd of Hermas* 9.5.6, “Let us go to the tower, for the owner of the tower is coming to inspect it.”

stood in the sense of holding sway or mastery over another. This is supported by the grammar of the verse. If Paul had a routine exercise of authority in view, he would have put it first, followed by teaching as a specific example. Instead he starts with teaching, followed by *authentēin* as a specific example. Given this word order, *authentēin* meaning “to dominate” or “gain the upper hand” provides the best fit in the context.

### Grammar

So how did “to exercise authority over” find its way into the majority of modern translations of 1 Timothy 2:12? Andreas Köstenberger claims that it is the correlative that forces translators in this direction. He argues that the Greek correlative pairs synonyms or parallel words and not antonyms. Since “to teach” is positive, *authentēin* must also be positive. To demonstrate his point, Köstenberger analyzes “neither” + verb 1 + “nor” + verb 2 constructions in biblical and extrabiblical literature.<sup>39</sup>

Yet there is a grammatical flaw intrinsic to this approach. It is limited to *functionally* equivalent constructions, excluding *functionally* equivalent ones, and so the investigation includes only correlated verbs. Thus it overlooks the fact that the infinitives (“to teach,” *authentēin*) are functioning grammatically not as verbs but as nouns in the sentence structure (as one would expect a verbal *noun* to do). The Greek infinitive may have tense and voice like a verb, but it functions predominantly as a noun or adjective.<sup>40</sup> The verb in 1 Timothy 2:12 is actually “I permit.” “Neither to teach nor *authentēin*” modifies the noun “a woman,”<sup>41</sup> which makes the *authentēin* clause the second of two direct objects. Use of the infinitive as a direct object after a verb that already has a direct object has been amply demonstrated by biblical and extrabiblical grammarians.<sup>42</sup> In such cases the infinitive re-

<sup>39</sup>Andreas Köstenberger, “A Complex Sentence Structure in 1 Timothy 2:12,” in *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9–15*, ed. Andreas Köstenberger, Thomas Schreiner and H. Scott Baldwin (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1995), pp. 81–103.

<sup>40</sup>See, for example, Nigel Turner, *Syntax*, vol. 3 of *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, ed. Nigel Turner (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1963), p. 134, who classifies infinitives as “noun forms.”

<sup>41</sup>See, for instance, James A. Brooks and Carlton L. Winbery, *Syntax of New Testament Greek* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1979), especially “The Infinitive as a Modifier of Substantives,” pp. 141–42. Köstenberger overlooks the role of the infinitive as a verbal *noun* (“Complex Sentence Structure,” pp. 81–103).

<sup>42</sup>E.g., Edwin Mayser (*Grammatik der Griechischen Papyri aus der Ptolemäer-Zeit* [Berlin/Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1926, 1970], 2.187), BDF §392), Ernest Dewitt Burton (*Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1900], nos. 378, 387), Turner (*Syntax*, pp. 137–38). Of particular relevance is Nigel Turner’s observation in his volume on Greek syntax

stricts the already present object. Following this paradigm, the I Timothy 2:12 correlative *neither to teach nor authentem* functions as a noun that restricts the direct object "a woman" (*gynaikei*).

It behooves us, therefore, to correlate nouns and noun substitutes in addition to verbs. This greatly expands the possibilities. "Neither-nor" constructions in the New Testament are then found to pair synonyms (e.g., "neither despised nor scorned," Gal 4:14), closely related ideas (e.g., "neither of the night nor of the dark," I Thess 5:5) and antonyms (e.g., "neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free," Gal 3:28). They also function to move from the general to the particular (e.g., "wisdom neither of this age nor of the rulers of this age," I Cor 2:6), to define a natural progression of related ideas (e.g., "they neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns," Mt 6:26), and to define a related purpose or a goal (e.g., "where thieves neither break in nor steal" [i.e., break in to steal], Mt 6:20).<sup>43</sup>

Of the options listed above, it is clear that "teach" and "dominate" are not synonyms, closely related ideas or antonyms. If *authentem* did mean "to exercise authority," we might have a movement from general to particular. But we would expect the word order to be the reverse of what we have in I Timothy 2:12, that

that the infinitive as a direct object with *verba putandi* (e.g., "permit," "allow" and "want") is peculiar to Luke, Paul and Hebrews in the New Testament. In such cases, he argues, the infinitive restricts the already present object.

Daniel Wallace (*Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1996], pp. 182-89) identifies *authentem* as a verb complement ("I do not permit to teach . . .") instead of the direct object complement that it is (*ibid.*, pp. 598-99). It is not that Paul does not permit to *teach* a woman, but that he does not permit a woman to teach. Cf. Romans 3:28; 6:11; 14:14; I Corinthians 11:23; 12:23; 2 Corinthians 11:5; Philippians 3:8.

<sup>43</sup>Here are other examples. (1) *Synonyms*: "neither labors nor spins" (Mt 6:28), "neither quarreled nor cried out" (Mt 12:19), "neither abandoned nor given up" (Acts 2:27), "neither leave nor forsake" (Heb 13:5), "neither run in vain nor labor in vain" (Phil 2:16). (2) *Closely related ideas*: "neither the desire nor the effort" (Rom 9:16), "neither the sun nor the moon" (Rev 21:23). (3) *Antonyms*: "neither a good tree . . . nor a bad tree" (Mt 7:18), "neither the one who did harm nor the one who was harmed" (2 Cor 7:12). (4) *General to particular*: "you know neither the day nor the hour" (Mt 25:13), "I neither consulted with flesh and blood nor went up to Jerusalem" (Gal 1:16-17). (5) *A natural progression of closely related ideas*: "born neither of blood, nor of the human will, nor of the will of man" (Jn 1:13), "neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet" (Jn 1:25), "neither from man nor through man" (Gal 1:1). (6) *Goal or purpose*: "neither hears nor understands" (i.e., hearing with the intent to understand; Mt 13:13), "neither dwells in temples made with human hands nor is served by human hands" (i.e., dwells with a view to being served; Acts 17:24). See Linda L. Belleville, *Women Leaders and the Church* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2000), pp. 176-77.

is, "neither to exercise authority [general] nor to teach [particular]." They do not form a natural progression of related ideas either ("first teach, then dominate"). On the other hand, to define a purpose or goal actually provides a good fit: "I do not permit a woman to teach so as to gain mastery over a man," or "I do not permit a woman to teach with a view to dominating a man."<sup>44</sup> It also fits the contrast with the second part of the verse: "I do not permit a woman to teach a man in a dominating way but to have a quiet demeanor [literally, 'to be in calmness']"

#### Culture

Why were the Ephesian women doing this? One explanation is that they were influenced by the cult of Artemis, in which the female was exalted and considered superior to the male. Its importance to the citizens of Ephesus in Paul's day is evident from Luke's record of the two-hour long chant, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians" (Acts 19:28-37). It was believed that Artemis (and brother Apollo) was the child of Zeus and Leto (or Latin *Latomé*). Instead of seeking fellowship among her own kind, she spurned the attentions of the male gods and sought instead the company of a human male consort. This made Artemis and all her female adherents superior to men. This was played out at the feast of the Lord of Streets, when the priestess of Artemis pursued a man, pretending she was Artemis herself pursuing Leimon.<sup>45</sup>

An Artemis influence would help explain Paul's correctives in I Timothy 2:13-14. While some may have believed that Artemis appeared first and then her male consort, the true story was just the opposite. For Adam was formed first, then Eve (1 Tim 2:13). And Eve was deceived to boot (1 Tim 2:14)—hardly a basis on which to claim superiority. It would also shed light on Paul's statement that Christian "women will be kept safe [or 'saved'] through childbirth" (1 Tim 2:15 NIV [1973 and 1978 editions]), presumably by faith in Christ. Thus they need not look to Artemis as the protector of women, as did other Ephesian women who turned

<sup>44</sup>Cf. Philip Payne ("Authentem in I Timothy 2:12," Evangelical Theological Society Seminar Paper [Raboban Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia, November 21, 1986]). His own position is that "neither-nor" in this verse forms a closely associated couplet (like "hit 'n' run"; "teach 'n' dominate").

<sup>45</sup>*Pausanias Guide to Greece* 2.27.4; 8.53.3. For further details, see Sharon Grütz, *Paul, Women Teachers and the Mother Goddesses at Ephesus: A Study of I Timothy 2:9-15 in Light of the Religious and Cultural Milieu of the First Century* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1991), pp. 31-41, and "Artemis," in *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, Nerescape Navigator, Nerescape Communications, 1997.



to her for safe travel through the childbearing process.<sup>46</sup>

The impact of the cults on the female population of Ephesus and its environs has been challenged by S. M. Baugh, who contends that the lack of any first-century Ephesian high priestess runs counter to an Artemis impact on the church.<sup>47</sup> Although Baugh is correct in saying that urban Ephesus lacked a high priestess during Paul's day, he overlooks the fact that suburban Ephesus did. While Paul was planting the Ephesian church, Iuliane served as high priestess of the imperial cult in Magnesia, a city fifteen miles southeast of Ephesus. She is honored in a decree of the mid-first century.<sup>48</sup> There were others as well. Inscriptions dating from the first century until the mid-third century place women as high priestesses in Ephesus, Gyzycus, Thyatira, Aphrodisias, Magnesia and elsewhere.<sup>49</sup>

Baugh also argues that female high priestesses of Asia did not serve in and of their own right. They were simply riding on the coattails of a husband, male relative or wealthy male patron.<sup>50</sup> This simply is not true. Many inscriptions naming a woman as high priestess do not name a husband, father or male patron. In the case of those that do, prestige was attached to being a relative of a high priestess and not vice versa. Iuliane's position, for example, was hardly honorary. While it is true that her husband served as a high priest of the imperial cult, Iuliane held her position long before her husband held his. Nor was her position nominal. Priests and priestesses were responsible for the sanctuary's maintenance, its rituals and ceremonies and the protection of its treasures and gifts. Liturgical functions included ritual

<sup>46</sup>As the mother goddess, Artemis was the source of life, the one who nourished all creatures and the power of fertility in nature. Maidens turned to her as the protector of their virginity, barren women sought her aid, and women in labor turned to her for help. See "Artemis," *Encyclopædia Britannica*. S. M. Baugh takes issue with the premise that Artemis worship was a fusion of a fertility cult of the mother goddess of Asia Minor and the Greek virgin goddess of the hunt ("A Foreign World Ephesus in the First Century," in *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15*, ed. Andrea Köstenberger, Thomas Schreiner and H. Scott Baldwin [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1995], pp. 28-33). But fourth-century B.C. "Rituals for Brides and Pregnant Women in the Worship of Artemis" and other literary sources support the fusion. See Franciszek Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées de Milet*; *Minerve Travaux et mémoires* 9 (Paris: E. de Boccard 1955); idem, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques. Supplément Travaux et mémoires* 11 (Paris: E. de Boccard 1962); idem, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques*, Travaux et mémoires 18 (Paris: E. de Boccard 1969).

<sup>47</sup>See Baugh, "Foreign World," pp. 43-44.

<sup>48</sup>*Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Mæander* 158.

<sup>49</sup>See R. A. Kearsley, "Asiarchs, Archiereis and the Archiereiai of Asia," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 27 (1986): 183-92.

<sup>50</sup>Baugh, "Foreign World," pp. 43-44.

sacrifice, pronouncing the invocation and presiding at the festivals of the deity.<sup>51</sup>

Baugh further maintains that Asian high priestesses were young girls whose position was analogous to the private priestesses of Hellenistic queens. Theirs was a nominal position of no real substance, given to daughters and wives of the municipal elite.<sup>52</sup> This too runs counter to Greco-Roman evidence. The majority of women who served as high priestesses were hardly young girls.<sup>53</sup> Vestal virgins were the exception. Delphic priestesses, on the other hand, were required to be at least fifty years old, came from all social classes and served a male god and his adherents.

The primary flaw of Baugh's study is that it is not broad based enough to accurately reflect the religious and civic roles of first-century women in either Asia or the Greco-Roman Empire as a whole. Because Roman religion and government were inseparable, to lead in one arena was often to lead in the other. Mendora, for example, served at one time or another during Paul's tenure as magistrate, priestess and chief financial officer of Sillyon, a town in Pisidia, Asia.<sup>54</sup>

#### Common Concerns

What about the prohibition in I Timothy 2:12: "I do not permit a woman to teach . . . ?" There are several aspects of I Timothy 2:12 that make the plain sense difficult to determine. The exact wording of Paul's restriction needs careful scrutiny. What kind of teaching is Paul prohibiting at this point? Some are quick to assume he means a teaching office or other position of authority. But teaching in the New Testament period was an activity and not an office (Mt 28:19-20), a gift and not a position of authority (Rom 12:7; I Cor 12:28; 14:26; Eph 4:11).

There is also the assumption that authority resides in the act of teaching (or in the person who teaches). In point of fact, it resides in the deposit of truth—"the deep truths of the faith" (I Tim 3:9; 4:6), "the faith" (I Tim 4:1; 5:8; 6:10, 12, 21), the trust (I Tim 6:20) that Jesus passed on to his disciples and that they in turn passed on to their disciples (2 Tim 2:2). Teaching is subject to evaluation just like any other ministry. This is why Paul instructed Timothy to publicly rebuke (I Tim 5:20) anyone who departed from "the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Tim 6:3).

<sup>51</sup>Kearsley, "Asiarchs," pp. 183-92.

<sup>52</sup>Baugh, "Foreign World," p. 43.

<sup>53</sup>See Riet van Bremen, "Women and Wealth," in *Images of Women in Antiquity*, ed. Averil Cameron and Amelie Kuhrt (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), pp. 231-41.

<sup>54</sup>*Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes* 3.800-902.

It is often countered that teaching in I Timothy takes on the more official sense of doctrine and that teaching doctrine is something women can't do. Yet doctrine as a system of thought (i.e., dogma) is foreign to I Timothy. Traditions, yes; doctrines, no. While Paul urged Timothy to "command and teach these things" (I Tim 4:11; 6:2), the "things" are not strictly doctrines. They included matters like avoiding goddess myths and old wives' tales (I Tim 4:7), godly training (I Tim 4:7-8), God as the Savior of all (I Tim 4:9-10) and slaves treating their masters with full respect (I Tim 6:1-2). The flaw therefore lies in translating the Greek phrase *hugainousē didaskalia* as "sound doctrine" instead of "sound teaching" (I Tim 1:10; 4:6; cf. I Tim 6:1, 3; 2 Tim 4:3; Tit 1:9; 2:1).

What about Paul's naming Adam as first in the creation process? Isn't Paul saying something thereby about male leadership? "For Adam was formed *first*, then Eve" (I Tim 2:13). Yet if one looks closely at the immediate context, "first-then" (*prōtos . . . eita*) language does nothing more than define a sequence of events or ideas. Ten verses later Paul states that deacons "must first [*prōton*] be tested; and then [*eita*] . . . let them serve" (I Tim 3:10). This, in fact, is the case throughout Paul's letters (and the New Testament, for that matter). "First-then" defines a temporal sequence, without implying either ontological or functional priority. "The dead in Christ will rise *first*. *After that* we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" is a case in point (I Thess 4:16-17). "The dead in Christ" gain neither personal nor functional advantage over the living as a result of being raised "first" (cf. Mk 4:28; I Cor 15:46; Jas 3:17).

But doesn't *gar* at the start of I Timothy 2:13 introduce a creation order dilemma? Women must not teach men *because* God created men to lead (following the creation order of male, then female); Eve's proneness to deception while taking the lead demonstrates this. This reading of the text is problematic for a number of reasons. First, there is nothing in the context to support it. Paul simply does not identify Eve's transgression as taking the lead in the relationship or Adam's fault as abdicating that leadership. Second, the conjunction *gar* ("for") typically introduces an *explanation* for what precedes, not a cause.<sup>55</sup> If the sense of I Timothy 2:12 is that women are not permitted to teach men in a dominating fashion, then I Timothy 2:13 would provide the *explanation*: that Eve was created as Adam's partner (Gen 2:24) and not his boss. By contrast, *effat* ("women are not permitted to teach men

in a dominating fashion") and then *cause* ("Adam was created to be Eve's boss" [i.e., first]) surely makes no sense. Third, those who argue for creation-fall dictums in I Timothy 2:13-14 stop short of including "women will be saved (or kept safe) through childbearing" in I Timothy 2:15. To do so, though, lacks hermeneutical integrity. Either all three statements are normative or all three are not.

What about Eve's seniority in transgression? Isn't Paul using Eve as an example of what can go wrong when women usurp the male's created leadership role? "And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman . . ." (I Tim 2:14). This view is without scriptural support. Eve was not deceived by the serpent into taking the lead in the male-female relationship. She was deceived into disobeying a command of God, namely, not to eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. She listened to the voice of false teaching and was deceived by it. Paul's warning to the Corinthian congregation confirms this: "I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ" (2 Cor 11:3).

The language of deception calls to mind the activities of the false teachers at Ephesus. If the Ephesian women were being encouraged as the superior sex to assume the role of teacher over men, this would go a long way toward explaining I Timothy 2:13-14. The relationship between the sexes was not intended to involve female domination and male subordination. But neither was it intended to involve male domination and female subordination. Such thinking is native to a fallen creation order (Gen 3:16).

#### Summary

A reasonable reconstruction of I Timothy 2:11-15 would be as follows: The women at Ephesus (perhaps encouraged by the false teachers) were trying to gain an advantage over the men in the congregation by teaching in a dictatorial fashion. The men in response became angry and disputed what the women were doing.

This interpretation fits the broader context of I Timothy 2:8-15, where Paul aims to correct inappropriate behavior on the part of both men and women (I Tim 2:8, 11). It also fits the grammatical flow of I Timothy 2:11-12: "Let a woman learn in a quiet and submissive fashion. I do not, however, permit her to teach with the intent to dominate a man. She must be gentle in her demeanor." Paul would then be prohibiting teaching that tries to get the upper hand—not teaching per se.

<sup>55</sup>The principal Greek causal conjunction is *hoi* (or *dioti*). See BDF 456.